

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ON THE LESSONS FOR JUNE 2, 2024

Deuteronomy 5 :12-15

- This passage is from the Ten Commandments as recorded in Deuteronomy 5. The other place we find the Ten Commandments is in Exodus 20. Compare the two passages:

Exodus 20:8-11

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.

For six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—

you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns.

For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.

For six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—

you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you.

Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.

What are the different reasonings given for the commandment? What difference does this make?

- In this commandment, God commands the need to rest, so much so that it is written as foundational for ourselves and our society. How well do you practice taking a “sabbath”? What helps you to take periods of rest?

Psalm 81:1-10

- This psalm appears to be written for a festival gathering. With that in mind, we can look to the psalm for how it describes the gathering or worship:
 - We celebrate and praise God with instruments and song – “Sing with joy to God ... Raise a song ... Blow the ram’s horn ...”
 - We remind ourselves about why we gather – “For this is a statute for Israel ... God laid it as a solemn charge”
 - We remind ourselves about what God has done in the past – “I eased your shoulder from the burden ... You called on me in trouble, and I delivered you”
 - We listen to how God calls us to be – “Hear, O my people, and I will admonish you ... Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.”
- “The waters of Meribah” refers to Exodus 17 and Numbers 20, in which the people complain about the lack of water. God commands Moses to strike the rock (in Numbers, Moses strikes it twice), and water pours forth abundantly. In Numbers, this incident becomes a sign of how the people do not trust God, so that they – including Moses and Aaron – do not enter into the Promised Land. The incident at Meribah illustrates the stubbornness of the people, as seen here and in Psalm 95. It will also get used in Hebrews 3-5. The call is to trust God, even when we do not see how God is at work.
- This psalm provides some interesting images. What do you think the following might mean?
 - “your hands were set free **from the gravedigger’s basket.**”
 - “I answered you **from the secret place of thunder.**”
 - “**Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.**”

2 Corinthians 4:5-12

- Central to what Paul says to the church in Corinth is stated plainly here: “we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake.” This message remains the same for us: we do not exist as a church for ourselves; we exist to proclaim Jesus and ourselves as servants of Jesus. What does that mean for us as a church?
- Paul uses this wonderful phrase about what this message means, saying that “we have this treasure in clay jars.” We are imperfect, struggling creatures, but the power of Jesus moves through us. We are called to show how Jesus works through our struggles and our weaknesses. How has Jesus moved through your struggles and weaknesses?
- Consider how two different versions word the line: “We are ... perplexed, but not driven to despair.” The Message says, “we’re not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do.” The Passion Translation says, “At times we don’t know what to do, but quitting is not an option.” In Greek, the two parts are connected by forms of the same word, so that it is saying, “being at a loss, but not being completely at a loss.” Thus, the sense of “not giving up” is central. We gather to encourage one another in the midst of our struggles and in the midst of our uncertainty. We gather to remind ourselves that God is working, the life of Jesus is working, even when we do not see it or understand it.

Mark 2:23 - 3:6

- In both incidents described in the passage, Jesus deals with what happened to the practice of the Sabbath. Instead of a time of rest or reflection or worship, the Sabbath became a set of laws about what to do and what not to do on a certain day. Jesus reminds them, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath.” The passage thus invites us to consider the purpose of why we gather. What is the church? Why do we gather for worship each Sunday? Does our practice or understanding of church ever get in the way of being the church? How?