

“Sabbath”

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Genesis 1:1-2:3

John 1:1-18

‘All things came into being through [the Word],
and without [the Word] not one thing came into being.’ John 1:3

Let us pray... O God,

On this Sabbath Day, we pause to remember
the multitudes of Creation and to give thanks
for your gift of life to us.

Amen

What is a ‘Sabbath’?

‘Day of rest’ comes to mind as we consider the story of Creation
and how God created the world in 6 days
and rested on the 7th.

In the Gospel stories, Jesus frequently
ran into trouble with the Pharisees because of
all the things he was doing on the Sabbath.

In one such story,

I made a discovery about the word ‘Sabbath’ that gives us
a clue about what it should mean to us...

Inspired by Mark 2:23-28

**AND JESUS ARRIVED ON THE SABBATH DAY,
GOING THROUGH FIELDS OF WHEAT.**

AND HIS DISCIPLES CAME ALONG

AND PROCEEDED TO PLUCK HEADS OF GRAIN TO EAT.

NOW, THE PHARISEES SAID TO HIM,

“SEE HERE!

**WHY ARE THEY DOING WORK THAT IS
NOT PERMISSIBLE ON THE SABBATH?”**

AND JESUS SAID TO THEM,

**“DON’T YOU RECALL WHAT DAVID DID,
WHEN HE WAS DESPERATE AND HUNGRY?
AND FOR THOSE WHO FOLLOWED HIM?**

**WHEN ABIATHUR WAS HIGH PRIEST,
HOW WAS IT RIGHT FOR DAVID**

**TO ENTER THE HOUSE OF GOD
AND EAT THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE
WHICH NO ONE BUT THE HIGH PRIEST
IS PERMITTED TO EAT?**

Willard, p.2

“YET HE ATE IT,
AS WELL AS THOSE WHO FOLLOWED HIM.”
AND HE SAID TO THEM ALL,
“THE SABBATH WAS CREATED
FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY
AND NOT HUMANITY
FOR THE SAKE OF THE SABBATH –
THEREFORE,
THE ONE WHO IS THE SON OF MAN,
THE TRUE HEIR OF HUMANITY,
IS ALSO THE LORD OF THE SABBATH,
THE DAY FOR REMEMBERING
THE MULTITUDES OF CREATION.”

I translated and paraphrased that story –
like many of the Bible stories I tell,
looking up each word in the Greek-English lectionary
to find a root meaning for the word.
I string the words back together and make sense of them –
sometimes with new imagery.

That happened with the word, ‘Sabbath’ when I found out
that its root meaning is ‘armies’ or ‘hosts’,
as in ‘the Lord of hosts’.
But ‘armies’ of what?
Angels? Possibly, but in regard to ‘Sabbath’?
‘Multitudes’ seems a better fit – as in the ‘multitudes of Creation’;
And this suggests what God was doing on the 7th day...

God was looking upon all the worlds that had been created –
not out of self-admiration,
but to admire ‘the multitudes’ themselves.

We really don’t say much about God as Protestant Christians
even in our worship.
We tend to be more about what we should we do as Christians
to promote justice and peace as ways of living out
God’s commandments to love –
but we rarely speak directly about God.
The Jewish and Muslim traditions have very beautiful prayers –
not simply praising God, but describing God’s attributes.

Willard, p.3

I believe – as a minister, one of my jobs is to help you find God –
or at least make room for God, in your daily living.

Reading to understand the Bible and praying aloud
are skills to be learned for approaching God.

By the way, I found that the word for ‘to pray’ in Greek
has a root meaning that includes the concept of ‘to approach’.

So, when we pray, we approach God to beseech, to beg, to praise,
to complain – or just to talk.

Another skill I encourage you to add to your repertoire
for approaching God is drawing –
or knitting or cooking or cleaning or building.

These may sound like forms of either work or recreation,
but they are indeed forms of *re*-creation.

By making anything, you are imitating the creativity
of that first person of the Trinity – God the Father,
or the Creator.

So, a proper use of the Sabbath is
to reflect on the multitudes of Creation,
to praise the Creator, and
to re-create by any of the ‘multitudes’ of creating.

I don’t consider myself much of a poet
but I do like this one I wrote about trying to understand
the concept of God as a Trinity:

Father Son Holy Spirit

What is it?

That ‘What’ is a Who.

Not ‘What’, but Who.

Why Three?

