

Notes: Shabbat – December 5, 2020

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and greet
2. Introduction
3. Announcements
4. Liturgy – Ma to vu, Sh'ma, Avenu
5. Music
6. Message
7. Time of prayer
8. Aaronic Blessing
9. Kiddush
10. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Title: Ha Yom – Today is The Day!

As I was considering what to share with you today, I was looking at past sermons and wondering if there was something that may be applicable for the time we are in. You may wonder, how could anything pre-Covid be applicable?

Nearly four years ago (January 14, 2017) when I gave this sermon, our challenges were different. We were not bound by the many restrictions we have today when it came to our lives. Before we do anything, whether in the forefront of our mind or dwelling somewhere in our subconscious we are confronted with new concerns before we even step one foot out the door.

“Do I have my mask and hand sanitizer with me?”

“Will there be a line at the store when I get there? If so, how long will I have to wait outside?”

“When I get to the store, will they have what I need?”

Watching or reading the news, you wonder what will be next.

We have been under a state of emergency since March 15th.

From government imposed curfews and capacity limitations for businesses to individual restrictions, life is certainly not what it was on January 14 2017.

This sermon was inspired by a bulletin insert...

Earlier in the week (four years ago), I had an idea of what this sermon would be about, but had yet constructed what it would look like or what the Ruach ha Kodesh would instill or guide me towards. As I was printing out the material for that day, in the bulletin, Jeri created an insert “How To Tell If You Are Wasting Your Life”. As I was reading it, one of the eight reasons struck me...

You always have a reason not to take action. *Isn't it funny how some people say they want something, but never actually take ACTION to make it happen? Maybe it's saying they want to travel, or get a new job, or find a new*

boyfriend/girlfriend. But as soon as they say they want something, they sabotage their own plans by giving an endless list of excuses why it wouldn't work. Always remember that inaction gets you nowhere in life except to a place filled with regret.

Today, with all the impediments before us,

It was talking about taking action in living your life. The verse she used for this reason was Ezra 10:4:

Ezra 10:4 - Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and **do** it.

Today it seems like you have many more reasons not to take action. Based on this one aspect, "you always have a reason not to take action" today, we have more reasons. Yet we cannot stop living our lives.

You have been given more reasons to not even venture a foot outside of your home.

- Online shopping now offers groceries so that trip to pick up food can be addressed through delivery.
- Restaurant delivery is wide spread, whether it is the establishment itself or one of the many delivery services you never have to go through drive through again.
- Streaming services are available through your TV, Computer and Cell Phone so you never have to go to the movie theater again.
- Online conferencing makes it possible to meet "face to face" with one individual or a group. Why spend the money to travel when you can see them online. The same goes for online options made available by congregations. In some instances if you are out of state and there are no other options then that can make sense. The Messianic Jewish Congregation does not offer one on every corner so the options are rather limited.

Add online banking and direct deposit with working from home and you never have to leave your home. Yet all of these conveniences makes it much easier to not take action.

Consider the flu pandemic of 1918 – 1920...three years. It has been estimated that nearly a third of the 1.8 billion people worldwide were infected by what is known as the Spanish Flu with the mortality rate estimated at between 4 – 5%. (50 – 100 million people) Today's world population is over 4 times greater.

Yes there are millions of cases today, yet what do we know about pandemics of the past, they came to an end and life did resume again. The only question today, given the infusion of the internet, social media, traditional media what will the resumption of our lives truly look like.

As the Spanish flu was dying out through herd immunity, whereby the virus had nowhere to go as a result of antibodies from those already infected, life resumed. Consider how the decade of the 1920's is remembered – "The Roaring 20s" As the decade roared on there seemed to be little if any "hangover" of the pandemic.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Influenza_pandemic

So, today, I want to revisit this sermon from four years ago...

Ezr 10:1 While `Ezra was praying and making confession, weeping and prostrated before the house of God, a huge crowd of Isra'el's men, women and children gathered around him; and the people were weeping bitterly.

