

Sermon Text: Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Date: June 15th, 17th, and 18th, 2006

Church Year: 2nd Sunday After Pentecost/Father's Day

Faith Lutheran Church, FDL

"Father Knows Best!"

There are many sayings in life that are timeless and true that you have probably heard and said a thousand times. For example, "money doesn't grow on trees" or "easy come, easy go" or maybe you remember hearing "there is no place like home". Possibly around the holiday seasons you have heard quite frequently, "the more you give, the more you receive". But I think we are missing one very important saying, it goes like this: "Father knows best!" On this Father's Day weekend, the third commandment of God's Law reminds us, "***Our heavenly Father knows best what we need.....exactly when we need it!***"

The Israelites were pyramid building, pharaoh working people. They made bricks from straw and mud. They were the workforce behind one of the world's greatest architectural feats. They were shining examples of hard working people, but their track record was less than spotless. The children of Israel came to Egypt at the time of Joseph in order to survive the torment of the famine ravishing the land. Then they spent centuries toiling in the desert heat for an empire that wasn't even their real home. Then they complained and grumbled about their place in life.

So God sent them a deliverer, Moses. A man raised as a child in Pharaoh's house as one of Pharaoh's own sons. Moses, Moses, a murderer, who ran away from his problem to the outermost parts of the desert to tend sheep. A man whom, when called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, came up with every excuse imaginable, "I don't know what to say, I can't speak very well, I can't go back to Egypt they will know who I am and what I did." A man God used to perform signs and wonders in Egypt of extraordinary proportions, plagues of hail, and locust, and frogs, who with the raising of his staff, parted the waters of the Red Sea. And so, Israel was free, no longer slaves.

Moses stood on Mount Sinai, trembling, as God described 10 very important things for his people, for their welfare, both now and forever. One of those important things was to "***observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.***" ***Deut. 5:12*** As part of this God wanted the Israelites to "***remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.***" ***Deuteronomy 5:15*** Remember that day when I, your loving Father, led you out of Egypt. Remember that day when I answered your cries of mercy. Remember that day by setting it apart as something special.

It isn't as if these were Moses words', as if Moses was looking for extra honor and praise, or added control of the people's lives. But these were the words of the LORD their God; their father who showered His grace upon them more times than they could count. This was their father who showed undeserved kindness to them despite the constant grumbling; why did you bring us out of Egypt; so we could die here in the wilderness?

God wanted them to remember how much help they really did need. The Israelites were partly right: they were going to die. Not because God brought them out of Egypt with a powerful hand just as they asked Him to do. Not because they were now in the middle of a wilderness, but because they turned their backs on their heavenly Father and instead wandered towards the gates of death. They were neglectful of the love owed God their Father. They forgot what a special privilege it is to be God's people.

They were descendants of that day in the garden when their first parents were neglectful of their God-given responsibility; when they found it easier to give into temptation instead of turning away from it. Every, single Israelite was going to die because they found more pleasure in worshiping a golden statue that looked like a cow. They found more pleasure in indecent behavior, sexual promiscuity and worldly pleasure. They found more pleasure in themselves.

The Israelites were right: we are going to die. Whether we want to admit it or not, we are just like them. There's been times when we turned our back on God? There's been times we neglected to show our love towards God? Do we take for granted the special privilege of being God's people? Do we find it easier and easier to fill our minds with trash instead of food from the Gospel that strengthens our souls? Do we find it easier when tough times come into our lives, to curse God, and disown Him instead of trusting that God, our heavenly Father, is going to work all things for our good? Do we find easier and easier to miss a week or two in God's house? Do we find it easier to join the throngs craving their golden calves instead of craving the Gospel?

Didn't God give them what their bodies needed? "***Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor***

your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the foreigner within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do.” Deuteronomy 5:13-14 God knew best that the Israelites needed rest. After all, rest was what their bodies needed, and not only that, but their equipment, their ox, their donkey, and their workers needed rest too from their labor, right?

God, our Father, knows that we struggle with something far greater than the need for physical rest. Our heavenly Father knows that we struggle with a far greater burden. God knows that we struggle against our flesh that desires our soul’s destruction. God knows that we cannot find rest in the law’s perfection. God knows that it is impossible for us to make satisfaction for our sins. The balancing act of weighing the right with the wrong in our life is impossible. God knows that the only way you and I could have rest, would be through his own son, Jesus.

Jesus lived the laws perfection in our place. Jesus descended into the depths of hell, and rose again so that our rest would not take place there. With a mighty hand and a powerful arm from the cross Jesus gave us eternal rest from our struggles and failures, our misery and complaining, our neglect of His Word, our sorrow so that the pit of the grave would not be our final resting place. God knew the rest we needed. ***Because God, our heavenly Father knows best what we need.....exactly when we need it.***

Do you remember that time you snuck back into the house past curfew. The next morning came with you waking up thinking that you are the smartest, cleverest child to ever live. But inevitably at the breakfast table your father asked the question, “so what time did you get in last night?” Your heart dropped into the pit of your stomach because you just knew your father knew exactly what time you came home. Or maybe it was when you had the worst day imaginable, and your father knew exactly what to do and what to say or maybe by him just being there to listen was enough to ease the pain.

Our trials, our troubles, our obstacles, our burdens that we bear are not because God has abandoned us, but because God knows what is best for us. God, our heavenly father, knows best exactly when our faith needs strengthening. When is there a good time for troubles and trials to come into our life? We would prefer to have the perfect life with no troubles to face, no conflicts to correct. But what good would that be for us?

God knows what our soul needs to be with Him in heaven, that’s why troubles and trials come into our life. That’s why God reminds us to remember this Sabbath rest by setting it apart as something special. God knew that the Israelites were going to face struggles and challenges. God knew that during the course of those six days their faith and determination would be tested. That’s why on the seventh day they were to gather around God’s Word. Because God knows that we need to be gathered around the Gospel. God knows that we need the reassurance of the eternal rest for our souls that Jesus true body and blood gives to us. God knows that we need to be reminded of our baptisms where God, our heavenly Father, brought us into His family where we find true rest. God knows, that after we feel the valleys of the shadow of death, how much sweeter that eternal rest from the Gospel is to us. In the words of the Apostle Paul, ***“Though we are pressed on every side, we are never crushed: perplexed but never in despair, persecuted but never abandoned, struck down and knocked down, but never destroyed.” 1 Corinthians 4:8,9*** Because with a powerful mighty, hand and an outstretched arm from the cross Jesus takes hold of us, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for us. (See Romans 5:3-6)

There are many famous sayings that tend to stick in our minds. Countless generations know them from heart. On this Father’s Day weekend, God our heavenly Father reminds us to remember one very important thing, that after today I pray takes on new meaning in our lives. Father knows best! ***Our heavenly Father knows best what we need, exactly when we need it so that you and I will be with Him forever in the eternal rest of heaven! Amen.***