

Sabbath Delight

Jan. 26, 2014

Jesus seems to be a trouble maker in the two passages Mark read this morning and we know there are more of this kind in the NT. Maybe not a trouble maker but he refused to follow the rules. Jesus said to them, **“The Sabbath was made for mankind, not mankind for the Sabbath.”** Jesus had to reaffirm this truth to those around him for it seemed the religious leaders had sucked the joy out of this day of rest. It appears NT people had as much difficulty as we do with believing that the Sabbath was truly set aside for our enjoyment and delight.

Think of this, this day was created for and we are called to rest, (pause) to celebration, (pause) to worship (pause) and delight. We have been given a **command** by the God who created the universe, and Jesus who reaffirmed doing good, to keep the Sabbath. I keep wondering why we have such difficulty following through, why we don't seize the day and say a hardy YES.

As I begin I want to give credit to two authors that provoked my thinking and helped shape this message: “Sabbath Time” by Tilden Edwards and “Sabbath” by Dan Allender. (pause)

There is a God who created us,

there is a God who liberated us, and

there is a God who redeemed us and you are not that God.

Sound familiar?

So as children whom God has created, liberated and redeemed we are called and commanded to a Sabbath rest. So welcome to the celebration, to delight, to enjoy all of God's creation. I hope this celebration will stir your senses, draw you in, give you hope, encourage you to participate in Sabbath.

While I'm inviting you to celebration and delight, I'm also very aware of the last sermon I preached here, that of grief. We are all aware of the sorrows, pain, and difficulties that members of our congregation, our community and our world have and are experiencing. I am not negating these realities, nor could I if I tried. In light of this I asked myself the question this week, "what gives me the right to invite you to delight and celebration in the face of grief?"

I have known sorrow, pain, deep disappointment, but I have never known the kind of grief that sits on your chest for days and will not move. Living into grief takes a long time and we should not shortchange it, but can we add the Sabbath celebration and delight alongside the grief and pain? Can we as God's people

hold both sorrow and joy together. Our joy is in celebrating love that is stronger than death, for death is not the last word, it is what brings us to our final redemption, freedom and resurrection. Sabbath does not deny that death, sorrow and pain exists, instead it celebrates life.

In order not to drown in despair, we must gaze simultaneously at creation and redemption, in spite of the darkness that surrounds us, hopelessness that seems truer than God. It is the need for balance.

I also know that the stage of life you are in will impact greatly how you engage in Sabbath keeping. It isn't nearly as difficult for Sheldon and me now, than when we had 4 children at home. Children need our attention and it demands from us sacrificing our own desires at times, but I hope we can incorporate our children and what delights them as well as what delights us as adults in our Sabbath keeping.

While I will not tell you **how** to engage your Sabbath rest, I hope the service this morning will offer each of you the engagement of all of your senses, to practice Sabbath, hopefully give ideas for what delights you.

God has given us the unique way to receive our worlds through our senses.

Through our seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting. It is called a sensual experience. Relax into who God has created you to be.

We will first delight in our seeing. This is Gen. 1 in picture. (Sheldon)

Watch the slide show.

Talk about creativity and delight, God was playing. And then God RESTED. The Hebrew meaning for the word rested literally means, “to cease from labor” or to take a “purposeful rest.” It wasn’t that God was tired, God’s power is infinite, beyond measure so the fact that God rested and stopped the business of creation says “it is enough and it is very good.”

Our visuals group put this display of what consumes our daily lives and I’m sure you could add some of your own here, and then they contrasted the rocking chair and the bible as a symbol of rest refreshment and reflection.

Could you visualize yourself looking back over your week and sitting down in your rocking chair and reflect on all you created? Could you look these items in the face and choose to let go of them for a day? To look at your “big books” and say to yourself or to those close, “it is enough, we have the time and space to delight in each other and in what God has created.”

I believe that after 6 days of creating God stood back or sat in his virtual rocking chair and reveled, delighted and celebrated all that he had created. God has called us to also set aside the day for rest, to say it is enough.

I want this to be a very practical sermon, a time of delight: we have spent 2 Sundays sermon times on Sabbath, establishing the need and God's command to observe Sabbath, but as Dan Allender says, "To read a book on the Sabbath, or I would say, listen to two sermons on Sabbath, is somewhat like waiting for an exquisite five-star meal and then forgetting to eat when it arrives because you were too busy chatting away on your cell phone."

