

Jon's Sermon for August 20/21

First of all, thank you to Sue Schultz and the congregation for the gift of being off for a few days to help my daughter, Annika, get settled in at college in Ithaca, NY.

Second, welcome to Patty Koplitz, our new Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry. She will be starting on Monday, August 22nd. Please stop in to say hello and introduce yourself, invite her for coffee or lunch. She will hit the ground running as we plan Sunday School, Confirmation, and Youth and Family Activities.

Third, congratulations to Andrew and Andrea Madsen who were married on Saturday. Andrea is our Office Manager. May God bless your marriage and your family the rest of your life!

In Martin Luther's Explanation of the 3rd Commandment in the Small Catechism... "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"... he asks, "What does this mean?" He writes, "We are to fear and love God so that we do not neglect God's Word and the preaching of it, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it."

Sabbath to Martin Luther, was all about making time for the Word of God in your life. This can happen at church, in your home, in Bible Studies, small groups, or daily devotions... or in multiple other ways. Luther doesn't list a specific day and time for us to remember the Sabbath day, which was Saturday for Jewish people. But the key is hearing and learning the Word of God. He did specifically mention hearing the **preaching** of God's Word. That means being a part of a worshipping community, which I know for many is hard.

Notice Luther didn't say anything about **not working or resting** in his explanation of the commandment. So if you want to mow lawn on Sunday, go for it.

Unfortunately, the Sabbath is something we don't talk about all too often in church, or even truly practice. It really is a check and balance on our idolatry in succumbing to the powers and pressures of the world... and we don't like to hear about that. It is like the song in the movie in Disney's Encanto, "We don't talk about Bruno".

“We don’t talk about Bruno... no, no, no”.

Bruno is Mirabel’s uncle and one of a set of triplets that first gained magical powers—he can see the future. When Mirabel doesn’t receive her powers, the family asks Bruno to use his foresight to conjure a vision to figure out why. In his vision, he sees an older Mirabel standing in front of a broken Casita, their home. Bruno knew this vision would strain the family and the members of the town, so he smashes the glass that he saw the vision in and goes into hiding within the walls of the home.

The Song, “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” discusses the misconceptions surrounding the perceived black sheep of the family. Her family paints him out as the villain of the story, but really he wanted to protect Mirabel. Many theorize that Bruno is neuro-divergent or shows signs of mental illness.

The song reveals that the reason why the family doesn’t talk about Bruno is because of the bad luck associated with his visions. Each family member has an individual story that surrounds a bad experience from Bruno’s visions.

So why don’t we talk about Sabbath, no, no, no? It’s because there are so many things competing for our time and attention these days. Without God’s Word in our lives, and a community of believers surrounding us to encourage us, we quickly fall into the trap of trying to go it alone... which as humans we are always bent toward sinning. We spin out of control.

God first instituted the Sabbath as a gift in Exodus 20. Imagine being slaves in Egypt to Pharaoh, working 7 days a week, and not having time to worship or practice your faith. Practicing the Sabbath is actually a form of resistance to the ways of the world that draw us from God. God’s hope was that the Israelites would have time to practice their faith and to give thanks and praise to God while wandering in the wilderness in Exodus. And yet they still complained and took more than their share of manna on the Sabbath.

In our Gospel from Luke, Jesus was teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath when he saw a woman, who was bent over... for 18 long

years. She obviously had some sort of orthopedic problem. For those who are currently suffering from orthopedic pain in their joints, you know how chronic pain can color your world and isolate you.

But Jesus saw her, called her over, and said, “Woman you are set free from your ailment.” Then he laid hands on her and she stood up straight and began praising God.

First of all, Jesus saw her. Jesus sees us when we are bent over, physically, or crippled by the weight of the world or our own sins. This is also a call to the church to look around and see who is feeling bent over.

Second, Jesus gets reprimanded for healing this woman on the Sabbath. The leader of the synagogue had such a narrow/legalistic view of the Sabbath, that he considered Jesus action of setting a woman free from the bondage of Satan as a violation of the Sabbath as work. Jesus said, you treat your animals better than this daughter of Abraham on the Sabbath. You hypocrites.

Sabbath became a legal burden to people and not the gift that God intended. But Jesus gave the people a reason to cheer.

We gather today bent over by something. We are feeling the weight of the world on our shoulders. But Jesus sees us and wants to set us free from this bondage. Remember that Jesus defeated Satan and the powers of this world on Easter Sunday. On the cross we learned that God desires to liberate us from the things that enslave us, so we can praise God again.

If it truly is God’s Word that sets us free, and not how good we are, the go ahead, stand as you are able, and let us sing praises to God.

Amen.