

## The Liberating Power of God

Luke 13:10-13

February 21, 2021

Take your bibles in hand if you will, and turn to Luke 13:10. Last week we finished up a long section of Jesus' teaching, started in Luke 12:1 and went all the way to Luke 13:9. So today we're kind of catching up with Jesus as he's moved on from that setting and he's moved on to another setting. We're going to catch up with him as he teaches in a synagogue as he heals a crippled woman and faces yet more opposition from dead religion, dead religionists.

Luke 13, I'm going to start reading in verse 10. "Now {Jesus} was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over, could not fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, 'Woman, you are freed from your disability.' And he laid his hands on her, immediately she was made straight. She glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had

healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, 'There are six days in which work ought to be done, come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.'

"And then the Lord answered him, 'you hypocrites. Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?' As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame. And all the people rejoiced at the glorious things that were being done by him.

"He said therefore, 'What is the Kingdom of God like and to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden and it grew, became a tree. And the birds of the air made nests in its branches. And again he said, 'To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until it was all leavened.'" That section from verse 10 to verse 21 all one piece, you can see that the parable's actually a

response to what had happened, what had just happened in the synagogue setting.

But it's all of one piece and it's one account, and I had at least hoped to cover versus 10 to 17 in one piece. I wanted to preach it that way. But in God's good providence, we're celebrating the Lord's table today, which means time is a little more limited. We can't do justice to the whole account. So I've taken that as the Lord would have us to make the healing of this woman, The first four verses of the text there, that should be the object of our exposition in our meditation today.

And the more I've gotten into that section, and seeing all that's there, and I'm so happy to follow that leading of providence and draw this out so that we can all rejoice here. There are three characters who feature most prominently in the narrative as we see. Our Lord, he features in both sections, the first half and the second half. And then, in the first half, there's a severely crippled woman she features as a character here, and then in the second-half there's a rather callous religious man.

In the first part of the narrative, our Lord interacts with the woman. In the second part he interacts with the man. Jesus draws the woman close and she willingly draws near to him. He rebukes the man. And he remains at a distance. Jesus has words of tender mercy for the woman pleased to declare liberty to this captive, liberty to this one who has been sorely oppressed. He has words of reproof rebuke for the man, who blinded by his pride, tries to impose a very, very wrongheaded application of the Sabbath principle, to try to stifle Jesus' work.

As we read to the end of the count, we can see the woman didn't just suffer the bondage of Satan, though she did. She didn't suffer, just suffer under the bondage of a crippling weakness in her body, though she did. She suffered under the oppressive bondage of false religion as well. And Jesus came to set her free from all of it.

So my hope and prayer today is that you'll see the mercy and the power, the grace of God in Christ, who is the Good Shepherd who enters into this scene and shepherds his sheep, even in the midst of enemies and adversaries. I want you to see

the grace of God in Christ as he interacts with this woman, as he comes to liberate her from her bondage.

That's exactly what he came to do. And if you're here today and you know that liberating power of God, then. I hope that this truth stirs your affections for Christ, reminds you of your great salvation. Let this truth stimulate joy and gratitude in your heart and put all of life into perspective. Because if you're liberated from bondage. What else matters? What else troubles you?

You have joy and gratitude in your heart because of God who is unchanging. Because his favor rests upon you, and that will never go away. And let that put all troubles and worries and anxieties and fears into perspective. Let them, let it dispel them, drive them away. And let that be your attitude as you come to the Lord's table today.

If you're here today and you haven't yet experienced the liberating power of God in Christ, then listen carefully, because this message is for you. In the first part versus 10 to

13, this is the liberating power of God. The liberating power of God will be the theme of this sermon. Next time it will be the separating power from God, of God. As we see him in his power, he separates the one from the other. But here it's the liberating power of God, and we're going to treat those four verses as four points.

So for your notes, it'll be the situation, the condition, the liberation, and the restoration. The situation, condition, liberation and restoration. Point one, the situation. What's the situation? What's the scene? What's the setting? Luke sets the scene showing Jesus engaged in what is really his typical occupation, verse 10, Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues of the Sabbath, on the Sabbath. Teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. Sabbath rolls around every week. He's there in the synagogue, and he's teaching. He's regularly employed in teaching work.

