



I am continually amazed at the power of RE-, aren't you?

You have no idea what I mean do you?

Ok, let's try this. When I was a teenager, I was a bit of a shade-tree mechanic. I did what I could to keep my family's vehicles running at minimal expense. I replaced a power steering line in my mother's Ford Taurus one time. I set a day aside to work on it. The fix was simple enough in concept; simply unbolt the line at both ends and re-bolt the new one. The real problem was that the line had to snake down, through, around, up, beside, and along virtually every part in the engine compartment and it was made of rigid metal. I had to unbolt a dozen other components and move them out of the way just to get the line in place. It took me all day and into the evening. Once all the parts were back in place and the line was bolted at one end, I only needed to rebolt the other end, I couldn't do it. The threads on the bolt were not lining up. I'd mated at least 100 other bolts that day with no problem. It's a simple task, but now I had tried fifty times to no avail. I was worried I had the wrong part and would have to undo all the work I had done and replace it again. I was frustrated with myself for not being able to do a simple task. I decided to try one more time. I felt the first thread take seat and start to turn. It was going! Then with the second turn the line flexed, popped free, and nearly hit me in the face. I jumped out from under the hood and in exasperation, yelled something indecipherable at the top of my lungs and threw the wrench at the ground. The wrench landed awkwardly and bounced hurdling end-over-end down the driveway, across the alleyway where it slammed into our neighbor's fence with a loud thud. I was positively red with frustration when a voice came from behind me saying, "Why don't you take a break." It was my mother and she suggested I take the evening off, rest up, and finish the job in the morning. I thought it was a terrible idea, but I couldn't bring myself to get back under the hood for the moment, so I took her advice. The next morning I woke, not so angry, calm, and REfreshed. The bolt threaded home on the first try. I was finished in five minutes.

I can't tell you what precisely made the difference that day, but I do know that it seems to be a part of the fabric of the universe where things need RE; not just REfreshing, but also REjuvenating. Today is my first day back in the office after a week of vacation. There's a lot going on at FBC and to tell you the truth, I hated to be away right now. I'm glad I took some time though. I can see some of the plans and issues we're working on in a whole new light after a few days working in the yard and being away. Speaking of the yard, it's looking REnewed. Anna and I spent the week tearing out the old landscaping in our front yard and REplacing it with new edging, flowers, and mulch. REplacing some plants gave our home a REnewed look and I feel REjuvenated for having done so. You see? RE is everywhere. RE-juvenation, RE-purposing, RE-cycling, RE-booting, RE-freshing, RE-kindling, RE-demption, RE-conciliation, and a thousand other RE-'s.

It's everywhere because that's the way God designed the world. Those ancient theologians who brought us the book of Genesis in the Bible REflected upon God's creative work and told us that every seventh day was set aside as Sabbath – a time of stepping away from the rigors of work to REflect, REst, REnew. Later, the idea of taking a sabbatical year arose. Every seventh year the agriculture at the center of life was to simply stop. They would save up their stores in the six years prior to ensure they would not have to sow or reap during the sabbatical year. They would REst and the fields would lie fallow, as it turns out it is good agrarian practice. On the eighth year, the fields produced more because their nutrients were REplenished. You see, it isn't just people that need RE, even the earth needs it. In fact, there is a description in Leviticus 25 of a kind of super-sabbath year. Every seventh sabbatical year (7x7 = every 49 years) on the day of atonement, the day the people were to be REdeemed from their sins, a shofar blast would signal the beginning of the festivities for the year, which included:

Fields lying fallow (REplenish)

Land ownership REverted to its original owners

Prisoners were REleased

Indentured servants RETurned to their families

The people REcommitted themselves to God's statutes

The people REMembered God's faithfulness in bringing them out of Egypt

It was a complete REboot of society that happened about every fifty years. Individuals were subjected to the power of RE, the people collectively were subjected to the power of RE, the land and all creation was subjected to the power of RE, even the economy and the criminal justice systems were subjected to the power of RE, all of life and existence were subjected to the power of RE. Are you tired of reading the non-word "RE"? I'm tired of typing it. So let me give you a new word.

That year in which all of the cosmos tangible and intangible was REdeemed was referred to with the Hebrew word, "jubile". That word is an ancestor of our English word, "jubilee". In the 25th chapter of Leviticus we read about God proclaiming a year of Jubilee!

Here at First Baptist Church of Rochester, we too are proclaiming a year of Jubilee!

On September 24th we will begin our program year on a Sunday which will henceforth be known as Jubilee Sunday and for the year following we will be celebrating our 200th *Anniversary: A Year of Jubilee*. We will celebrate, yes, but we

will celebrate with purpose. We will spend our bicentennial year imagining together what it would be like if Jubilee truly came to us as individuals or to our church or to our city or to our world. Each of our celebratory events and initiatives will fit at least one of six implications of Jubilee identified by the Bicentennial Planning Team:

- Forgiveness
- Liberty and Justice
- Stewardship
- Mercy
- Redemption
- Celebration

We will explore the ways in which these Jubilee concepts have been a part of the first 200 years of FBC life and we will lean into how they will show up not only throughout our year of celebration but also in the next 200 years! Watch for more specific information about the coming celebration through our usual channels of communication and by checking in, regularly, at our new web page www.fbcrochester.net/jubilee as it is developed and updated. A celebration is coming to First Baptist Church of Rochester. September 24th Jubilee begins!

Pastor Brent