

Sermon 2-16-2025 'This Is The Day'

Morning Minister Ruthie Tippin, Spokane Friends Meeting

Scripture: Psalm 118:22-29 NRSV

I Samuel Chapter 17, Job 1:20-22

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/quaker-calendar-lib-guide-2018>
<https://www.swarthmore.edu/friends-historical-library/quaker-calendar>

Up to and including 1751 the Julian (Julius Caesar) calendar was used in England, Wales, Ireland and the British colonies overseas. In these places the year officially began on the 25th of March (Lady Day) and ended on the following March 24th. So 24 March 1750 was followed the next day by 25 March 1751. In Europe and Scotland, the Gregorian (Pope Gregory) calendar had been in use since 1600, with a year that began on January 1st. Easter would sit in its proper place in the solar year.

In 1751 the British Parliament passed the Calendar (New Style) Act. It declared that from 1752 the English year would begin on January 1. Thus the year 1751 began on March 25th, as the new year always had, but *ended* on December 31st, followed *immediately* by the 1st of January 1752.

Parliament also forced a correction... the Julian calendar was 12 days behind the Gregorian one! Ah... counting those leaps the earth takes around the sun... So, September 2nd of 1752 would be followed by September 14th, 1752. Can you imagine the strange work the printers had ahead of them when setting up their calendars for that year ahead?

Quakers had long since had their own way of marking their calendars. They objected to using names of days and months, many of which came from pagan gods: Janus – January, Thor – Thursday. So they used numbers instead. Today's date? Second Month, 16th Day. And the day of the week? First Day. Tomorrow? Second Month, 17th Day. Second Day of the week. And what did Quakers do with those 12 'lost days' in 1752? For many who would have celebrated birthdays and anniversaries, they simply added 12 days and marked them as a 'double celebration' in their records. A September 3rd birthday would be conjoined and celebrated on September 15th. Birthdate: 9/3/1750 – 9/15/1752.

Psalm 118:22-29; NRSV

- ²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.
²³ This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.
²⁴ This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
²⁵ Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!
²⁶ Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.
²⁷ The Lord is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar.
²⁸ You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you.
²⁹ O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

What is it about this day – February 16, 2025 – that matters so much? I'm not sure. Is it Julian or Gregorian? Is it a lost day, or a day of celebration? Is it a day that matters, or not?

The psalmist sang this song with the fulness of her heart, and at the top of her voice, that *this day - that particular day – mattered to her*. In a time of centered worship, she remembered God's love, God's refuge and safety, God's strength and protection. She realized that God's discipline had not brought death, but greater freedom and life in her. The one who had been counted out, perhaps as *she* had, had been proven to be most worthy, most loving, most secure. That day, *God's life in her mattered*, and she sang.

What a difference a day makes! One day, we don't know what day it was, a young man showed up with a sack lunch for his brothers and ended up saving his countrymen with a slingshot and a stone. David journeyed from home with bread for his brothers, and cheese for their commander Saul on the front lines against the Philistine army. To the chagrin of his brothers and the surprise of others, David faced Goliath – the one Israel's army had run from - with a sling and stone and said, "You come against me with sword, spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord God Almighty... *This* day the Lord will hand you over to me..." [I Samuel 17:45-46] And *that* day, Goliath fell.

On another day, a man whose heart and life was squeaky clean, became the subject of a conversation between God and Satan, and ended up losing everything. Oxen, donkeys, sheep, camels, servants, his house, his sons and daughters... *everything*.

‘At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb; and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised. In all of this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.”’
[Job 1:20-22]

We never know what any day will bring. It could be the best day or the worst day of our lives. It could be the most boring day of our lives. It could be crazy/fun, exasperating, or hilarious. It could be shocking – ‘a day that will live in infamy’ – or the sweetest day ever. We never know.

David had no idea he would meet Goliath that day. Job didn’t know he would lose everything. The woman coming to meeting for worship had no expectation that she would be lifted in centered spirit, so much so that she sang a psalm. I had no idea that I would give birth on January 15th, when Matthew was *due* on Valentine’s Day!

This is the day the Lord has made. *Let us complain. Let us worry. Let us fear. Really?* Really! So often we anticipate ourselves. We truly anticipate the norm – the flow of the path we inhabit, rather than the intention God might have for the *new* way set before us. God makes a new day – and perhaps a *new* way for us to walk in – each day. Listen to what the prophet Isaiah told us so long ago: Isaiah 30:18-21 NIV

¹⁸Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

¹⁹People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, (these are God’s beloved – *just as we are!*) you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. ²⁰Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. ²¹Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”

God breaks open each new day, with the breaking of the sun on the horizon – whether we see it or not. With the waking of our bodies, and the waking of our minds and hearts, we come alive to ourselves and to God. This is the day the Lord has made. We did not make it. God has formed it for us and for all creation. *How do we receive this day?*

God made this day for us. God made *us* for this day. God is *with* us in this day.

God may strengthen us in this day, but when God gives us strength, God's strength is added to our own, just as it was for David.

God may test us this day, but when God tests us, it's because God trusts us, just as he trusted Job.

God may speak to us this day, but when God speaks, God knows we're ready to listen, just as the woman in worship was.

God is with us in this day. Will we rejoice? Will we wait to hear God's direction and purpose? Will we check our own calendar, before considering what God has in heart and mind for us? What is it about this day – February 16, 2025 – that God has for us to rejoice and be glad in?