Ezr 10:2 Sh'khanyah the son of Yechi'el, one of the descendants of `Eilam, spoke up and said to `Ezra, "We have acted treacherously toward our God by marrying foreign women from the peoples of the land. But in spite of this, there is still hope for Isra'el.

Ezr 10:3 We should make a covenant with our God to send away all these wives, along with their children, in obedience to the advice of Adonai and of those who tremble at the mitzvah of our God; let us act in accordance with the Torah.

Ezr 10:4 Stand up, and do your duty, for we are with you; take courage, and do it!"

Which got me thinking about the when of this dynamic.

When should we take action?

Remember, I already knew what this sermon would be about, so in reading reason number six, I had my connection.

The answer to the previous questions is – TODAY!

“Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.” – Thomas Jefferson

By definition - Today - “on or in the course of this present day.”

Nowhere is this more prevalent than in Deuteronomy. Some call it the second law, while I would rather call it the scroll of Today.

“Today” does not have a direct corresponding Hebrew word associated with it. What you will see in Hebrew when you see the word today in English is ha yom – the day

In other words, Today is the day. Ha Yom Ha Yom!

65 times ha yom is used in Deuteronomy

Deu 4:8 What great nation is there that has laws and rulings as just as this entire Torah which I am setting before you today?

Not some undetermined moment in the future, but now, today.

Deu 6:4 "Sh'ma, Yisra'el! Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad [*Hear, Isra'el! Adonai our God, Adonai is one*];

Deu 6:5 and you are to love Adonai your God with all your heart, all your being and all your resources.

Deu 6:6 These words, which I am ordering you today, are to be on your heart;...

Not yesterday, not tomorrow and not some distant time in the future beyond tomorrow, but today Ha Yom – The Day.

Adonai is conveying through Moshe the components of the relationship they, Israel is to have with Adonai. It starts with the heart, expressed through action and is at hand, Today!

Not the excuse that some people make - “I'm not ready to come to God yet” I'm having too much fun” I'm too busy, I'll do it later.”

Adonai's response to Israel – ha yom – the day, today.

19 times ha yom and mitzvot are found together in the same verse in Deuteronomy

Deu 4:37 Because he loved your ancestors, chose their descendants after them and brought you out of Egypt with his presence and great power,

Deu 4:38 in order to drive out ahead of you nations greater and stronger than you, so that he could bring you in and give you their land as an inheritance, as is the case today;

Deu 4:39 know today, and establish it in your heart, that Adonai is God in heaven above and on earth below - there is no other.

Deu 4:40 Therefore, you are to keep his laws and mitzvot which I am giving you today, so that it will go well with you and with your children after you, and so that you will prolong your days in the land Adonai your

God is giving you forever."

19 times, Moshe is conveying to a new generation of Israel, the promises of Adonai are at hand, today. Not at some point in the future that is yet to be determined, but Today!

19 times, Moshe stresses to the people the connection of Adonai and His mitzvot. This is what will differentiate you from the other nations of the world. This is what will make you my people.

Deu 5:23 (5:20) When you heard the voice coming out of the darkness, as the mountain blazed with fire, you came to me, all the heads of your tribes and your leaders,

Deu 5:24 (5:21) and said, 'Here, Adonai our God has shown us his glory and his greatness! We have heard his voice coming from the fire, and we have seen today that God does speak with human beings, and they stay alive.

Deu 6:24 Adonai ordered us to observe all these laws, to fear Adonai our God, always for our own good, so that he might keep us alive, as we are today.

Deu 6:25 It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to obey all these mitzvot before Adonai our God, just as he ordered us to do.' "

Deu 8:1 "All the mitzvot I am giving you today you are to take care to obey, so that you will live, increase your numbers, enter and take possession of the land Adonai swore about to your ancestors.

Deu 8:2 You are to remember everything of the way in which Adonai led you these forty years in the desert, humbling and testing you in order to know what was in your heart - whether you would obey his mitzvot or not.

Deu 8:18 No, you are to remember Adonai your God, because it is he who is giving you the power to get wealth, in order to confirm his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as is happening even today.

