

1.29.12 Dave Lyman

Year of Jubilee

Text: Lev. 25:1-28, 39-41, & 55

1 The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, **2** “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to the LORD. **3** For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, **4** but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the LORD. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. **5** You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. **6** The Sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired worker and the sojourner who lives with you, **7** and for your cattle and for the wild animals that are in your land: all its yield shall be for food. **8** “You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years. **9** Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. **10** And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan. **11** That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. **12** For it is a jubilee. It shall be holy to you. You may eat the produce of the field.

13 “In this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his property. **14** And if you make a sale to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another. **15** You shall pay your neighbor according to the number of years after the jubilee, and he shall sell to you according to the number of years for crops. **16** If the years are many, you shall increase the price, and if the years are few, you shall reduce the price, for it is the number of the crops that he is selling to you. **17** You shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God, for I am the LORD your God.

18 “Therefore you shall do my statutes and keep my rules and perform them, and then you will dwell in the land securely. **19** The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and dwell in it securely. **20** And if you say, ‘What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather in our crop?’ **21** I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, so that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years. **22** When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating some of the old crop; you shall eat the old until the ninth year, when its crop arrives.

23 “The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me. **24** And in all the country you possess, you shall allow a redemption of the land.

25 “If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold. **26** If a man has no one to redeem it and then himself becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it, **27** let him calculate the years since he sold it and pay back the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and then return to his property. **28** But if he does not have sufficient means to recover it, then what he sold shall remain in the hand of the buyer until the year of jubilee. In the jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his property.

39 “If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: **40** he shall be with you as a hired worker and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee. **41** Then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his own clan and return to the possession of his fathers.

55 *For it is to me that the people of Israel are servants. They are my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*

summary

When God gave His law to Moses, he commanded them to allow the land they were going to enter to keep a Sabbath to the LORD: six years of planting, cultivating and harvesting, followed by one year of rest. They were not to plant or harvest, but only live off what the land grew on its own, in addition to what they harvested in the sixth year, thereby feeding the land owner and family, his slaves, hired workers, cattle, and the wild animals. After seven of these special land Sabbaths (49 years total), they were to celebrate a year of Jubilee in the 50th year, the year when property would be returned to original owners, and poor Israelites who sold themselves as hired workers would be set free. Debts were forgiven. The year of Jubilee may sound crazy, ridiculous in worldly eyes, but it's a restart.

my story

What is your first memory of needing to trust God? When is trusting God most difficult for you? When you look back over your life, what patterns, if any, do you see of God teaching you about trusting him? Are you learning to trust him little by little with the "smaller" things? How about the "bigger" things? Share a "trust" experience - if you feel comfortable. How do you usually respond to those situations when you clearly need to depend on God?

segue

In Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus tells his listeners not to worry about their lives, that as God provides for the birds of the air and splendidly clothes the flowers, so he will provide for us on a daily basis. In fact, he uses the lesser to greater argument that if God does these things even for the birds, how much more will he do so for you. He knows we need them, but he wants us to seek him and his righteousness first. Likewise, the Israelites were to trust God for his daily provision, while carrying on their faithful witness to the world of the glory of God.

God's story

1. Read 2 Kings 19:14-19, 29. Because of its steady record of sin, God used their enemy, the superpower Assyrians, to conquer the northern tribe of Israel. The Assyrians were surrounding Jerusalem when King Hezekiah, one of only eight good kings of the southern tribe of Judah (and the only one of two unqualified kings - no "but" after his name), prayed fervently, desperately to the LORD to spare them from the brutality of Sennacherib. *What was Hezekiah's request and the reasoning behind his request? What was the sign that the LORD gave to him through Isaiah? Why was this sign significant?*

2. Read 2 Chronicles 36:21. The book of Chronicles was written after the exile, probably around 530 BC, not long after 1 & 2 Kings were written. But the author of Chronicles is doing something different than Kings. He is trying to bridge the gap to get his readers to forget about the north and start thinking about returning from the Babylonian exile, restoring Judah. One of its main emphasis, then, is continuity: what can they learn from the past that will help them rebuild as a nation? God will continue his plan of redemption even after exile. *In light of this emphasis of*

Chronicles, why is verse 21 important? What do you think God was trying to teach the southern tribe of Judah?

3. Read Luke 4:14-21. Jesus was in his hometown taking his turn reading the weekly Torah portion in the synagogue. Although the reading of the law was a “set” portion by this time, the prophet reading probably had more freedom. *Why do you think Jesus chose this passage to read at the beginning of his ministry?* To our modern ears, we tend to think of fulfillment as the achievement of something predicted, but this fulfillment had a present, personal and gracious nature. *How do you think these three facets were fulfilled through Jesus’ discourse of Isaiah’s words? What do they mean for us today?* *(lifegroup leaders: present - what the prophet had foretold was now coming true, the kingdom of God was at hand; personal - the one anointed with the Spirit was Jesus, he ushered in this kingdom; gracious - the long awaited era of God’s salvation had finally arrived.)*

my place in God’s story

One of the main differences between Christians living in the 21st century and the Israelites of the Old Testament is that the group of people whom God has called—the gathering of believers, or the church—is not exclusively identified with a nation-state. It is more like a nation comprised of, and comprised within, many nations. As a result, practicing a “Year of Jubilee” as the Israelites were instructed in Leviticus is no longer a requirement for God’s people. Yet Jesus ushers in the fulfillment of the year of Jubilee; it is not just a year, but a new state of living. It is the better year of Jubilee!

1. In the Luke passage, Jesus is basically saying that he is our year of Jubilee who frees us from our debt of sin. *Do you ever feel like you have a huge debt of sin, or do you feel like your debt isn’t that bad - compared to other people? How can you cultivate a proper understanding of your sin offending a holy God, and the deliverance that you have through Jesus paying your debt? How might your response change the way you live your life?*

2. Pastor Dave reminded us that Jesus set the prisoner free from slavery to sin. *Is there any sin in your life right now to which you feel in bondage? Is there anything at all in your life that prevents you from serving God and your neighbor fully? Do you know what you need to do to be free from the things that are weighing you down? God longs for us to experience jubilee right now. The first step in any change is identifying the problem. The next step may involve confession or finding an accountability partner. Certainly all change begins with a humble spirit and prayer. Consider this week what steps you might need to take so you can fully grab hold of God’s promise of jubilee.*

3. Read Matt.11:28-30. We often hear and experience how difficult it is to live as a Christian, but Jesus calls those who are weary and heavy-burdened to rest in him. *Is this a paradox? Does this kind of deep soul rest in God seem elusive to you? Why is it that this soul-rest is so difficult for us? Is it because of something lacking in the work of Christ, or something lacking in the trust in our souls?*

conclusion

Pastor Dave told the story about a town who had developed a system for dealing with vast amounts of suffocating fish that would wash up on their shore. The first to see the fish lying in shallow pools would shout, "Jubilee!" to all their neighbors, who would then run out to the beaches with their coolers, and scooping up as many fish as they could into the coolers, they would enjoy a grand barbecue together. Their cry of "Jubilee!" was filled with urgency and excitement. But if the one who discovered the fish had wanted to, he could have been selfish, scooping up just enough fish for himself and leaving the rest to spoil, or for someone else to find.

Jesus has paid our debt of sin, freed us from our bondage to sin and given us new life. *Do you keep this good news of "Jubilee" to yourself, or do you share it with others? Who can you spend time praying for this week who does not know Jesus? Pray a few minutes for that person every day. And keep praying about your pond!*