We don't know the exact location of the synagogue, and we don't know the exact timing, but it's probably still prior to the feast of dedication, which is the December time frame as we understand it today. He's, he's going to head up to Jerusalem

for that feast of dedication, dedication, and we can actually read about what happens up at that feast during that time in John 9 and John 10. Those two chapters of John's Gospel cover that time period.

But even though we don't know the exact time or place, we know that he's probably close to Jerusalem, probably still in Judea, maybe even in Perea crossing over the Jordan River to the other side, perhaps even he's even migrated as far as Jericho. We're not sure, Luke doesn't tell us, because it's really not germane to the point of this narrative. What is important to this account is what Luke has written here, and setting it up that Jesus is in a synagogue, it's on the Sabbath, and he's teaching.

Jesus teaching in the synagogue reminds us, it's synagogue attendance, every Sabbath day was habitual for Jesus. He was faithful to attend. We could just put it in our terms. We could, he's faithful to attend church. He's faithful to attend worship in the synagogue every Lord's Day. For them it was the Sabbath. For us it's the Sunday, the first day of the week, the day that

the Lord rose from the dead. But that was his custom according to Luke 4:16.

And as Jesus became a well known rabbi, popular itinerant rabbi traveling from village to village, he was often invited to preach, to those in attendance on that Sabbath day or perhaps he was there for a series of Sabbaths if they invited him to, to do so. And typical synagogue service began with singing and prayer, and was followed by the recitation of the Shema. Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear oh Israel, the Lord, our God, the Lord is one." And then there was a reading from the Torah, a reading from the prophets. And after those readings, the reader would take his seat, the scrolls would be carefully rolled up, put away in a chest, and then it was time for the preacher to address the congregation.

Men and women alike would attend the synagogue, but the readings and the preaching were more aimed at the men. As was clear from the seating arrangement. Women were seated around the perimeter of the, of the synagogue, seated and, and then men would sit and occupy the middle section of the synagogue. So the men were in the middle. They were seated in rows in the main



section. They had a clear line of sight and earshot, easy earshot of the preacher.

Even though the synagogue was arranged to target men, they were the spiritual heads of their households. With the teaching of the ministry of the synagogue, Scripture is clear that women are to learn as well. From Genesis all the way through, women are to learn as well. Even though there are social and cultural traditions that develop that did marginalized or even exclude women altogether, it's very clear that Jesus ignored all those social conventions. He treated men and women as equals, that both sexes having the image of God and then recipients of God's grace and God's word and God's teaching.

Luke seems to delight in drawing out those kinds of issues in the first century. Showing a world that has gone wrong how they need to think about men and women learning. We need to be quick to point out here as we think about the setting and the scene here, the woman who becomes the subject of Jesus' healing ministry, whom Jesus in verse 16 calls a daughter of Abraham, she's in attendance here on this particular day, and it would

seem, for reasons that we'll mention, she's been attending synagogue every week for the at least the past eighteen years.

She's been there. She's been listening. She's been in attendance. She's been faithful. As Jesus comes to her synagogue, she is going to, on this day, get something she did not expect. She's going to experience the liberating power of God through his words and his works.

I love what J.C. Ryle says about this woman, "She came sorrowing, but she went home rejoicing." So true. He also had this to say, J.C. Ryle, "Sickness someone does not used as an excuse for not worshipping in God's house. [That's notable] In spite of her suffering, she found her way to where the sabbath day and the word of God were honored and where God's people met together." End Quote.

It's sad to see today how many stay away from church. We've seen this exposed in these coronavirus times. How many have really taken it as an excuse to drop out altogether? Obviously, that's not you. You're here, right? But we see, we've seen how

much unfaithfulness has been exposed, how much of a lack of a commitment has been exposed, and not because people are actually sick or suffering, but because they fear the potential of being sick or suffering.

Or, because they've acquiesced to the voice of another authority in their life, submitting them, submitted themselves to a false authority in their life, one who rises above the command of the Lord Jesus Christ. And due to this sin of submitting to false authority, of not honoring Christ as Lord in the heart, too many these days are staying away from the fellowship of the saints.