Deu 8:19 If you forget Adonai your God, follow other gods and serve and worship them, I am warning you in advance today that you will certainly perish.

Deu 8:20 You will perish just like the nations that Adonai is causing to perish ahead of you, because you will not have heeded the voice of Adonai your God."

Deu 10:12 "So now, Isra'el, all that Adonai your God asks from you is to fear Adonai your God, follow all his ways, love him and serve Adonai your God with all your heart and all your being;

Deu 10:13 to obey, for your own good, the mitzvot and regulations of Adonai which I am giving you today.

Deu 10:14 See, the sky, the heaven beyond the sky, the earth and everything on it all belong to Adonai your God.

Deu 10:15 Only Adonai took enough pleasure in your ancestors to love them and choose their descendants after them — yourselves — above all peoples, as he still does today.

Deu 10:16 Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart; and don't be stiffnecked any longer!

Deu 10:17 For Adonai your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awesome God, who has no favorites and accepts no bribes.

Last year we spent a great deal of time in Deuteronomy and Isaiah in that 8 of the 11 haftarah readings associated with Deuteronomy were from Isaiah. Including this example in Luke 4, whereby I had conveyed that the parasha cycle existed at the time of Yeshua and further established for us a time in which He was at His local synagogue in Natzeret and what had already transpired, starting on Tisha B'av, leading us to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Luk 4:16 Now when he went to Natzeret, where he had been brought up, on Shabbat he went to the synagogue as usual. He stood up to read,

Luk 4:17 and he was given the scroll of the prophet Yesha`yahu. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written,

Luk 4:18 "The Spirit of Adonai is upon me; therefore he has anointed me to announce Good News to the poor;

he has sent me to proclaim freedom for the imprisoned and renewed sight for the blind, to release those who have been crushed,

Luk 4:19 to proclaim a year of the favor of Adonai."

Luk 4:20 After closing the scroll and returning it to the shammash, he sat down; and the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him.

Interestingly, Yeshua's response is rather striking.

Luk 4:21 He started to speak to them: "Today, as you heard it read, this passage of the Tanakh was fulfilled!"

The very words – ha yom, stated 65 times in Deuteronomy, conveyed by Moshe to Israel emphasizing that it is now, not tomorrow, but now. Yeshua, too is emphasizing now when during His sermon on the mount He tells us...

Mat 6:34 Don't worry about tomorrow—tomorrow will worry about itself! Today has enough tsuris already!

Time to start thinking with a Jewish mind...

What Parasha is associated with the passage of Scripture in Isaiah 61:1 – 63:9

Parasha Nitzavim (Standing) Deuteronomy 29:10 – 30:20

So, prior to Yeshua's reading of Isaiah, in the synagogue, there would have been ready the parasha for Nitzavim...including these verses...

Deu 30:15 "Look! I am presenting you today with, on the one hand, life and good; and on the other, death and evil -

Deu 30:16 in that I am ordering you today to love Adonai your God, to follow his ways, and to obey his mitzvot, regulations and rulings ; for if you do, you will live and increase your numbers; and Adonai your God will bless you in the land you are entering in order to take possession of it.

Deu 30:17 But if your heart turns away, if you refuse to listen, if you are drawn away to prostrate yourselves before other gods and serve them;

Deu 30:18 I am announcing to you today that you will certainly perish; you will not live long in the land you are crossing the Yarden to enter and possess.

Deu 30:19 "I call on heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have presented you with life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants,

Deu 30:20 loving Adonai your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him - for that is the purpose of your life! On this depends the length of time you will live in the land Adonai swore he would give to your ancestors Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya`akov."

The message of the Prophet Isaiah to Israel, read by Yeshua, and the Word of Adonai from Torah, conveying the promise that is before them today...

Luk 4:21 He started to speak to them: "Today, as you heard it read, this passage of the Tanakh was fulfilled!"

Today, much is happening and will continue to happen as each moment draws us closer to the return of Messiah.

The challenges are greater now than they were four years ago. We are seeing an enormous impact occur upon the body of Messiah. The impact of restricted attendance is only further amplifying a problem and trend that have been heading in the wrong direction. Attendance is down everywhere. Is the gap being made up online?

