

Sermon for July 21, 2024
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
Proper 11B
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Trinity on the Hill Episcopal Church
Los Alamos, New Mexico

2 Samuel 7:1-14a
Psalm 89:20-37
Ephesians 2:11-22
Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

We hear a lot about David in the lessons today. More than we do about Jesus.
But both men are inextricably linked in the Bible.

In Matthew 22 there's this exchange about David and the Messiah:

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

⁴² "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they replied.

⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David,
speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says,

⁴⁴ "The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet."

⁴⁵ If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?"

⁴⁶ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on
no one dared to ask him any more questions.

But, back to David:

"When the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his
enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a
house of cedar,
but the ark of God stays in a tent."

David comes up with the idea of building a temple to give God an address.

[It would be nice if God had a fixed address, or even a zip code.
Maybe a sign: Appointments available; Drop-ins Welcome!]

But God will not have it, so he tells Nathan to tell David:

I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to
this day, but I have been moving about in a tent

and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about
among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word
with any of the tribal leaders of Israel,
whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying,
“Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”

So God promises to honor David and more – to set his house on the throne:

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors,
I will raise up your offspring after you,
who shall come forth from your body,
and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name,
and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.

So here we now read into the text of Samuel
the fulfillment of God’s promise to David in the person of Jesus.

What I just did with the text from Samuel is called Eisegesis.

It’s a method of interpreting the Scriptures by reading meaning into the text. It’s very much like looking
at the past through the lens of our present beliefs.

The counter method of Scriptural interpretation is called Exegesis,
which means reading meaning from the text itself
within its own historical and cultural context.

It may be a stretch, but in the context of today’s readings,
I venture to say what God wants
is to keep us from building walls that keep us apart.

That’s the issue addressed in the Letter to the Ephesians – the division between the circumcised and
the uncircumcised
– the Jews and everybody else (called the Gentiles).

He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances,
that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two,
thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God
in one body through the cross, thus putting to death
that hostility through it. ... In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into
a holy temple in the Lord;
in whom you also are built together spiritually
into a dwelling place for God.

In this sense, we, each of us, becomes the temple
David wished to build for the Lord God Almighty.

And as bodily temples, we come to Jesus in today’s Gospel, kind of saying

“I give you a new commandment:”

Let me ask you all a question: Who’s tired?

It’s Sunday morning. The first day of the week.
Who’s tired before the work week even begins?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
at least once a month nearly 40% of adults report falling asleep during the day without meaning to.

According to the National Council on Aging:
13.5% of adults over 18 reported feeling tired or exhausted most days.
More than a third of Americans report getting
less than seven hours of sleep in any 24-hour period.
About 30% of adults have symptoms of insomnia
and 10% say it affects their daily lives.

Good sleep, at least seven hours a night,
improves brain performance and mood,
and decreases the risk of disease and other physical disorders,
such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and dementia.

So Jesus has a new command for us:

“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.”

Of course, Jesus has good reason to call on his disciples to rest:
they’ve been on a mission; healing the sick, casting out demons,
preaching the Good News, and there’s always more to do.

Sound familiar? There’s always more to do.
There’s always something left undone,
loose ends to tie up, just one more thing... So it says in the beginning:

**“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.
By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing;
so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.
Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy,
because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.**

Who takes a day off – a day off from everything?
“I would but:” There’s too much to do. I can’t afford take the time.

Addiction Recovery author John Bradshaw made the comment:
too often we are “human doings” rather than “human beings.”

Being only happens when we take the time for ourselves
to commune with God, to commune with nature,

to be with those who mean the most to us, and to be with ourselves.

While I was working through the lessons this past week
I had occasion to reach out to a friend, a parish priest.
I was calling her about for something routine and got her voicemail.
It was the regular message: “Leave a message: I’ll get back to you,
if it’s an emergency, please... etc. etc. and then she said,
“unless it’s Monday. Monday is my Sabbath day,
and I do not return calls on my Sabbath.”

This made me stop and think – Sabbath.
Sabbath is a time set apart, a Holy and sacred time to be cherished.
We all need a Sabbath time.
A time set aside to renew and refresh,
a time to lie down in green pastures and walk beside still waters.

In her book, *Sabbath Keeping*, Donna Schaper maintains
“Sabbath” is not something to keep, but a way of living.
Observing a Sabbath helps us work when it’s appropriate,
rest when it’s appropriate, and take time to rest and recover.
She sees sabbath as a road to living a life of plenty.

So, I leave you with a challenge.
Well, let’s call it an opportunity:
Make the commitment to set aside a time for a personal Sabbath
and allow God the time to revive your souls
and guide you along right pathways.

After all, we prayed at the beginning of the liturgy:

**Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom,
you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking:
Have compassion on our weakness,
and mercifully give us those things,
which for our unworthiness we dare not,
and for our blindness we cannot ask.**

Ask now: Give me the time to just be.

Amen.