



Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

Second Sunday after Pentecost (Affirmation of Baptism)

June 3, 2018

Jesus and the Sabbath

Mark 2:23--3:6

I..., S..., A..., J.... Each of you is surrounded today by those who have loved and cared for you. Stood by you since your borning cry and have kept you close to the way of God.

Seems like I have known you forever. In fact, in two instances, I have too, since your borning cry. And for me each of you is a blessing each and every day.

Once in time, Mary had a baby. You know the story, we know the story well. His father, Joseph, was faithful, a carpenter by trade, who was trusting too that God had given him a son with a purpose. In fact the boy he named "Jesus" was God's son too.

This Jesus was likely most of us; a child of blessing who grew in a home with a mom and dad who loved him. We know that Mary and Joseph both knew that they were given a son with a special trust.

Like each one of you. The cutest kid that had to be fed, changed, disciplined, (Can you imagine Joseph saying to Jesus, "Son mind your mother" or "Eat your vegetables" or, "Son you need a time out!") He was also shown the ways of the family of that time---an observant Jewish family who kept close the traditions of the Law. Kept the story of Passover, when the Lord delivered the people of promise from slavery in Egypt, promised them a land of freedom, and walked beside them in the good, the bad, and every other time.

Here is the point: like each one of you, Jesus grew up. And one day found himself at the River Jordan and was baptized by his cousin, John the Baptizer. And He began ministry as the servant Son of God who walked the earth with love and peace as His theme of life.

We know that Jesus had been taught to go to synagogue on the sabbath; a little like each of us are delivered or encouraged or taken to church on Sunday. Because on the Lord's Day, we are called to rest and to worship, to cease and to be with God's people to give worship and praise to God.

One day on the way in ministry Jesus crossed a boundary; and worked on the sabbath. Forbidden in the tradition of the First Testament which commanded "Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy; you shall not do any work...remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath." Which meant don't work, just worship! Cease! Rest! You are meant on that day to be a human being not a "human doing."

Jesus was with the 12 best friends He had; disciples, students along the way. Who were hungry and began to take grain, rubbing the grain out of the husk, they ate it because they were hungry. The religious questioned Jesus because according to the law of the lawyers (scribes) they broke God's law by working on the sabbath.

Jesus taught that even David, when he was king, ate the bread in the house of God because he was hungry. And Jesus taught that human need comes first, service to others is more important than keeping ritual.

Then, Jesus went to synagogue/church and saw a man whose hand needed healing. The Pharisee wondered if He would break the Law by healing; they were watching and wanted to trap him for working again on the sabbath, the Lord's Day, and he did in the face of human need.

He said to the man "Come forward...stretch out your hand...the man was healed." A good deed of healing on the sabbath is not work, but an act of love and mercy which becomes a sign of God's presence.

You are at worship on the Lord's Day, keep Sunday as a day to worship God, through Jesus Christ (the Lord of the Sabbath), in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Once in time, Martin Luther wrote this about the sabbath, the Lord's Day, Sunday. It is the Third Commandment:

"What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

Each of you, dear Confirmands, have done just that, supported by each one of us. You have gathered, been encouraged, equipped with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and helped to know that each of you is called. To be sent to show the love of God in the ways you love and serve, work in your own ways, be just and to show mercy and to be the presence of God in the world.

Today, you mark a moment, each of us will mark your time, as our time too, to return to the Lord with all our hearts and to commit anew our lives to live among God's faithful people, to hear the Word and share in the Lord's Supper, to live love, to serve all, to strive that all might know and trust that God's plan is for life to be lived with generosity; with action and words, that build up and never tear down.

This is our pledge to you; that you will never walk alone. Never, ever without the assurance that we enfold you in love just for whose you are, ours and God's.

I..., God's love lives through you!

S..., Never fear, God is with you, to give strength!

A..., blessed are you in God's mercy to show mercy!

J..., you can do all things in Christ, with strength!

We live in interesting times. A world sometimes locked in darkness, anxiety, fear. A friend once observed: "I long for time to time to find serenity in silence." Another reminded "We are called to rest from work; not work to rest!"

The rabbis taught that on the 7th day, God created "menuha," tranquility, serenity, peace, repose, rest, healing stillness. In some very unique way, Sunday means to be a time of grace that keeps us, not that we KEEP Sabbath.

May each us live within the freedom of three points:

✠ Keep Sabbath time, cease!

✠ Remember, as for the first time, that you are forgiven and healed.

✠ Sealed with the Cross, confirmed each day.

Sent that others might taste and see too that God is good.

May our prayer to God be, for the precious four and for each one of us: "Wash, O God ...Fill us and anoint us...send you Sprit, holy dove, and hearts delight...that we might be kept as your forever, in Jesus' name, Amen.