That means they're not obeying the "one anothers." Means they're not partaking of the Lord's supper. They're not submitting to the discipline of the church. I think about that pastor that Josh mentioned up in Canada.

Canadian government said only fifteen percent can come. He said, "I can't do that. I'm a shepherd. I need to open up the church and minister to the souls of people because there's

something more important than their physical bodies. It's their souls that are going to live on past their bodies." And so he was preaching, faithfully preaching, and they arrested him and took him to jail. And they said, "We'll let you out on this condition that you no longer pastor that church."

He said, "I can't. I can't do that. I can't do that. I can't be faithful to what you're saying and faithful to Christ, who is my Lord and your Lord." He's still there. As far as I know, he's locked up. His dear wife. Teaching her children through that they can't see their father, she can't see her husband. He was even in isolation because of it.

You think that's going to stay up north of the border? Coming here folks. J.C. Ryle drives his observation home when he writes this, "Let us never forget that our feelings about Sunday are a sure test of the state of our souls. The person who can find no pleasure in giving God one day in the week is clearly unfit for heaven. Heaven itself is nothing other than an eternal Sabbath. If we cannot enjoy a few hours in God's service once a week in this world, it's obvious that we would not enjoy an eternity in his service in the world to come." End Quote.

So this woman. She's a daughter of Abraham. She, like Jesus himself, prioritized that weekly observance of the Sabbath. She's there to worship. She's there to pray. She's there to learn. She's there to hear the reading of the Scripture.

Many families in that day did not have their own copy of the torah, the prophets, they didn't have a copy of the law and the prophets at home. They came to the synagogue to hear it read. Probably committing much of it to memory, but they wanted that reinforce all their memory verses reinforced through the reading of Scripture. And then they need to hear it preached. They wanted it preached to their souls because their souls needed to drink in the life giving word of God.

So she came there to learn. Jesus came there to teach. Perfect match. What did he teach? We've been exposed to so much of his teaching at this point in Luke's gospel. There's so much more coming, so much good stuff coming in Luke's gospel. But looking ahead to 18 in, in verses 18 to 21, which we read just earlier, we get a hint of the subject of his instruction that he taught in the synagogue. There's no break in the narrative

between verse 17 and verse 18, and in point of fact Luke uses that inferential particle therefore. Therefore, based on that, keeps this account connected to the two Kingdom parables. He said therefore, and then he taught about this growing influence of the Kingdom.

So Jesus is teaching on the same theme. His favorite subject, the one he sent the twelve out to preach. The one he sent the seventy-two to preach, he sent them to preach the Kingdom of God. And all that it takes to come into it repentance, faith. He's calling everyone everywhere to repent and to believe. He's calling him to be, make haste and make every effort and be diligent to be reconciled to God.

So they can enter into his Kingdom and guess what? This woman's listening. She's listening. As the preacher in the synagogue on this Sabbath day, Jesus would have been there teaching from a seated position. The seat was elevated up above on an elevated platform above the, the floor, and he was able to see out over the entire congregation. And as he taught, and as he looked out, he saw in the back that this woman got his attention and takes us to a second point, the condition.

We've seen the situation. Now we're going to look at the condition. Jesus looks out. He sees this woman's, what we can really call a pitiful condition. Pitiabile condition. You can imagine her there crippled and her crippled frames straining to look up at him. Look at verse 11, "And behold [Luke introduces it with that exclamation, behold] there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for 18 years. She's bent over and could not fully straighten herself." The way Luke describes that, Jesus was in the middle of his teaching. When he spotted this disabled woman, in fact. With this exclamation, behold, though the woman's condition was, was quite a sight, evidently.

Her crippled figure Jesus could see, it had arrested his attention. And Luke tells us two things, he tells us the cause of her disability and then the effect of her disability. I, I'd imagine, being a physician, this must have been so satisfying to Luke, as the author of this gospel, not only to get a proper read on the symptoms, but also to get the right diagnosis and the cause of her condition. The actual reason for her symptoms.

