

*If you refrain from trampling the sabbath,
from pursuing your own interests on my holy day;
if you call the sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the Lord honourable;
if you honour it, not going your own ways,
serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs;**
¹⁴ *then you shall take delight in the Lord,
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; Isaiah 58: 13*

Dearly Beloveds:

Having returned from vacation and being immersed in the practice of and preaching of the Sabbath, there is one more thing on my heart which I want to share with you. One of the alternative readings from last Sunday was from Isaiah 58, the relevant part is quoted above. Not only is the Sabbath about an unbinding and surrender to the Holy One but it is also about doing God's will, behaving as God would have us behave on the day which God made.

Many of us confuse work for profit with work for God's creation. It seems clear to me from Isaiah the prophet that we honor the Sabbath and keep it holy when we get outside our own earthly desires and assume holy responsibilities. That is what is duly owed to the One with whom we have covenanted.

It seems to me that Sabbath becomes a delightful opportunity to join together to worship, something which delights God, and take a small step toward social justice, tipping the scales in the direction of God's economy. When we offer our selves, our souls and bodies to God and couple that with clothing the poor, sheltering the homeless, comforting the oppressed (and I include animals in that duty!?) we are honoring the Creator of all that is!

God has a passion for us which is fulfilled when we exhibit the same passion for God and all God loves. God has a passion not only for beautiful worship but for peace and freedom for all! Last Sunday at 3PM when bells were tolled all over the country in remembrance of slavery and its horrors, I felt that mutual passion, mutual tears and mutual joy at once. The joy was the joy of the beloved community coming together to Honor God's Peace. In remembering we too are re-membered.

This Sunday we will extend our conversation about Sabbath as we consider the difference between humility and arrogance. It takes humility to shed one's own desires for those of our Lord. It takes humility to practice sabbath life in its resting and in its witness to injustice. This holy humility is exactly what we are called to practice as disciples and I have witnessed it time and again among you the members and friends of Christ Church.

Bless you Sabbath keepers!

Martha