

# [ this is the day ]

:: psalm 118 / others ::

[ read psalm 118 ]

"This is the day that the Lord has made."

We come here on Wednesday mornings and have a good time together (*hopefully*). We spend a few minutes in prayer and a few minutes in the Word and then we head out to face the day.

Today I want to remind us that this is the day that the Lord has made. As such, there are a lot of things that can and will present themselves to each of us. We know that because of the Bible, which has plainly told us many things that we are guaranteed to encounter in our lives: trial, struggle, difficulty, temptation, relationships, enemies, opportunities to minister, opportunities to worship.

Beyond the *plain* promises, we have the examples of God's people living out their lives on the pages of Scripture. And we have to remind ourselves that these pages are **practical** and are delivered to us that we can know how to act, when to act, what to avoid, who to trust.

Today is the day that the Lord has made and today we will each be faced with a number of **decisions**. I see this illustrated wonderfully in 1 Samuel 24. David and his men are hiding in a cave from Saul and the army of Israel. Saul comes into the cave and David is presented with a very powerful decision that will drastically affect his future.

1 Samuel 24.4 - Then the men of David said to him, "**this is the day** of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

David had a decision to make. For him there was no Theophany. God didn't appear to him and give him the answer to this choice. David had to make the decision himself, though not without the help of Scripture and prayer and his knowledge of the character of God.

Each of us are going to have to make decisions today. Maybe they are business decisions or personal decisions. Maybe they are about things that could increase our wealth or secure our standing at our jobs. Maybe it's something altogether different. Now, like we've seen with David, just because a decision might benefit us materially or financially, even vocationally, it doesn't mean it's the right thing to do.

Thus, as we're out today and tomorrow, when these sorts of choices present themselves to us, it is incredibly important that we include God in our decision making process. That we fall back on the Word of God and the examples He's given us. We must listen to the still, small voice of the Spirit, who will guide us if we will listen. Single decisions can change the course of our lives. Single decisions can change the course of human history. When we make decisions, we need to be sure that we are in communion with the heart of God and His will for our lives.

Today is the day that the Lord has made and today we need to live as **disciplined** men. Discipline is one of our best tools in daily living. Daniel was a man who was personally disciplined. He prayed regularly and specifically each day. When difficulty and trial came Daniel was strong to withstand because he was disciplined in his daily living.

The opposite of Daniel in the Bible is Samson. Samson was a man who totally lacked personal discipline. Because of that, a man who could've been a great example to us, a man who could've made a long-lasting difference in the lives of the people around him, becomes one of our greatest warnings in the Bible.

Samson lacked discipline. When temptation came he immediately gave in. If we want to overcome temptation today, the answer is discipline. Staying in the Word. Praying constantly. Giving. Fasting. All of these things are what we call the 'Christian disciplines' and they keep us defended against temptation.

Today is the day that the Lord has made, and today as men we need to be **durable**. Durability is important because life gets tough. We live in a fallen world that is in an ever-hastening state of decay. We are, in a sense, sailing on a burning ship. We will be rescued, but for the time being we are being tried and perfected by the fire. Durability, endurance, is what we need to live in a way that glorifies the Lord.

Job was a man who demonstrates durability to us. God allowed an incredible amount of suffering in his life, but not without a purpose. And Job was able to praise the Lord in the midst of his circumstances. If you are struggling this morning, if you're going through something that is wearing you down, trust in your God. Endure. Be durable. Choose to bless the Lord in the midst of your circumstances, and if you are about to fall, then fall into the strength and provision of Christ. Cast your cares at His feet and see how He will strengthen you.

We must endure. We must be durable. Christian living is not to take up our **pillow** and follow Jesus, but to take up our **cross**, daily. Our durability glorifies the Lord and allows Him to use us more than we ever thought possible.

This is the day that the Lord has made and perhaps today is the day of your **deliverance**.

In Judges 4.14 there's a great verse:

Judges 4.14 - Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For **this is the day** in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.

Today may be the day of deliverance for some of us. Deliverance from some trial. From some temptation. From some fear or frustration. Now, to all of us I can say that we should be *looking* for God's deliverance. We are imperfect. Each of us must have some hurt, some attitude, something that God desires to set us free from. Whether it's a relationship that needs mending or a sadness that we've been harboring, a worry or a resentment or a prejudice, today is the day that the Lord has made and He is a God who **delivers** His people.

When we rise up and follow after the Lord we realize what Barak realized: that God has gone out **before** us, He goes **with** us AND He follows **after** us. The Lord loves to deliver, but sometimes we

forget about deliverance and are almost content to be oppressed. If that describes you, then let the Spirit and the Word be like Deborah this morning who said, 'Up! For the Lord has delivered you.'

Today is the day that the Lord has made. Perhaps today you might need to make a **declaration**. Maybe today is a day that you must make a stand for your King. We think of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego who boldly declared to Nebuchadnezzar that they would not bow before his golden image. It meant sacrifice, it meant danger, it meant a lot of things, but they were not going to compromise their love for God, no matter what the stakes were.

We are people who are often given the choice to compromise. We need to declare to the world and to our flesh that we will not betray our Messiah. Perhaps that means having a very candid talk with your employer. Maybe that means changing a habit or an activity. God desires that we be men who declare our faith and declare that we will not compromise, no matter what the situation may be.

Finally, though these points have not been in a particular order I wanted to end with this one. Today is the day that the Lord has made. Today we should be men of **dedication**.

Moses is a fantastic picture of dedication. We're familiar with his life and the stories. We know about his slip ups and the miracles that God performed through him. But Moses' entire life is summed up in Exodus 40, verse 16.

**Exodus 40.16 - Thus Moses did; according to all that the Lord had commanded him, so he did.**

When we walk out of this room let us purpose in our hearts to be men of dedication. Men that are willing to do what needs doing. Men who understand who we are in Christ. Men who are willing to search the Scriptures and wait for the Lord in prayer. Men who are willing to sacrifice self and serve others. Men who are willing to stand for what is good. Men who are willing to sow seed and gain ground for our King. Let us be men who are dedicated to do all that the Lord has commanded us to do.

We decide. This is our life to lead. Let us be men who are dedicated to the purpose of God and men who are ready to be used by the Master to change the world for time and for eternity.

Today is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.