So often the cause is hidden from the medical examiner, but not here. Here he knows. So Luke starts, as every good physician wants to, starts with a cause. This woman had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. Literally it's having a spirit of weakness. That's the literal translation there, having a spirit of infirmity, could even be translated a spirit of disability. There's a spiritual cause for this woman's physical condition.

It's been with her for a long time, at least the last, or for the last eighteen years. Long enough for her to have sought help. Be examined by doctors. Receive some attempt at treatment. Obviously nothing has helped. And now the fact that she'd been like this for eighteen years tells us she's been suffering for a long time.

Doesn't tell us much about her age. We really don't know that. Pretty unlikely she's a young woman at this point. Supposing this condition came on, maybe in her late teens, early twenties, should be nearing forty about this time. Maybe a middle aged woman, maybe an older woman. Lot of years though to suffer like this, eighteen years.



Some may think be tempted to think because Luke describes her as having a disabling spirit that means she was demon possessed. I don't think that's quite right. First, notice that even though this is, a this disabling spirit, a spirit of weakness had been on her for eighteen years. Notice that Luke makes no comment whatsoever about it having any effect on her speech or her behavior.

That's notable, almost certain, that this is a unique case in the gospels recording instance not of demonic possession, but demonic oppression. Oppression, not possession, you say, "what's the difference?" Demonic possession is when a human being is inhabited by an evil spirit. The word, the word can be translated for, for being demon possessed can be demonized, someone who is possessed by an evil spirit, in indwelt inhabited by an evil spirit.

And in all the recorded cases of clearly identified demonic possession in Scripture, the person's personality is completely subdued and overwhelmed by the demon. The person is dominated by the evil spirit. Remember the demoniac the Jesus encountered in Capernaum in Luke 4:33? Remember how that demon used that man's

vocal cords to speak out to Jesus, "Ha, what have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the holy one of God." That's not the man speaking, that's the demon speaking through that guy.

Remember the Garasene demoniac? He crossed over, Luke, at Luke Chapter 8, verse 26 and following. And remember that, man, he's in a, he's in like this pathetic animal like state or condition. He's, he's stripped down, no clothing, night and day. He's in the tombs. He's crying out, cutting himself with stones. That's not normal. He fell before Jesus, and again the demon, using his voice said "What have you to do with me, Jesus, son of God most high, I beg you, don't torment me."

That's not the man. The demon's tormenting the man and demon is about to be tormented by Christ. Remember after the transfiguration, Luke 9:37? That account, father came to Jesus about his son. His son's been exhibiting this strange selfdestructive behavior that's demon inspired. The spirit seizes him, the father says, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him, so he foams at the mouth, he seizes up, foams at

the mouth, and it shatters him. And that demon was even throwing that kid's body into the fire, trying to drown him in water.

Clear contrast between all those clear cases of demonic possession and this woman. This woman isn't described like that at all. There's no effect on her speech, her behavior, her personality. In fact, she's been attending worship in the synagogue. She's been coming regularly, coming faithfully. She's known to these people in attendance for at least these eighteen years. You say, "How do you know that?" Because down in verse 16. Which we'll get to next time. But when Jesus rebukes the hypocrisy of the synagogue ruler, and along with all those who share his point of view, Jesus is overt there about eighteen years, as if she's been coming in and out of the synagogue the whole time.

Luke's way of describing this number eighteen, *dekadyo*, eighteen verse 11 Jesus, when he describes the same number, he breaks that number up into two parts, saying *deka kai okto ette*. So he's saying *deka*, ten, and eight years. He's trying to, he's trying to lay it to their, to their, he's trying to lay the charge to them. He's trying to pierce their consciences. "Behold

[he says in verse 16] Satan bound her ten and eight years." He draws it out.

He's making these people soak in the knowledge that they've been watching this woman come and go into their midst for ten and eight years the entire time. Unlike the Demoniac in Luke 4, she hasn't spoken out. She's not acted out in such a way as to draw any attention. Demons seem to be unable to hide being in the presence of Jesus, hearing his teaching. It grates at them, it tortures them, it torments them. His very presence smokes them out of their hiding, and it reveals their hidden presence. They simply cannot stay quiet when he's around. But they croak and they groan and they moan.