I will share more about this disturbing yet not unexpected occurrence within the body of Messiah.

In our case, to some extent where combined we average between 40 and 50 people a service similar to a time pre-pandemic. In some instances it is not the case. My mother-in-law's church has seen their attendance dwindle and yet their online service does not make up for the difference.

It is imperative that you grasp to Messiah even tighter today...ha yom. An isolated believer is not good. The emphasis Scripture places upon community is not accomplished virtually. We are required to and need to come together as a people. Adonai said it is not good for man to be alone in B'resheet 2:18. This dynamic has not changed and will not change.

Gatherings are infused throughout Adonai's order, whether it is the weekly Shabbat, identified as a convocation, a gathering, as are the moadim...appointed times designated for gathering. All are intended to honor Adonai. He delights in the presence of His people when we gather together to honor Him.

Let us do everything today, ha yom, thus taking action and not offering any excuses for why we don't.

HOW TO TELL IF YOU ARE WASTING YOUR LIFE:

1. Good enough” has become the new standard. You don't try hard anymore. You don't try new things anymore. You are merely content with the status quo. Being content with what you have is fine, but make sure you don't confuse “being content” with “settling for less” because you are too scared/lazy/tired to go for what you want. Life is too short to play small. You don't want to waste yours.

Proverbs 6:6-8 - Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.

2. You think work is the only thing that matters. Most adults spend the majority of their waking hours working. While that may be true, that doesn't mean your work should consume ALL of your waking hours. Spend time with your friends and family. Enjoy your hobbies. Go on a new adventure. Work to live; don't live to work.

Exodus 20:9 - Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

3. You're always chasing the latest toy. Can't live without that latest cell phone, luxury car, or new line of clothes that just came out? We all have weaknesses. But if you're always chasing after material things, you should ask yourself why. Could chasing toys be a reflection of your unhappiness and yearning for something more in life?

1 John 2:16-17 - For everything that is in the world—the desire for fleshly gratification, the desire for possessions, and worldly arrogance—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world and its desires are fading away, but the person who does God's will remains forever.

4. Television is your best friend. According to a recent study published by Nielsen, Americans on average spend over 30 hours a week watching TV. That's over 4 hours a day. Maybe you should spend some of that time with friends and loved ones instead. Otherwise, you may very well die alone. Sound extreme, I know, but it's your life we're trying to save from being wasted here.

Colossians 4:5-6 - Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

5. You often escape into a fantasy world. For a brief time, you get to leave your current existence and experience something else entirely different, but you should never replace living with mere fantasizing. Live your dreams instead. Do you even remember what they are? Are you following them now or are you merely living someone else's dreams?

Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

6. You always have a reason not to take action. Isn't it funny how some people say they want something, but never actually take ACTION to make it happen? Maybe it's saying they want to travel, or get a new job, or find a new boyfriend/girlfriend. But as soon as they say they want something, they sabotage their own plans by giving an endless list of excuses why it wouldn't work. Always remember that inaction gets you nowhere in life except to a place filled with regret.

*Ezra 10:4 - Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and **do** it.*

7. You often find yourself reliving the past. Ah, the "good old days". You may have heard your elders use such language. Your elders may not be going on new adventures as often as they did in the past, but what about you? Are you really content with spending your waking hours reliving the good old days while others actually go and live new adventures.

Philippians 3:13-14 - Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Messiah.

8. You let others tell you how to live. Plenty of people will enter your life – well-intentioned or not – who try to tell you how to live your life. Will you listen? Thinking it through would be a good first step for you. It's your life and you only get one chance to live, so don't waste it by living dependently on the commands of others.

James 4:15 - Instead you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.

The path of God-exalting joy will cost you your life. Yeshua said, "Whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it." In other words, it is better to lose your life than to waste it. If you live gladly to make others glad in God, your life will be hard, your risks will be high, and your joy will be full. Some of you may die in the service of Messiah. That will not be a tragedy. Treasuring life above the Father, through the Messiah, is a tragedy.