So if your 5-star meal may include engaging you sense of taste but it could also mean being outside in God's first sanctuary, it may be in the safety of your home, in your workshop.....hopefully you know where to find your 5-star meal. We also hope that part of your delight is being here on any given Sunday morning to worship the God of all creation and to touch your community as we celebrate who and how God has made us.

The best way to use these sermons is to ask yourself the question, what would I do in the next 24, 12 or even 2 hours if the only criteria was to pursue my deepest joy and delight? Could you name your deepest joy or delight?

We are invited by God to celebrate with him, to drink deeply of what is satisfying, to be in God's presence by being in God's creation.....all of it.

While you have engaged your sense of hearing by listening to me this morning (and others) I want you to sit back and listen to about 2 min. of grand music that JD picked out for us.

LISTEN

Now you may say, "that wasn't exactly my kind of music" and my response would be, "great, what is your kind?" Find it, enjoy it, sing it, play it, and dance with it – what is the music or the sounds that you delight in? And if sharing the music brings more joy, invite others to join you. It is not about producing, managing or manipulating what is, but to simply appreciate and enjoy. It is about being refreshed and renewed. It may be maybe delighting in the sounds of nature, your children's voices, your grandchildren, a crackling fire or silence. What delights your ears?

Some of you thinking by now, "I didn't come, or I don't come to church to hear how to please myself or have fun, life is serious after all and I'm needing to hear how to meet that seriousness." I would agree that life is serious and we must pay attention to how we live it, but we have 6 days to do that. Sabbath keeping is not

denying that life is difficult but it is saying, for today we will bask in the beauty of God's creation, provision and abundance.

Could it be that when we allow ourselves to take Sabbath, to let go, to rest, to not produce that we are better equipped to meet the challenges of the rest of the week? When God said to keep the Sabbath I know God had our delight and joy in mind.

When we engage in Sabbath feasting in all its glory, we in some way remember the delight and leisure of the Garden of Eden and anticipate the joy and pleasure of the new heavens and the new earth with all of God's creation to God's glory thus bridging the beginning and the end?

The Sabbath was created for us and we are commanded to enter into it, full hearted, with delight for it is a holy day.

One of our wise inquiring minds ask me on the way out of the sanctuary last Sunday, why us pastors preach on Sunday, we are working? I told him that was a very good question (something I wonder too at times) but then said that we and all of us who are working on the Sabbath, need to set aside Sabbath time to find rest, and to rejuvenate. So to all of us it isn't necessarily **when** we take the time it is if and how we take the time.

I want to also suggest that Sabbath time should/needs to be an exercise in gratefulness. Gratitude opens the heart to wonder and to freedom. Anthony Robbins says, "When you are grateful, fear disappears and abundance appears." This is a good combatant to the fear of scarcity that Cindy talked about last week. In gratitude we can let go of the demand of producing, controlling, and judging, we can just let it be.

Smell

I wonder if any of you have been noticing a smell in the sanctuary. Yes? What do you smell? Oh yes, is there a much better smell than bread baking? Thanks to Lyle, we are pleasing our sense of **smell**. This is just another way God created us to delight in. The sense of smell gives us and other created beings information about our world. Some smells draw us in, some repel us and some warn us. I do wonder about God's sense of smell when he created the skunk.

There are two senses I have not addressed this morning yet that part of our delight, that of touch and taste. Could I suggest that you delight someone with a hug, a hand on the shoulder, a kiss if it's appropriate, or some way touching a brother or sister? We are just a little suspicious of touching and yet we were created with a great need for it. Babies who are touched and caressed and held

thrive and that may be a good indicator for the rest of us. So enjoy appropriate touch.

First service say:

And oh yes we didn't taste anything unless you popped a mint in your mouth or tasted your child's snack. As you enter your nurture hour room you will find that sense available to you. Enjoy – it was my delight to share it with you.

Second service:

I hope you enjoyed your sense of taste as you gathered in nurture hour. It was my delight to share this with you.

The Sabbath is like every other gift, it requires discipline and practice to grow in delight. My guess is that when Anne began to play piano years ago, she wasn't able to delight many (maybe her mother) but today she brought delight as we listened.

Delight yourself in the Lord.....I suggest you delight in the Lord as you delight in all that has been created, what God has created and what you have created. Receive delight through the channels God has created in you, your sight, your hearing, smelling, your touching, and your tasting. God delights in us his

children and God gave us the capacity to delight – don't waste the delight. Feast in God's delight and may you have a delightful, sensuous Sabbath.

Benediction:

Go my friends delighting in the God who has created you to delight in all of creation. Amen