So it would seem, just based on the contrast with actual cases of demonic possession. I'll give more reasons later why I think this to be true. But this is a case of demonic oppression, not possession. Further this woman, is a believing woman. She's not an unbeliever.

A couple of commentators suggest that this woman had sinned in some way to bring on this demonic oppression, this disabling spirit. She'd sinned in some way and kind of invited this, brought this on herself. I think that's an incorrect way to look at this. In fact, I think it's not only incorrect, I think that can turn into a very cruel position to hold.

We have plenty of biblical evidence, plenty of evidence to show us that there are times, in ways that are not known to us that we're unable to trace out, but mysterious ways that are sovereignly directed by God, demonic activity can be used to trouble and to test and thereby refine a true believer. Sometimes that's because of the chastening hand of the Lord who disciplines the one he loves, but at other times the reasons aren't known to us. We read in the first two chapters of Job, don't we, that Satan himself, he solicited God's permission to go and afflict Job, and God permitted it because of sovereign purposes. Job had no idea what was going on up in the councils of heaven. Job was a righteous man. Wasn't because of his sin, it's because of God's purposes

The apostle Paul likewise he testified similarly. Second Corinthians 12:7, God gave him a thorn in the flesh. Remember that a messenger of whom? Satan. A messenger of Satan to harass the mighty apostle Paul. Why? Because Paul was sinning? No, Paul even learned something about the sovereign purpose of God through that whole thing he said, "to keep me from becoming conceited."

We don't see any signs that this woman was possessed by a demon, and I think absent any clear evidence that her sins brought on demonic oppression, I think we should give this woman a strong favor and benefit of the, benefit of the doubt, don't you? We should see this, I think, in the same way that Jesus told us to view the man born blind, John 9:3, "It's not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."

And so it is here. It's not that this woman sinned or her parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in her as well. Nevertheless, There's still 18 years of spiritual oppression upon her. And they've taken a toll on her body. She's

developed a severe physical disability that's crippling and painful.

End of verse 11 Jesus gives the physical symptom and, or I should say Luke gives the physical symptom and he says the same thing in two different ways here. He says she was bent over number one, and could not fully straighten herself. So it's not just that she was bent over from time to time and could get back up. It that she was bent over and permanently that way. She was stuck in a bent over position. She couldn't straighten herself up.

Bent over, literally. She was doubled over. She was bent in half. And then, unable to stand erect, she had no power whatsoever to straighten herself out. The picture we get here is, is, is really pathetic, isn't it? It's this, such you just imagine, there's such a heavy spiritual oppression from this demonic influence that it's been pressing her down over the years.

At first you've got her eyes looking down. And then she's no longer able to look up and catch other people's gaze. She's looking down. Her shoulders droop, the neck bends, and then the back follows. Where the head goes, the body follows. Further and further, she bows down, bows down, succumbing to the weight, succumbing to the pressure of the spiritual oppression until she's bent in half. And then the bones become set.

The spine somehow fusing ligaments, muscles of adjusted and hardened in place. Some medical experts have read this text, and they refer to this condition as *spondylitis deformans*. Bones of the spine being fused together. And now it causes her excruciating pain to be bent like that, even if she were to try to stand erect. Getting around itself is just a daily chore.

Just sitting in a chair, walking, everything that we take for granted. She had to think about everything, think about every step. Think about every move. This disabling spirit, because of who she was as a daughter of Abraham, may not have been able to invade her personality and wreak havoc on her, on her, on the inside, but it has done what it can to oppress and bury her, from the outside in.



She's got no strength. She's been fighting to stay mobile, and as it seems clear, she's been fighting to stay mobile so she can attend synagogue every single week. Because she knows without any power, without any strength of her own, she needs the Word. She needs Truth. Adding to the daily physical challenges this woman face she lived with the social consequences of her condition as well.

One commentator says people with, "with physical deformities were expected to remain socially invisible." The social stigma. Added it took it, took the physical pain and brought it into her heart. Where she's shunned and she's pushed away. More weight to an already heavy burden. More pain and sadness.

The fact that she's a woman. Sent her to the back of the synagogue anyway. She's invisible, overlooked, probably very alone. Onto this pathetic picture of a severely crippled woman, the light dawns because Jesus is there. He steps in and he brings with him liberating power and comes to deliver this woman.

