

Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink and with the baptism with which I am baptized you will be baptized, but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

"Singing Grace"

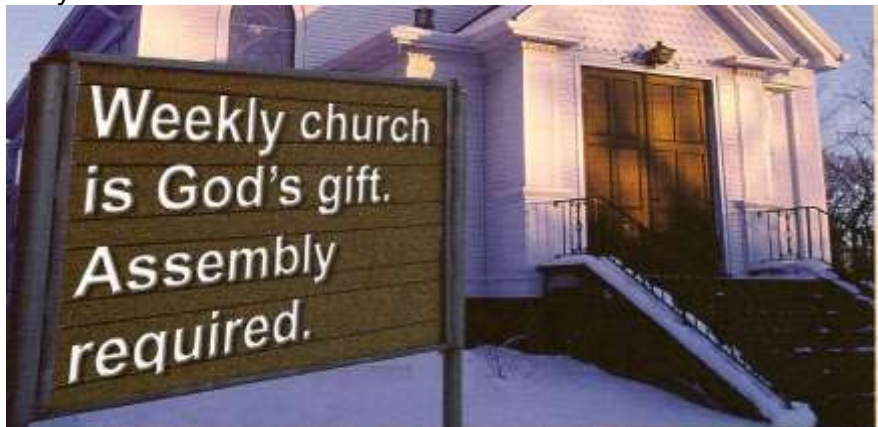
'And God spoke all these words . . .
Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.
On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or
daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your
animals, nor the alien within your gates.
For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
but he rested on the seventh day.
Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.'
Exodus 20:1,4

Not long ago a Lutheran Church started up a new outreach ministry. It's got the name, 'Drive-Thru Prayer.' It functions like the drive-thru at McDonald's: Drive up, order up, fill up, and drive away with your hungers relieved. Rumor has it that those who enter the drive through do so singing that gospel tune, "Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord! Come and quench this thirsting of my soul; bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more-fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!". Rumor also has it that those who drive away as satisfied customers do so singing: 'Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost, but now am found, twas blind but now I see.'" Now praying for others is, was, and always will be both spiritual gift and mandate of Christ to his Church. But, if you are sensing that something might not be quite right about this way of praying, perhaps you can catch a glimpse of what that 'not right' might be in a comment that a non church-goer wittingly quipped, "Don't you think they could at least get out of the car?"

The first post resurrection followers of Jesus not only deemed it necessary to dismount their donkey, but also found it necessary to gather as a community of faith for the worship of God, for prayer time with the Risen Jesus, and for the receiving of Holy Spirit-ed grace. . . on the day after observing the Jewish Sabbath day. As the years passed, Sunday became the Christian day

for observing God's Sabbath. In American when culture mirrored the Christian religious practice of honoring the Sabbath, stores closed on Sunday, families attended church, enjoyed a Sunday noon meal together, before making afternoon visits to extended family, neighbors, and friends. When times changed and the religious practice of Sabbath keeping mirrored the values of society, lots of people of faith started saying: 'I'm spiritual but not religious' and stopped coming to church. Some came back when their children were born; some came for Christmas and Easter holy days; some came to be married in the church; and many brought their loved ones for services of remembrance at the time of death.

As for me, I've been a Sunday going to meeting church-goer all my life. . . and grateful for the Sabbath keeping of it. Once a week I get to shut off my cell phone, step out of my car, and into the house of the Lord for four blessed hours of immersion in the Peace of Christ which passes all my understanding. Once a week in my relationship with each of you in this community of faith, little by little, I experience (as Marcus Borg puts it) 'a dying to self as the center of its own concern' and 'a dying to the world as the center of security and identity.' Through hearing and of preaching God's Word; through sharing in the sacraments of Baptism and The Lord's Supper; through prayers and meditation; and through mutual service to the Lord, I receive grace upon grace for the living my days and for the rejuvenation of my faith.



Amazing grace how sweet the sound – of the Holy Spirit starting up our Children's Peace Choir today. It's the sound of Sabbath singing as described in Colossians 3:12-17: 'With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.' It's the grace filled attitude of gratitude and praise. It's the grace filled smile of love's embrace of inner and outer peace. ' Rev. Quinn G. Caldwell wrote: There are about 5,400 species that make complex, intentional, repeatable, musical vocalizations. That is, there are about 5,400 species that sing. The majority live in the trees, a few live in the oceans, a very few live underground, but there is one---only one---singing species that lives on the ground: us. Another thing: humans are the only singing species with a precise and shared sense of rhythm, which is what allows us to sing together. Two birds might sing the same song, but they cannot sing it together. Another thing: if a roomful of people sings at the same time, they start to breathe at the same time as well. Some studies suggest that if the drumbeat or bass line is strong enough, their hearts will begin to beat together, too. And if we're singing together and breathing together, their hearts will begin to beat together, too. And if we're singing together and breathing together and our hearts are beating together, then it's like we're one body. And you know whose body it is. Another thing: all the other species stop singing when danger approaches. But humans sing louder the closer the danger gets. We sing together, and we become large, and we do not back down. So come racism, and "We Shall Overcome: you. Come fear, for "It Is Well with My Soul." Come war, for tonight is your "Silent Night." Come death, for "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today." Come, all ye faithful, and sing.

Amazing grace how sweet the sound . . .

Tw'as grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved,
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

When we've been here ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun. Amen.