

Luke 13.10-17

10 One Sabbath day as Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, 11 he saw a woman who had been crippled by an evil spirit. She had been bent double for eighteen years and was unable to stand up straight. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, *“Dear woman, you are healed of your sickness!”* 13 Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised God!

14 But the leader in charge of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus had healed her on the Sabbath day. *“There are six days of the week for working,”* he said to the crowd. *“Come on those days to be healed, not on the Sabbath.”*

15 But the Lord replied, *“You hypocrites! Each of you works on the Sabbath day! Don’t you untie your ox or your donkey from its stall on the Sabbath and lead it out for water? 16 This dear woman, a daughter of Abraham, has been held in bondage by Satan for eighteen years. Isn’t it right that she be released, even on the Sabbath?”*

17 This shamed his enemies, but all the people rejoiced at the wonderful things he did.

The Word of God for the People of God.
Thanks be to God.

“Choosing to Do Good”
8.21.16

One day, Jesus was teaching on Sabbath
He noticed a woman crippled, bent over.
Jesus called her to Him.
“You are free/healed of your sickness.”
He touched her. Stood straight.
Woman thanked and praised God.

Great story. Healing miracle. Not end of story.

Pious religious leaders in the house. Indignant about this. Incensed, one of the leaders addressed this situation.

“People, don’t you know there are six days to do work. Come on one of those days and be healed. This is the Sabbath. We must keep it holy.”

Not to back down from a challenge, Jesus also addressed the crowd:

”Hypocrites! If your animal falls into a pit on the Sabbath, don’t you rescue it? Don’t you feed and care for your animals even on the Sabbath? How much more valuable is this life? This Daughter of Abraham is in need and is now whole because she is dearly loved by her Heavenly Father.”

Jesus performed other miracles on the Sabbath, and each time, someone would challenge Him about what is lawful on the Sabbath. (Luke 6,10,11)

Jesus would deal with those who challenged Him. But He didn’t engage in an argument, quarrel or fight. People were watching Him closely, to see what He would do on the Sabbath.

(pluck grain, heal someone)

Not only did Jesus see the person in need, He also perceived the hearts of those around Him.

Jesus asked: *“Is it lawful (right) to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath? To save life or destroy it?”*

(Luke 6.9; 14.3)

His approach silenced the crowd. Then He would perform the miracle. Heal lame. Restore life.

The Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath.

And people were amazed... but not all.

Some looked for ways to plot against Him. kill Him.

Like these other Sabbath stories, Jesus performs a miracle on the Sabbath, then is challenged.

Different ways to look at this story. Let's consider options.

- 1) The Woman was bent over. *“Spirit of Infirmity.” “Crippled by an Evil spirit.” “illness was often connected with an evil spirit”* (8.2-3; 9.42; 13.11) (The HarperCollins Study Bible; NRSV; © 1993; HarperCollins, Publishers, Inc; New York; Notes on Luke 13; p. 1986)

“What sins are holding us back? What is keeping us from being all that we can be? What Spiritual malady is keeping us from standing up?”

- 2) Jesus' words to woman: *“Woman, you are healed; set free!”*

Dawn Chesser:

The central story of Exodus is how the Law is *“all about setting people free for praise and service to God and neighbor.”* (Dawn Chesser: Discipleship Ministries)

Consider: *From What do we need to be set free? Sin, financial burden, harmful or abusive relationship, job situation, voices in our heads keeping us from being who we are meant to be. In what ways do we need to be set free?*

- 3) The crippled woman was healed instantly. Jesus called her, spoke to her, then touched her. Instantly, she stood straight. Do we believe that God is still the God of miracles?

In what ways does God perform miracles today? In what ways does God bring healing? Sometimes it may not be what we expect. Sometimes the ultimate healing may be death. Are we open to God's touch and miracles? Do we believe in miracles?

- 4) Role of Women in Church/Ministry - in Jesus' day, women were 2nd class citizens.

> In some churches women are not allowed to be ordained. Only about 60 yr ago could women take official leadership role as ordained clergy in the UMC. They served in other capacities, but were not ordained. [Jessica Stonecypher. Deacon. Word, service, justice].

