



Second Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, June 3rd, 2018

The Memory of Freedom in “Shabat” (Sabbath)



“Shabat Shalom”
(Art and Faith Too, WordPress.com)

Today, we begin the journey of ‘ordinary time’. This is not to suggest that the rhythm of readings for the rest of the church year will be ‘ho-hum’, dull or average. Rather ‘ordinary time’ suggests that we are over the major feasts of the church, such as Easter, Pentecost and Trinity. Now we settle down in earnest to learn about the faith through a creative process of reflection week by week. The colour for this period of ‘ordinary time’ is green, which points to the idea of and commitment to growth, to spiritual and intellectual development.

Today, the readings are quite rare, not usually heard in the three-year cycle, but not for that reason, unimportant. They are based in the idea of the “sabbath” (*shabat*). As a clue to the theme, it is enough to say here, that the sabbath is not in the first instance – as we are accustomed to think – about rest. Rather, the sabbath, according to the thought of Deuteronomy, is tied up with the message of liberation from the oppression and anxiety of lives governed by the dominance of economic systems, dominated by production and consumption.

GATHERING

Announcements

Greeting

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
Amen

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Approaching God through Today's Psalm (*Psalm 139:1-6*)

Lord God, you know me through and through;
you know my sitting down, and my getting up.
You sense what I am thinking from far away;
you understand my journeying and my resting.
In fact, you are familiar with the way I do everything;
even before I speak, you know what's on my mind.
You are in my past, and in my future,
you surround me with your love
and your reassuring hand is upon me.
This wonderful knowledge is beyond my understanding;
it surpasses everything, and is beyond my grasp.

Hymn: Praise with joy the world's Creator (TiS 179, Praise my Soul, John L. Bell)

Introduction to the theme: Freedom Grounded in the Sabbath

A Prayer: Haiku for Lawbreakers

“Haiku” is a very short poem, following the Japanese form of three lines. Strictly it is about a brief moment involving nature. Haiku has in recent times broadened in character to be a sort of impressionistic poem, focusing as in haiku literature upon a particular persons’ perception of events. Here, we listen to Jesus’ perception of the religious laws built around religious sabbath observance. We discover that Jesus appears radically free from religious rule-keeping, pointing out that religious rules are there to serve people, not people, religious rules. In other words, people matter not rule-keeping.

The Sabbath cornfields
see his disciples breaking
the Sabbath work laws.

Plucking heads of grain:
harvesting, threshing, working!
All against the law.

The Sabbath, he said,
was given for humankind
not the opposite.

Jesus sits loosely
with the letter of the law;
he is ruled by love.

In the synagogue
the man with a withered hand:
will Jesus heal him?

Shall Sabbath prevail
and circumvent the healing?
No. He will choose love.

*What does the law say,
on the Sabbath, to do good,
or should we do harm?*

They will not answer.
Their hearts are hard, unable
to find compassion.

The plotting begins.

The Peace

The children leave for Sunday Morning Group (SMG)

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

Some Insights into the Hebrew and Christian Idea of the Sabbath

Sabbath, in the first instance, is not about worship. It is about work stoppage. It is about withdrawal from the anxiety system of Pharaoh, the refusal to let one's life be defined by production and consumption and the endless pursuit of private well-being.

Walter Brueggemann

One of the first disputes Jesus has, is about keeping the sabbath. People see Jesus' disciples picking off stalks of grain on the sabbath, thus breaking the law. To justify their action, Jesus refers to the action of David and his men, centuries before, who because of hunger entered the Temple and ate the holy bread. Jesus is trying to establish a scale of values. In doing so, he concludes that human welfare trumps religious observance and rules. The sabbath was made to serve human beings, not human beings, the sabbath.

Juan Luis Segundo, *El hombre de hoy ante Jesús de Nazaret: Fe e ideologías*

Sabbath is not simply the pause that refreshes. It is the pause that transforms.

Walter Brueggemann

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 (Good News Translation) Elizabeth White

This is the Third Commandment in its Deuteronomistic form. It is a little different from what we are used to – the commandment as expressed and written in the Book of Exodus. The Exodus version (20:8-11) highlights, what we call the “priestly” account of creation, with God's work of creation on six days and rest on the seventh. The Deuteronomistic version focuses on the issue of liberation from slavery. They are to remember their own slavery in Egypt, and God's rescue from it, as they consider how they treat their own slaves and animals. This version fits more aptly with Jesus' teachings about the Sabbath in today's Gospel reading.