I love this, point three, the liberation, the liberation. Jesus starts, where we need to understand all healing starts. He starts by treating the actual cause of her condition in verse 12. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you're freed from your disability."

I love how that starts, don't you? Jesus saw her. She may have been invisible to others, a social ghost. But Jesus saw her. She may have been deliberately ignored by those who are uncomfortable with an awkward appearance in their midst, an awkward form and frame, but Jesus saw her. Friend, take note of that.

No matter what others may think of you. No matter what you may think, others think of you. No matter what you may think about yourself. You need to know that Jesus sees you. He sees you and he loves you. And believe me, if he sees you with his omniscient gaze, he has no good reason in you to love you, right? Because we're all sinners before a holy God. What he sees when he looks deeply within us is, is sin. He sees offence against his Father.

He's not drawn to us because we're so lovable, likable. He loves us because he shares the very nature of God, because God is love. He loves us not because of who we are, and we're so great. He loves us because God is great and because God is love. Jesus sees. And not only does he see. But he has the heart and the desire to affect real and radical change in your life.

Notice that when he saw her Jesus, or Luke tells us here, that Jesus called her over. It's a verb that means he summoned her to himself. From her location at the outer periphery of the synagogue, and she had to notice him noticing her. So that she could tell his summoning was meant for her. "Who, me? You're calling to me?"

She had to rise and move toward him. He summoned her. He brought her out of the shadows and out of the periphery, out of the, the boundaries and the edges and the fringes, and he brought her into the midst of the synagogue. Why, did he want to embarrass her? No. He want to see God glorified in her. He wanted people to see and to take notice.

This deliverance, like every spiritual deliverance, begins with the omniscient Jesus seeing us and then calling us to himself with that effectual call, that loving voice of the shepherd that compels us to come. So whether she made it to the front of the room where he was, whether he spoke to her while she's still struggling to make her way across the floor, Jesus did not wait. He was pleased at that very moment to declare her deliverance. Woman, you're freed from your disability.

I like to think that as she moved toward him, he was also moving toward her. The verb translated freed, it's *apolyo*, *apolyo*. It's in the passive voice. So it's not just you're freed, but it's you have been freed, you've been set free. And the tense, the verb tense, emphasizes not only the fact, but also the continuing abiding result of being set free. You are and you remain released. You are set free. You are completely liberated. You are totally and utterly free.

He announced that freedom. A freedom from spiritual oppression that she had been bound under for eighteen years. He's just released her from that demonic oppression. He's

liberated her from that spirit of weakness or infirmity. His very presence, and his word, has commanded that spirit away. And that's the very first miracle that takes place here. It's an invisible miracle. It's invisible to everybody except him. Invisible to everybody else in the room.

He's liberated her. He's set her free. He's dealt with the actual deep cause of her condition. And yet, no one can see it. But so that we will know the real power of God to change, there's a fourth point. There's more to be done. Jesus sees that he's not unaware of that, he's not going to leave her to suffer the damage that's done by that foul spirit. Declaring her free has addressed the cause, but now he's going to address the effect. Still one more thing to do, a necessary thing, and that's full restoration.

So point four, the restoration. The restoration. Jesus attends to the woman's physical condition. He first dealt with her spiritual condition, the spiritual issue, the spiritual cause. Now he's dealing with the physical issues. So we could really call this, in the best sense of the word, a holistic miracle. It's accomplished in two stages. He deals with the

spiritual issues first, and then he deals with the physical issues.

The first and deepest, treated the cause in verse 12. The second treats the effect, the symptoms in verse 13. He laid his hands on her, it says there, immediately she's made straight. Laid his hands on her immediately, she's made straight. That first miracle drove away the oppressing demon. The second miracle, though, restored her crippled body.

The second was predicated upon the first. The second miracle couldn't have happened without the first before the first. Release from the demon came first. Ability to stand erect followed immediately after, but at the instigation and at the laying on of his hands. It's another unique aspect of this miracle, isn't it? That Jesus has laid his hands on someone who is victimized by demonic oppression? You really don't find that in the rest of the Gospels.

