

## Sermon – Freedom of the Sabbath – Lk 13:10-17

### Venerable Jeff Ward – Sunday August 21, 2022

- Sunday is the Sabbath Day for Christians
- The Sabbath was originally established as a day of rest—this is first introduced in the first creation story found in the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter of Genesis
- God created all things in six days and then rested on the seventh day—all beings were then commanded to enjoy one day of rest every week
- This meant that no work of any kind was to be conducted on that day—for the Jewish people who established this day—they also established many laws to define what was considered work to limit activities of the faithful
- The Sabbath was later more fully defined in the Book of Deuteronomy Chapter 5—this is where the Sabbath was used to remember the being set free from captivity
- The setting free of the Jewish people from the captivity of the Egyptians is remembered as the Exodus
- Jesus was referring to the Exodus and the definition of the Sabbath from the Book of Deuteronomy when he healed the woman on the Sabbath in the synagogue in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel according to Luke which we read from today
- The synagogue leader complained that healing was considered work and therefore the woman should not be healed on that day—but instead on another day of the week
- Jesus made clear that some necessary and compassionate acts should always be allowed on the Sabbath—such as watering one’s animals
- He also argued that being set free from bondage should also always be allowed on the Sabbath—he said that he was setting free the woman who had been “bound by Satan” for 18 years
- Jesus made clear many times—that all laws—the laws made by the Jewish religious leaders to shape all behaviour of the Jewish people—should only be made for the welfare of God’s people—not to bind them even more
- Every person feels captive at times—bound by burdens that keep them from living joyful and full lives
- This can include— hate—enmity—greed—fear—loneliness—poverty—illness—hunger—addiction—unemployment—anxiety
- And what is it that sets us free?—Christ teaches us that it is love—forgiveness—peace—generosity—compassion—community—food—courage—trust—faith—joy—respect—dignity
- It is common for people to believe that freedom means to do whatever we want—whenever we want—without limitations
- Jesus teaches us that this is not real freedom—Jesus teaches us that freedom is actually to be “set free” from those things that keep us from being the faith-filled—loving and caring—complete people that he knows we can be
- We become more free as we become more like Christ—more caring of others—more willing to make sacrifices—so that we can all stand up

straight—with dignity—and experience fullness of life

- We can never be completely free while others remain bent over by the heavy burdens of illness—poverty—and discrimination—anything that weighs them down
- We can free ourselves when we work to free others of their burdens—and free ourselves from the burdens we bear as well
- Let us regard Sunday not as a day of religious obligation—but instead as a day where we come together to remember and give thanks for the freedom that comes from our life in Christ
- Hopefully we will become more mindful of our Sabbath day—Sunday—as a day of release and deliverance—of freedom for all people
- This is the fullness of life that Christ invites us all to enjoy—and that is a true cause for celebration and rejoicing—at least one day per week!
- For this we give thanks to God! Amen.