



Sunday Teaching Guide

Sabbath, Week 5

November 12, 2023

Bible Texts

- Leviticus 23:1-12
- Luke 4:14-21
- Matthew 11:28-29
- Matthew 12:1-13

Important Terms

- Shabbat: The Hebrew word for "rest" that is transliterated into the English word "Sabbath."
- Jubilee: The Hebrew word literally means "ram's horn trumpet."

Sermon Notes

- The Jews had a number of festivals and days of commemoration, many of them revolved around the number seven. Once in a lifetime, the year of Jubilee was to be celebrated. This was a year like none other. If enacted in our culture today, the year of Jubilee would bring chaos to our systems because it upended the socio-economic order. There was no selling, no debt-paying, no property holding.
- The Year of Jubilee was an important moment in Jewish life because regardless of their condition, the people could look forward to this time with the hope: That all would be forgiven. That all would be made right. That all could go home again and start over.
- As radical as this idea is, there's no evidence that a Jubilee was ever proclaimed in ancient Israel. However, early in the Gospels, Jesus declares Jubilee. And he didn't just declare Jubilee; he declared that his mission was Jubilee and that he was the fulfillment. One way of saying this is that a Jubilee had never taken place because Jesus had yet to come to bring it. Through Jesus, all would be forgiven, all would be made right, and we could go home and start again.
- Jesus didn't abolish the Sabbath; he fulfilled it. The practice of Sabbath only pointed to what was to come. To really find Sabbath, find Jesus. We find that through Jesus, what was promised on Jubilee takes place in the lives of those who choose to follow Jesus. We find satisfaction, rest, and restoration. We find that through his love, mercy, and grace, all are forgiven, all is made right, all can go home and start again.

Reflection Questions

- What sort of hope would the year of Jubilee have provided for the ancient Israelites?
- Why do you think the Israelites seem to have never practiced the year of Jubilee? How would this have affected the social order?
- How do you think actually practicing the year of Jubilee would affect those living in that place?
- How is practicing the year of Jubilee contrary to the ways of the world (in ancient times and today)?
- How does Jesus expand the idea of the year of Jubilee?
- In what ways have you had to start over again in your life? What was starting over like?
- How can you practice a Jubilee in your life?

Prayer for the Week

- Loving and forgiving God, thank you for sending your son Jesus as the living embodiment of the year of Jubilee. Help us to follow after Jesus' example to forgive, make right, and allow others to start over again. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Isaiah 43:18-19
- Jeremiah 29:11
- Romans 8:28