¹² “Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy, as I, the LORD your God, have commanded you. ¹³ You have six days in which to do your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work—neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. Your slaves must rest just as you do. ¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and

that I, the LORD your God, rescued you by my great power and strength. That is why I command you to observe the Sabbath

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Mark 2:23-3:6 (Good News Translation)

Stephen White

The idea that ‘humanity was made for the Sabbath’ continues to be a wildly popular theology: that God created the law, and humanity needs to live up to it or else we are lost. In that theology, God is chiefly known as holy, and humans have to achieve a certain level of holiness – through following laws or practicing purity rituals - to be acceptable to God.

The alternative theology, which Jesus poses here, is that ‘the Sabbath was made for humanity.’ In this sense, God is chiefly known as love, and the laws and purity rituals must reflect that love. If they do not, if they become abusive of human beings, especially those who are vulnerable, then they need to be challenged and rethought. This is Jesus’ position, as he challenges the religious rules and rituals that dehumanize people.

²³ Jesus was walking through some wheat fields on a Sabbath. As his disciples walked along with him, they began to pick the heads of wheat. ²⁴ So the Pharisees said to Jesus, “Look, it is against our Law for your disciples to do that on the Sabbath!”

²⁵ Jesus answered, “Have you never read what David did that time when he needed something to eat? He and his men were hungry, ²⁶ so he went into the house of God and ate the bread offered to God. This happened when Abiathar was the High Priest. According to our Law only the priests may eat this bread—but David ate it and even gave it to his men.”

²⁷ And Jesus concluded, “The Sabbath was made for the good of human beings; they were not made for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

3 Then Jesus went back to the synagogue, where there was a man who had a paralysed hand. ² Some people were there who wanted to accuse Jesus of doing wrong; so, they watched him closely to see whether he would cure the man on the Sabbath. ³ Jesus said to the man, “Come up here to the front.” ⁴ Then he asked the people, “What does our Law allow us to do on the Sabbath? To help or to harm? To save someone's life or to destroy it?”

But they did not say a thing. ⁵ Jesus was angry as he looked around at them, but at the same time he felt sorry for them, because they were so stubborn and wrong. Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it became well again. ⁶ So the Pharisees left the synagogue and met at once with some members of Herod's party, and they made plans to kill Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Christ

Some thoughts...

Offering

Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise him, all creatures here below,
praise him above, ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

Prayer of Dedication

Hymn: Community of Christ (TiS 473, Leoni, Shirley Erena Murray)

EUCCHARIST

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Let us lift up our hearts.

..... ***We lift them to the Lord.***

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

..... ***It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God,

for your love is forever
and you have raised the crucified Christ from the dead.

You created all things and placed Christ as the cornerstone.
You made your grace known to Israel in the wilderness,
and through your prophets you pledged
your everlasting love and constant faithfulness.

You anointed your child, Jesus,
with the Holy Spirit and power,
and he went about doing good
and healing all who were oppressed by evil.
He was put to death, hung on a tree,
but you raised him on the third day,
and allowed him to appear, first to Mary Magdalene
and then to your other chosen witnesses.
So now we praise you within the gates of justice
and raise our glad songs of victory
for you have become our saviour
and hidden our lives in Christ in glory.

Therefore we join with all the company of heaven in their song

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.***

***Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest***

Through him, in him and because of him,
We affirm the Church's faith

***Christ has died.
Christ has risen.
Christ will come again.***

Institution

Lord's Prayer

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.***

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여
이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며
나라이 임하옵시며
뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이
땅에서도 이루어지이다.
오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고
우리가 우리에게
죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이

우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고
 우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고
 다만 악에서 구하옵소서
 대개 나라와 권세와 영광이
 아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

Breaking of the Bread

Christ is the bread of joy
Who shares food with sinners.

Christ is the cup of life,
Who revives the faint-hearted

Let us receive what we are;
Let us become what we receive.

Agnus Dei

Jesus, Wisdom of God,
have mercy on us

Jesus, Word made flesh,
have mercy on us

Jesus, Liberator of creation
grant us peace.

Communion

Distribution

We come forward as a family to partake of the elements together at the Communion Table. The cup on the right-hand side as you face the table is unfermented grape juice and the cup on the left-hand side is alcoholic wine.

Prayer after Communion

God of heaven and earth,
 you make us one in Christ.
 Inspire us with new vision of the sabbath
 becoming a community marked by the freedom to serve.
 Give us strength to walk together
 In Christ's name

Amen

Prayers of the People

Annette Burne

The one who prays, after a series of petitions, says, "Raise us Lord" and the people respond, "To be a community that celebrates life".

Closing Hymn: I the Lord (TiS 658, Here I am Lord, Daniel L. Schutte)

Blessing and Sending Out

Christ is risen!
 Let us celebrate life!

Our service has ended
 Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

Amen

Sung Blessing: Father bless us as we go (TiS 781, Kookaburra, Robin Mann)

Father bless us as we go
Jesus walk beside us
Holy Spirit guide us (twice)

Musical Postlude

Pianist:

Jim Abraham