

Many of us know that in the book of Genesis creation is described as a 7 day process. The first six days portray God as Creator working to create night and day, then the waters and land, then the plants and birds. On the 6<sup>th</sup> day God creates the animals and God creates the people. Many of us know that the 7<sup>th</sup> day is reserved for something quite different than all of this creating. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day, God rests. There are 6 days to work and the 7<sup>th</sup> day is to be a day of rest.

The idea of Sabbath extends beyond the original creation. The idea of working for 6 days and taking a day of rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> makes it into the Ten Commandments. We are to honor the Sabbath and keep it holy.

I would guess that all of us have heard something about Sabbath. But how many of us know something about Jubilee? And I'm not talking about the Queen's jubilee which is being celebrated in England. I am talking about biblical Jubilee.

Today is the 2<sup>nd</sup> week when we are going to be reading from the Old Testament book of Leviticus. Two sermons on Leviticus are about all anyone can take. The Sunday School class that meets in the Bigger Room is going to be studying this passage as well this morning.

Leviticus contains lots of rules that the Israelites are to observe as they roam in the wilderness. They were slaves and Moses led them out of slavery and they are now wandering for the first of what will end up being 40 years.

Last week we read from chapter 19 and saw some rules that made sense to us and others that did not. We could understand the rules about caring for your neighbor and not lying or stealing. We were challenged by the rule about treating a foreigner as a citizen. But the rules about not wearing two materials in the same garment or not eating shrimp did not make much sense.

Last week we talked about how these rules were written for a specific community and we had to make a decision about which of these rules applied to us and which ones did not. Not stealing may be one that applies to us while not eating shrimp may be one we can throw out.

The section which we are going to read from Leviticus 25 causes us to ask this same question as well about accepting these rules. Is this rule about Jubilee something that should apply to us? And if we did adopt this rule as our own, what would our society be like?

Read Leviticus 25: 1-12

In other words, every 49 - 50 years the rule is that all debts are cancelled. If you are indebted to anyone, your debt is cancelled. If you went into foreclosure and had to sell your home or your land or yourself into slavery, at the 50 year mark the land and property would be returned to you. Jubilee is a time to start over. Debts cancelled.

Obviously, our society has not adopted Jubilee. As one who has a house payment and a car payment it should would be nice if we did. I doubt very seriously if our American capitalistic society is going to follow this biblical model of Jubilee. I also doubt that China would adopt it. Because if our society adopted Jubilee then small groups of people could not control the vast amount of wealth and property in our country. If communist societies adopted Jubilee then the state would not be permitted to own large amounts of property.

So our society, I would guess, is not going to adopt Jubilee. No one is naive enough to think otherwise. But what if we in this room and in this church sought to live out Jubilee? What would happen?

Is there someone in your life that owes you money and you are stressed out because they are not paying you? Is there someone in your life that you are holding a grudge against and you refuse to forgive them for what they did? Is there someone that you feel like owes you something because they took something from you that you feel was not there's to take? Maybe in some way you are holding someone in debt to you in some way.

What would happen if you went to that person that owes you money and you said to that person, "I have decided to forgive you your debt." What would happen? What if you went to the person that you are holding a grudge against and you said to that person, "I am holding a grudge against you and I am willing to throw it away." What would happen to you?

What if you went to the person who you feel wronged you in some way and you say to that person, "I forgive you." What would happen?

We don't know what would happen. Our society doesn't believe in Jubilee. But our sacred Scriptures do. Our sacred Scriptures tell us a story about how every 50 years we are to forgive all debts. All of them.

I know this is one of those rules that our society rejects. It's also a rule that we reject. But what if we didn't?

What if we announced Jubilee and cancelled a debt owed to us? What would happen?

I don't know. But it would be interesting to find out. Jubilee!!!! AMEN.

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