

Sermon Outline - Sun, Oct 2, 2022 – We Are Called to Jubilee - God's Kin(g)dom Way

Intro

Here we are at year 4 of the life of New Roots and it has been a bit of a wild ride. Now we are emerging from the pandemic as we continue to live with COVID but understand how to move beyond the crisis mode we have lived in for more than 2 years. We talk a lot about Jubilee in this congregation, the idea that we are called to live according to the radical ideas of community that God lays out for the children of Israel. It has been a couple of years since we really looked at those principles, so I want to spend this time reminding us about these systems that God established for God's people, not just in the past but it still holds today.

Telling the Story of Jubilee

- You cannot understand the Children of Israel w/out understanding their enslavement
- Many play a role in the uprising that allows them to leave Egypt and seek the Promised Land (Moses, Aaron, Miriam, the Radical Midwives, so many unnamed.)
- The people get out but they forget quickly, they leave Egypt, but Egypt hasn't left them.
- When they survey the land, they are full of doubt and fear
- They spend 40 years wandering as those attached to the old ways die off
- Finally, they are ready to enter the land and God sets up for them the way they are called to live defined by two measures of time Sabbath & Jubilee
- No evidence that they ever really follow God's commandments in full, but we have some evidence they tried (Boaz) & lots of examples of how they do not

God doesn't just talk in abstractions but gives folks rules and systems that help them to live out what God is calling them to. Jubilee is set within a series of tangible practices that give life to the principles.

- (1) Rest/ Take Sabbath/ Lean into the spirit realm - Resist the pull of capitalism to always be doing. Have a weekly and yearly practice of stopping, being - together and trusting God.
- (2) Rely on one another/ Interdependence/ Kin(g)dom – (10 Commandments; family structures/tribes, kinsman redeemer, gleaning)
- (3) Reset/ Second Chance/ Forgive - Things will go wrong so decide to start over as needed

These are radical counter-cultural values, and they are at the heart of the vision for New Roots. The idea that we can live these values as a community with so many different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender expression, income brackets, educational profiles. We choose to be **radical** both in who we are – **together** – and in our willingness to take on the challenge of living Jubilee.

Jubilee of Hebrew Scriptures = Kin(g)dom of God in the New Testament

The Moment We Are In Now

Here we are at a pivot point in human history. A lot of folks have literally died over the last few years. Not so sure that old ways of being have gone with them, but have we let old ways die in

us, have we allowed new things to be born. I hope so! Because we are called into a moment of Jubilee.....

Celebration

- We have grown in numbers, in locations with members throughout Boston and Greater Boston as well as California, Detroit, New York City and Philadelphia and Spain.
- Earlier this year we hosted a gathering to talk about food justice, bringing in local groups to share their work and offering financial support for that work from our Community Support Fund.
- Since last anniversary we've given \$8,350 to support everything from New Roots members to take a class to build new skills to natural disaster relief efforts around the world to community organizations like BIJAN working on immigration support
- From February 2020 when we named that we were called to buy or build a home called Jubilee House to August of this year when the house was finally purchased – we have seen God be faithful in fulfilling an important vision for this community.

Areas for Discernment

- We've also lost folks. Some for reasons beyond our control, but many because they have not been able to really feel rooted in this community. For that reason, we are heavily emphasizing small groups. What can we do to make those groups transformational? What other forums for deep connection do we need to create? (Especially if we are serious about our members beyond Boston)
- Before the pandemic we were building a worship and arts ministry which we struggled to sustain in any meaningful way when we transitioned to virtual services. If we believe that creative expression can be a powerful way to connect with God and each other – how are we called to cultivate creative space in this community?
- We are clearly called to justice and have been active on several issues from criminal justice reform to food justice, but we have not sustained work on any justice issues. Is there a particular justice issue or community of folks who need allies to stand with them that we are called to commit to in a sustained way?
- How do we continue to listen to Spirit in the process of renovating Jubilee House, inviting folks to live there and offering ministry to the community from that home base?
- We could be tempted to add a million things to our plate, but that could lead us to violate God's command to Sabbath. What things should we set down as a community to make space for God's emerging vision for this community?

Broader Reflection Questions

- How can you get more serious about practicing God's call to Sabbath as a crucial part of Jubilee? What specific steps do you feel called to take? What might you need to stop?
- How are you building deep connections with folks to live more interdependently? How can you increase your community connectedness in your family, neighborhood, job, etc.
- How might God be calling you to support the New Roots community even if you are not called to be an active member?