Why ‘Three in One’?

One God makes sense,

but three persons, a sacred unity?

‘Where’ is the answer and the constant question

Where is God?

*When we peek behind the façade
of concrete, plastic, neon, and pavement,
we see...*

Willard, p.4

*We see the wildness of Creation,
planned and scattered, urging itself upwards
through cracks in the sidewalk
to be...*

The telltale handiwork of YHWH

*And walking on that pavement, enclosed by concrete,
reading from neon and eating with plastic
we find ourselves insulated in a 'homeland security'
that is neither
until God walked there, too, and lifted the roof off
so that the maze became a labyrinth*

*The lizard brain works well for so many
but the cerebral rainbow arched above it
by God's pottery wheel of evolution
and the conscious world of 'I am'
became 'me' and 'you'
the least of these
that reflect 'I AM'
the dandelion of God, urging itself upward
through cracks in our minds
to be
with us*

**"Father Son Holy Spirit"
Drew Willard 7/7/2004**

Amen

*Chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis are the first words of our Bible,
telling us about the origins of our world and our faith.*

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,
2 the earth was a formless void and darkness covered
the face of the deep, while a wind from God
swept over the face of the waters.

3 Then God said,
‘Let there be light’;
and there was light.

4 And God saw that the light was good;
and God separated the light from the darkness.

5 God called the light Day,
and the darkness he called Night.

And there was evening and there was morning,
the first day.

6 And God said,
‘Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters,
and let it separate the waters from the waters.’

7 So God made the dome and separated the waters
that were under the dome from the waters
that were above the dome.

And it was so.

8 God called the dome
Sky.

And there was evening and there was morning,
the second day.

9 And God said,
‘Let the waters under the sky be gathered together
into one place, and let the dry land appear.’

And it was so.

10 God called the dry land Earth,
and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And
God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said,
‘Let the earth put forth vegetation:
plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind
on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.’

And it was so.

12 The earth brought forth vegetation:
plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind
bearing fruit with the seed in it.
And God saw that it was good.

13 And there was evening and there was morning,
the third day.

14 And God said,
‘Let there be lights in the dome of the sky
to separate the day from the night;
and let them be for signs and for seasons
and for days and years,
15 and let them be lights in the dome of the sky
to give light upon the earth.’
And it was so.

16 God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day
and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.

17 God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,
18 to rule over the day and over the night,
and to separate the light from the darkness.
And God saw that it was good.

19 And there was evening and there was morning,
the fourth day.

20 And God said,
‘Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures,
and let birds fly above the earth
across the dome of the sky.’

21 So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature
that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm,
and every winged bird of every kind.
And God saw that it was good.

22 God blessed them, saying,
‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas,
and let birds multiply on the earth.’

23 And there was evening and there was morning,
the fifth day.

24 And God said,
‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind:
cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth
of every kind.’
And it was so.

25 God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind,
and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps
upon the ground of every kind.
And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said,
‘Let us make humankind in our image,
according to our likeness; and let them have dominion
over the fish of the sea,
and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle,
and over all the wild animals of the earth,
and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’

27 So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them,
‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it;
and have dominion over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the air
and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’

29 God said,
‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed
that is upon the face of all the earth,
and every tree with seed in its fruit;
you shall have them for food.

30 And to every beast of the earth,
and to every bird of the air,
and to everything that creeps on the earth,
everything that has the breath of life,
I have given every green plant for food.’
And it was so.

31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed,
it was very good.
And there was evening and there was morning,
the sixth day.

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished,
and all their multitude.

2 And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done,
and he rested on the seventh day
from all the work that he had done.

3 So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it,
because on it God rested from all the work
that he had done in creation.

John 1:1-18

- 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
- 2He was in the beginning with God.
- 3All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.
- What has come into being 4in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
- 5 The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.
- 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
- 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light,
so that all might believe through him.
- 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.
- 9The true light, which enlightens everyone,
was coming into the world.
- 10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him;
yet the world did not know him.
- 11He came to what was his own,
and his own people did not accept him.
- 12But to all who received him, who believed in his name,
he gave power to become children of God,
13who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh
or of the will of man, but of God.
- 14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.
- 15(John testified to him and cried out,
"This was he of whom I said,
"He who comes after me ranks ahead of me
because he was before me." ")
- 16From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.
- 17The law indeed was given through Moses;
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
- 18No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son,
who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.