

“The King’s Speech” (Preached at MLK Service on Jan 15, 2012)

Luke 4: 16-21

When we think about speeches that change the world

We often think of the JFK speech

“Think not what your country can do for you,

But what you can do for your country.”

Or Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address

***“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth
on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and
dedicated to the proposition that all men are created
equal.”***

Of course with the magic of movies we have recently become aware

of the speech of King George VI of England

on the verge of World War II.

The story “The King’s Speech” tells how this leader who stuttered

Ended up rallying his people to rise up

against the oppression of Hitler and the Nazi’s

“We can only do the right as we see the right and reverently

Commit our cause to God... whatever service or sacrifice it

may demand, then with God’s help, we shall prevail.”

These speeches helped change the world; inspire freedom & sacrifice

Yet the speech voted the greatest of the century by London's Guardian newspaper was not a speech made by a president or king.

But rather a speech made by a preacher from Birmingham Alabama

The "I Have a Dream Speech" by Martin Luther King Jr.

on the steps of the Lincoln Monument on August 28, 1963.

His speech happened not on the verge of a war

but in the midst of a movement to live out the rights

that Abraham Lincoln had spoken about 100 years earlier.

His speech was not a speech about freedom from another country

As King George's speech was but freedom within our own country.

And so we gather on this anniversary of Martin Luther King's birthday

Not only to remember The King's Speech

but to live out a part of his dream:

"that someday the sons of former slave holders and the sons of former slaves will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood."

"That one day little black boy and girls will be able to hold hands with little white boys and girls and walk together as sister and brothers."

Sometimes I get discouraged that the vision Dr. King planted

nearly 50 years ago, is still so far from being realized.

And then a read the speech again and remember that the dream

Of Martin Luther King and this King's Speech was built

Not upon human hopes and promises but upon

The promise of the King of all creation- Jesus Christ.

When Dr. king says "I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

He's quoting Isaiah from Luke 3.

In a sense he playing out the part of John the Baptist

Setting the table for the real king's speech in Luke 4

When Jesus said

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me

To bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives,

And recovery of sight to the blind,

To let the oppressed go free,

To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down

"Today the scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

**The reason that Martin Luther King's message
of freedom and peace and reconciliation
has stood the test of time is that Dr. King's speech
Was based on the eternal King's speech-
the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

**And so we remember how Dr. King lived out Jesus call
To preach good news to the poor and release to the captives.**

**We remember his efforts to help people blinded by racism
Open their eyes to image of God that we see in each other.**

**We remember his efforts to free those who were oppressed,
And to free them not by "physical force" but by "soul force".**

**And we strive to walk in those footsteps today,
My father in law was at the rally on the reflection pool
With my brother-in-law on his shoulders.**

**I always regret not having been there and yet we are perched
On the shoulders of those who have gone before us today
As we live out the dream in our worship and fellowship.**

**And we are not just living out the dream of Dr. King but we are living
out the words of Jesus: *"Today the scripture has been fulfilled in your
hearing."*
Amen**