**Biblical Reflection on Jubilee Year**

*What does the word jubilee mean to you?*

*How can we make our bicentenary celebration a time of grace for all?*

*In which ways can this celebration lead us to the future?*

**Lev.25:8-28**

 When seven sabbaths of years have passed, that is, seven times seven years, there shall be the time of the seven weeks of years, that is forty-nine years. Then on the tenth day of the seventh month sound the trumpet loudly. On this Day of Atonement sound the trumpet all through the land. Keep holy the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom for all the inhabitants of the land. It shall be a jubilation year for you when each one shall recover his property and go back to his family. In this fiftieth year, your year of Jubilee, you shall neither sow nor reap the aftergrowth, nor gather the grapes from the uncultivated vines. This Jubilee year shall be holy for you, and you shall eat what the field yields of itself without cultivation.

 In this year of Jubilee each of you shall recover his own property. When you sell something to your neighbor or buy something from him, do not wrong one another. Ac-cording to the number of years after the Jubilee, you shall buy it from your neighbor and according to the number of years left for harvesting crops he shall sell to you. When the years are many the price shall be greater and when the years are few the price shall be less, for it is the number of crops that he is selling to you. So you shall not wrong one another but you shall fear your God, for I am Yahweh, your God. Carry out my precepts and obey my laws. In that way you will live securely in the land. The land will give its fruit so that you may have food in abundance and live securely.

But if you ask: What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not sow or gather crops?; see that I will send you my blessing in the sixth year that it may produce enough for three years. So in the eighth year the remains of the old crop will provide you with what to sow and to eat until the harvest of the ninth year is ready.

 The land shall not be sold forever for the land is mine, where you are but strangers and guests of mine. In all the territory you occupy, the land is to be redeemed.

 When your brother becomes poor and sells his property, his nearest relative is to come and buy back what his relative has sold. If the man has no relatives to buy back his property, but later has sufficient means to redeem it, he will calculate the value based on the number of years since he sold it and refund the balance to the man who bought it and in that way he shall recover his property. But if he does not find the means to repay him, what has been sold shall remain with the buyer until the Jubilee year when it must be given back to its original owner without any payment.

Luke. 4-18,19

Jesus then unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and new sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and announce the Lord’s year of mercy.”

Leviticus chapter 25 speaks of the Jubilee Year that was supposed to be celebrated by the Israelites. As we prepare ourselves to celebrate the 200th year of our Foundation let us go back to the Bible to see what inspirations we can draw so that we can celebrate our fourth jubilee in a meaningful way.

**Reflection**

Every 50th year the Israelites are to blow a trumpet throughout the land to call all people to keep holy the fiftieth year and to proclaim freedom for all the inhabitants of the land. Slaves are to be set free and each one is to recover his property and go back to the family. It is to be a year of rest for the people and for the land. It is also to be a year of rejoicing.

Jubilee year reminds us who we are. It reminds us that we are children of God called to live in right relationship with God, with one another and with the whole of creation.

Since we are God’s children we cannot be salves of one another. Due to difficult life circumstances if one sells him/herself to another it cannot last that way. Slaves are to be redeemed. If there is no one to redeem the slave in the 50 th year he/she is to be freed anyway, without payment.

People are not supposed to go on working nonstop. They are to take a time of rest in the sabbatical year and the jubilee year.

The land belongs primarily to God. We cannot exploit it any way we like. It is to be given a time of rest every sabbatical year and every jubilee year. The land is capable of producing more than we need. In six years it can produce what we need for seven years..

We are not sure if the Israelites truly practiced the Jubilee Year as stated in the Bible. Yet we can ask ourselves if the principles on which the whole idea of jubilee Year is built, are relevant for us today. The land that belongs to God is destined for all His children.

All are to enjoy the fruits of the land. Due to difficult life circumstances if one is to sell the property, the buyer cannot hold it in perpetuity. In the Jubilee year it is to be returned to the original owner without any payment. According to this system it is not the land that is sold but the number of crops up to the Jubilee Year. (Lev.25:13-17)

In the Jubilee Year all differences are to be settled and start a new life at equal basis as children of God. Nobody is to hold another in bondage. Nobody is to exploit another. The land is to be given to the original owners. Land is also to take a time of rest.

The two main themes that are in the practice of the Jubilee Year are Release and Rest.

In the Gospel of Luke, at the beginning of his public ministry Jesus proclaims the year of grace, when the captives will be released, the blind will recover sight and the oppressed will go free.

**Questions for Reflection**

How can we integrate these into our Jubilee Year?

What is the rest that we and our earth need?

What are the modern forms of slavery from which we need to be liberated and we need to help others to liberate themselves?

What is the call we here with regard to returning to right relationship with God with one another and with the whole of creation