This crippled woman was in synagogue, unusual for the time.

Dawn Chesser describes it like this: *“In the deformed condition in which this woman had found herself for so long, she had also become religiously marginalized. People with such conditions were not allowed in the temple, period. It's a bit surprising she was even allowed in the synagogue. In the synagogue, she would have been seated near or at the very back of the room, with the other women, who were not permitted to participate actively in the worship offered up front by the men. Women, of course, were not even supposed to speak.”*

Jesus would have been seated front and center since He was a teacher.

Suddenly, in the midst of His teaching, Jesus noticed the woman, recognized her, and called her to Him.

“This meant the woman was now being empowered by Jesus to move into the place of the men. *There* he laid hands on her. Immediately, she stood up straight and began praising God, thanking God worshiping God!”

Think about it. “A woman who had been crippled for eighteen years was now standing and praising God (in the place) where the men worshiped.”

Some may have wanted to scold Jesus and kick the woman out of the synagogue, because she was a woman. a second class citizen. We could *consider what it means to be sons and daughters of God. And what it means to be One as the Body of Christ,*

Dawn Chesser (Discipleship Ministries)

5) Synagogue Leader so focused on Rules, could not get over the fact that something good actually happened.

Many rules beside ten commandments. Leviticus. Some saw Jesus as a Rule breaker. Yet He said, I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill the law. (Matthew)

Think about those in leadership, whose main job is to make sure we do things in a certain way. In the life of the church, there are those who write the law, interpret the law, and enforce the law.

For some, “at all costs, we will keep the law.” Some focus on the Letter of the Law. exactly as law is stated.

For some, Keeping the Law was of utmost importance. One of the main laws of the Jews was keeping the Sabbath Holy. Exodus 20.8-11:

8 “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy. (Exodus 20:8-11 New Living Translation (NLT))

Not all interpreted this law the same. One interpretation, following the Letter of the Law was “*Do absolutely NO work of any kind on the Sabbath.*”

When Jesus healed this woman, He was breaking the Sabbath. That was considered work.

So we can consider how we become so entrenched in our laws, our rules, our policies, that we focus only on what is right or wrong and may miss out on important relationships or opportunities. IWW do rules/laws hamper us from being all that God wants us to be?

Do we keep the Letter of the Law or the Spirit of the Law? Are we Rule keepers or Rule Breakers?

6) Or could it be that the greater issue was not about breaking the rules as much as it was about control?

“The synagogue leader wasn't just mad about breaking a rule about not doing work on the Sabbath. But rather Who was in control... Not just in control in this service, but in control of the culture as he knew it. Dawn Chesser (Discipleship Ministries)

In What Ways are we afraid of losing control?

There are all sorts of ways to look at this story...

7) What was Jesus' response to the synagogue leader? Jesus knew the Law, he was not a Law breaker. He pushed the thinking of the people of His day. When pushed and questioned about healing this woman, He does not engage in an argument with the people. He simply asked a question. *"If your animal needs to be fed or rescued on the Sabbath, don't you take care of it? Of course, you would take care of your animals. Feed. water. Rescue. They are a life that is valuable. How much more important is this woman's life? She is a daughter of Abraham. A child of God.* Jesus knew how to silence a crowd by simply choosing to do good. We are all children of God. We may not all agree with each other. Or see eye to eye. We may not all interpret the law the same way, but we can choose to do good.

Block party. We have opportunity to do good. But we can get caught up in the details.

What time is my shift? Or what job do I have?

Who Cleans up? Sets up? Who shows up? What if my shirt doesn't fit? Who picked the color or design anyway?

We may be upset about something. Some may choose NOT to attend because of the time or location or music or tent or whatever. This is our opportunity to do good. We can Shine the light of Christ. We can feed a hungry child. We can touch a lonely, weary soul. We can speak words of love and hope and grace to others.

Every moment of every day we make choices.

We can do harm or we can do good.

We can judge others or we can accept others.

We can ignore people or we can care for people.

We can focus on rituals, rules and policies or we can focus on people and their needs.

In the words of John Wesley:

"Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can."

Friends, God is the source of every good and perfect gift, and blesses us in order that we might be vessels of God's boundless blessings to others. Amen.