

Psalm 118:24
“This is the Day”
New Year’s Eve

December 31, 2018
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ,
our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

Our text for this sermon comes from Psalm 118 verse 24. You know it well.
This is the day the Lord has made; *let us rejoice and be glad in it (Ps 118:24).*

[Living in the Past]

Have you ever heard words that sound like this:

I wish I could have or would have.
I could kick myself.
How could I have been so stupid?
If only I could do it again.
If only I could turn back time.

Expressions like this point us to the past.
We wish we could go back and make a change,
hear the starting gun,
re-start the marriage,
begin raising the kids again,
get on the *right* career track.

But we can’t go back, knowing what we know now, and
do it over, do it better, make fewer mistakes, make fewer ripples.

That day no longer belongs to us.
Oh, sure, TV shows do it all the time
—in the land of make-believe, we can turn back time.
But in the real world, going back is impossible.
We cannot even turn back the clock one minute.

What has happened in the past is past.
What we can do is to give the past to our dear heavenly Father,
commend it to his forgiveness and mercy,
and ask him to right what is wrong,
to finish what is undone,
and to renew us for today.

God forgives us, and he wants us to forgive ourselves.

Sometimes, even though we know that God has forgiven us, and
even when other people have forgiven us,
we find it so hard to forgive ourselves.
Yet that is where we can live, in that forgiveness.

We can't change the past,
but for Jesus' sake
God will *NOT* hold us liable for
any mistakes, any sins ... that we confess and give to him.

Other expressions about the past,
like "It's her fault or his fault" or "They made me do it,"
are of no help.

Resentment, anger, or revenge over the past can poison our lives.
I heard it said, "Hatred corrodes the container it is carried in"

These things are in the past. Leave them in the past.

[Living in the Future]

What about living in the future?
Is that the day we should rejoice and be glad in?

As a planner, I have the potential danger of living in the future.
And I have heard of a man who spent his whole life living in the future.

When he was a young man, his quite wealthy father had said to him,
"When I die all this will be yours."

This son lived his whole life planning for the fortune he was going to receive.
He certainly didn't plan for a career.
He really didn't even worry about a job.
He just went on from day to day dreaming about what he was going to do.

At the age of 70 years old, his father was still alive.

He was living for the future, and	in the meantime, he had more or less wasted his whole life.
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How many times do we say, “I will get to that someday!”

We like to tell ourselves that the future is an unrestricted account from which we can draw unlimited time reserves.	But we have no authority over the future.
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We may worry and get anxious about what the future may bring,
but the future belongs only to God.

He who gave up his dear Son for us
will, with his Son,
freely give us all things.

God cares for us, provides for us, and protects us.

He knows us inside out.

He knows the hairs on our head.

He knows which sparrows will fall.

He holds the future in his hands, and ...

He will be gracious and merciful then ... as he is now.

[*Living in the Present*]

“This is the day the Lord has made; **let us rejoice and be glad in it.**”

This day is your day.

This day is my day.

This is the day that God gives us.

Each day is his gift. That is why they call it the present! Or so I have heard.

I know today is the day the Lord has made;

and yet I have said,

and I am sure you may have said,

or you may have heard other people say,

“That day was the most important day of my life.”

Well, I am sure that something beautiful happened on that day,

But Mrs. Bride,

Mr. with the new job-of-a-lifetime

Brand new mother

Brand new grandpa

each day is just as valuable and

just as important as *THAT* one

because God fills each day with his promises.

THIS is the day that the Lord has made;
 let us rejoice and be glad in it,
 for in it he will cause all things to work together for good,
 including those things that
 now seem impossible or intolerable.

When we concentrate on this day
 and fill our hearts with thanksgiving to the Lord,
 then we get our eyes off ourselves
 and we put them back on God himself.
 Enjoy this day.

[Conclusion]

Oh, I know that in my own life I have said,
 “I can’t wait until next Tuesday,” or “I can’t wait until my next Disney trip.”

Yet each day is a gift,
 not to be looked at as just a bridge to get us to some better day.

Today is our gift—to enjoy, to live, to make count for Christ,
 who has redeemed all our days.

In a real sense each day is your birthday.
 God gives you new life each day.
 Each day that you live, the power of God is in your life,
 just as it was on the day when you were born and
 just as it will be on the first day that you enjoy heaven.

You can’t live fruitfully in the past, though you can launch from it.
 So remember the good times and know the bad is forgiven in Christ.

AND

You can’t live in the future. Sure plan for tomorrow, but don’t wait to live.

Live for today. Rejoice each day!

For:

“This is the day the Lord has made; *let us rejoice and be glad in it.*” Amen.

REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)
