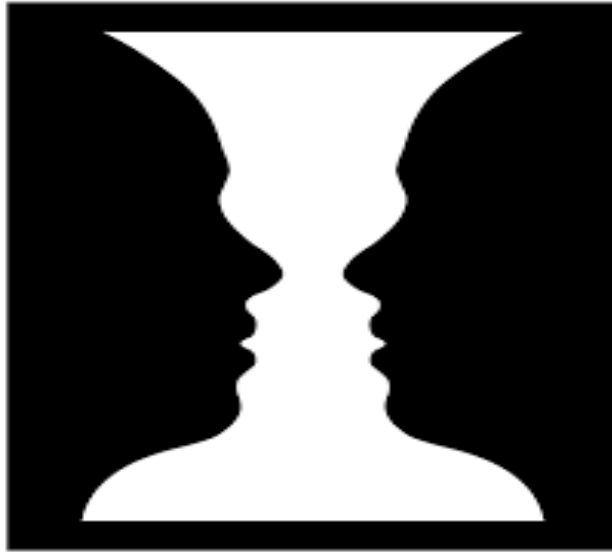


## “A SABBATH VIEW”

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

What is this?



It's a matter of perspective. We can see two faces here; we can also see a fancy vase.

What are our lives all about? Again it is a matter of perspective. We can see our world as what we can see now with our eyes at this time—the people around us in this building. But at this same time think of how we look from an airplane 1,000 feet up. You can make out the form of this building just to the south of Lake Laverne. From further up in the sky we are the part of the city of Ames bordered by Lincoln Way and the shape of Lake Laverne. Viewed from even higher up we are a green patch in central Iowa. From a satellite orbiting Earth we are the center of North America. As the satellite leaves earth's orbit we are the western hemisphere of the planet. From Jupiter we look like a light reflecting the light of the sun. If we were to look from outside our solar system we could see the dot that is our sun. From the outside galaxy, the Milky Way, that galaxy would look like a dot among other dots that are galaxies. In the midst of all that vastness, just who are we really?

We need the right perspective in our lives. God gave that to us through the Sabbath. Our Old Testament lesson tells us the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment affirming what God said when He created the world: “Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the 7<sup>th</sup> is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.” We have years because the earth revolves around the sun in a year. We have months because of the periods of the moon. But the week comes from the Sabbath. God placed the Sabbath into our world to give us the rhythm of the week. Why? So that we have perspective in our lives.

The Jews believed that God commanded them to rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day so they would stop working and let God do the creating that day. It would give them the perspective of who they were as God's people. As they worked during the week they could get so buried in their own

perspective that they would forget God. And what they would be left with is such a small perspective of them. Psalm 90 puts our perspective of things this way, “The length of our days is 70 years or 80, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.” Job lamented, “Does not man have hard service on earth? Are not his days like those of a hired man?” On a tombstone are written the dates of our birth and death, but the lives we live in between them is shown only by a dash.

But God gives us another perspective. He gave the Sabbath so people would look at their lives from God’s view. They could see from God’s view that the world doesn’t just exist to exist. It is God’s marvelous gift to us to live in it. Our lives are not about surviving until we die. They are about living in a relationship with Him.

We call our church services “worship.” “Worship: comes from an old English word “worthship.” In other words God is “worth” our praise. For many Protestants the main part of worship is how we offer our praise to God, to show God that He is “worth it.”

In the introduction to the Lutheran Worship hymnals, our old “Blue Hymnals,” we read these words:

Our Lord speaks, and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise, enlarging and elevating the adoration of our gracious giver God.

Saying back to Him what He has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure. Most true and sure is His name, which He put upon us with the water of our Baptism. We are His. This we acknowledge at the beginning of the Divine Service. Where His name is, there is He.

The rhythm of our worship is from Him to us, and then from us back to Him. He gives us His gifts, and together we receive and extol them. We build one another up as we speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Our Lord gives us His body to eat and His blood to drink. Finally His blessing moves us out into our calling, where His gifts have fruition.

We speak of our worship as being the “Divine Service.” It is a service, because we are being served. It is divine because God is the one doing the serving.

That’s why Jesus said in our Gospel that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. We don’t go to church to honor God as much as we come to receive from Him. And we receive it with our fellow Christians.

By serving us, God gives us that other perspective. We see how important we are to Him, so important that He died for us on the cross. We see that we are valued not because of how much we make or how many times our picture is seen in the paper. Remember we are just

specks on this planet which revolves around a sun that is just a speck in the Milky Way. But because God loves, we are not just specks, but God's beloved children.

Martin Luther said of the Sabbath, "We should fear and love God that we should not despise preaching and God's Word, but hold it sacred, gladly hear and learn it." Not just on Sundays at church, but each time we read the Bible, as we study it with others, as we pray God's Word, as we talk about it with others, that is the Sabbath. It is the chance God gives us daily to let Him serve us. And each time that gives us God's perspective of who we are and why we are here.



Later this month is Father's Day. On that day we remember our earthly fathers. It helps give us a perspective. We remember where we came from and who we are. But not just once a year or every Sunday, but each day we can be into God's Word and experience the Sabbath—God's view.

Don Faas, a now sainted member of our church, made the processional cross out of stained glass in the front of our church. You can see through it. The Sabbath gives us a "cross-eyed" view of this world. As we come to worship and get into God's Word, we see things through the cross. That gives us the right perspective of who are—who everyone else is—because we know who our God is as our loving Savior, Christ Jesus.