

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, June 2nd, 2024, Second Sunday after Pentecost
1 Samuel 3:1-20, Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17, 2 Corinthians 4:5-12, Mark 2:23-3:6

Jesus taking food to eat and healing on the Sabbath. The phrase that sums it all up from Jesus *the Sabbath is for humankind not humankind for the Sabbath*. It seems to me that the value of the Sabbath is being lost in this day and age. It's losing its significance and its value. Jesus saying what he says does not take away from the value of the Sabbath although that's the impression one can get from his phrase.

I can't help thinking from another sports metaphor. The worst players are the ones who never do what coach says, but those who only do with the coach says are not much better. The best players are the ones who know when to listen to the coach and when to be creative.

This means understanding ourselves. In Corinthians Paul talks about treasures in clay jars. Light in the darkness, the hidden aspect of God in the world. And in us. This shows the need for rest and relaxation, and to stake stock of the direction of our lives. And maybe later than I could have understand myself. I would have done better in school if I had learned I could get more work done in front of the TV instead of the separation and not thinking of combining. There is great value in commercials the advertisers do not want us to know about. I've also found there are better times for certain jobs and aspects of work. Early morning work which is logical and involves numbers and the creative nonlinear thinking later in the day perhaps towards darkness.

So, a sense of balance. And there is another side of it from those who never take the time off and are afraid to stop and others. There was a Kit Kat commercial a number of years ago which two slackers were there having a Kit Kat. They weren't doing anything anyway, so the question was how do they know when they're having their break? The answer because they're having a Kit Kat.

But there is more to the treasures in clay jars. This is to remind us that the power within us belongs to God and does not come from us. This suggests among other things the need to take the time to try and figure out what comes from God in way of inspiration and what is our own hopeful thinking. And by extension, reflecting on who God is and who we are.

Brennan reminded me of what the mystics and the 3rd century desert fathers say about God, starting with who God is not.

And when Paul in Corinthians talks about us being treasures in clay jars and goes on to say: *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.*

It follows and expresses differently what I have been thinking about God lately. Where is God when I think of health issues and think of other problems? The philosophical

question, is God absent or doesn't care?

Some answers have come to mind. We learn more from our failures than our successes. And we have a part to play even if just going forward.

And a comment I made to a woman who was dying, in a few months and seemed prepared to die. When asked how she was doing said that she had good days and days she did not feel good. I said something to the effect, maybe the bad days help you feel better about dying and that life here will end. And help you let go. If life was perfect, we would never want to leave this life.

And the answer which is the one for me is: It could be worse. God has saved me from things I haven't even imagined or considered. And I imagine the worst and consider myself a bit of a hypochondriac.

So, it is not that God needs our worship and our thankfulness and our gratitude, but maybe the sabbath helps us see beyond the problems and concerns we face and see them in context of the bigger picture.

There is a video I saw recently about Morgan Freeman talking to a woman who is sad because her husband is building an Ark like Noah. Morgan Freeman says that the point of the story is not God's wrath and anger, and people love it when God gets angry. It is a love story about believing in each other. The animals came into the ark two by two and not alone. Noah's family came into the ark together as well.

And he goes on to say that when we pray for patience God does not give us patience but the opportunity to show patience. When we ask for courage, God does not give us courage, but the opportunity to show courage. And if we pray for the family to be closer does God give us warm fuzzy feelings or gives us the opportunity to love each other?

Therefore, the sabbath is a gift for us with the possibility of benefit at different levels rather than a strict rule we need to follow obsessively.

Amen.

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing ...