MLK Freedom March  
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Thank you for being here and for celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

If he were alive today, Dr. King would have celebrated his 93rd birthday this past weekend. In reflecting on his life, he accomplished much at such a young age.

When he was just 26 years old, he led the Montgomery Bus Boycott that lasted for 385 days and ended with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional.

At 28, he founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and was the president until his assassination in 1968. This group had a large role in the American Civil Rights Movement.

At 34, he helped organize the Great March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which included his “I have a Dream speech.”

This led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act a year later. He was also Time magazine’s Man of the Year, the first African American recipient of this honor. He also received the Nobel Peace Prize, the youngest to receive it. These words are from his acceptance speech -

I accept this award today with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind. I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history. I refuse to accept the idea that the “isness” of man’s present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal “oughtness” that forever confronts him. I refuse to accept the idea that man is mere flotsom and jetsom in the river of life, unable to influence the unfolding events which surround him. I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.

Until his death at the age of 39, he continued to travel wherever there was injustice, to speak and support non-violent protests. He wrote five books and was known worldwide as the leader of the Civil Rights Movement fighting for justice and equality for all.

Dr. King was a man who knew his God-given purpose. He was a man who fervently believed in the power of the human spirit. And he was a man who believed there was no place for hate, injustice and inequality in this world.

As we celebrate his life, his dreams, and ideals he dedicated his life to, let us also believe and work for a world where there is no place for hate, injustice and inequality our world.