And what is pictures here is such, such tenderness. As Jesus applies a, a human touch to a woman who's probably felt

pretty alone and isolated for a long time, no real touch coming her way. It's really adding insult to injury, isn't it? Not just the bent spine, but also to suffer all those social effects that she had to go through.

I mean, the disability crippled her spine and it wrecked her posture. She had to fight just to walk in a straight line. I'd imagine that listening to Jesus in the synagogue, she just had to strain against a deformity to look up, even to catch a glimpse of the voice that she was hearing. The gracious words. "What mouth is that coming out of? Who is that?"

But imagine the social effects, the economic effects of this disability as everyone with, everyone who has back pain can imagine. Such painful crippling of the spine would make sleeping at night a challenge. And so robbed of sleep, every single night depletes whatever energy she might have had during the day. Limited her ability to work, limited her ability to be productive, to make a living, to contribute to the household. So she'd be in a dependent condition. She's a real charity case. She relies on the goodwill of others to help her, perhaps even to support her financially. That, that had to get to her, that

had to affect her heart, her sense of dignity, sense of belonging, contributing.

It affected her social standing and hindered her relationships. The social relational issues further complicated by really what was a widespread, very cruel theology. One that explained physical disability is having a direct relation to personal sin. I mean, what could be more cruel?

So when Jesus, when he laid his hands on her, in an instant all of that evaporated. In just a single touch of mercy his power drove away all that stuff. And think about it, this is a famous rabbi. He's been honored by the synagogue ruler to come and speak and invited to preach the Word of God to these people to address, so for him to address her personally, speaking to her, calling her out, identifying, isolating her and bringing her forward, and then to touch her with his hands, to lay his hands on her. Jesus has honored her.

He has identified with this woman. He's treated her with the dignity that is truly due to a daughter of Abraham. A



daughter of faith. More immediately, Jesus lays his hands on her because, well, he's not through with her yet. He needs to finish what he started. He needs to bring this miracle to its completion. He needs to bring it to its fulfillment. So this woman is fully restored, these, these bones had fused.

All this time, the ligaments were tight muscles without strength to make her stand erect. So we had to do for her what she could never, ever do on her own, what doctors could never do for her. He laid his hands on her, and by divine power he effected that second miracle to make her stand up erect, straight and tall, in an instant. No surgeries. No series of surgeries. No rods. No traction. Instant healing.

Interesting verb used to describe it. Perfect word though, *anorthoo*. Oh you hear the word orthotic in that word, *anorthoo*. Orthos means straight, so the verb *anorthoo*, in the active voice it refers to rebuilding a structure that's fallen down. Therefore, to rebuild, to restore. That's what he needed to do to her body. That's exactly what his power effected, a rebuilding, a restoring, and it took place, verse 13, took place

immediately. No surgery. No series of surgery. No traction. No painful, no chiropractor bills. No long and painful recovery.

Crooked fused spine, spine unfused. Spine perfectly straightened. All the nerves that had wound around and found other pathways right back into their spinal pathways. Rigid ligaments loosened, becoming flexible again. Weak muscles made strong.

Don't let any modern self proclaimed healer lie to you folks. All that crowd on TV. The Internet these days. This is what a true miracle of healing looks like. And if someone claims they have the power to heal, today, have them show you this. Take him to the hospital. Let's empty out the hospitals. This is, that's what Jesus is doing here. Full, complete, instantaneous healing. What a reason to rejoice.

What a reason to rejoice. This is a real life demonstration of the liberating power of God to set this woman free and restore her dignity, to restore her, her health. What a reason

to rejoice. There are several observations that I'd like to make here as we close here before we turn our minds to communion.

First observation is that all of us without any exception, we're in the same basic condition as this woman is, are we not? We're in the same basic condition. Perhaps some are more, apparently, in her condition than others, some outwardly more so. But figuratively speaking, metaphorically speaking, and spiritually speaking, the weight of a fallen world has crippled us, disfigured us.

Our own personal sins against God have brought into our lives some terrible consequences that we've had to live through. Some very real sorrows we've brought upon ourselves. Spiritually speaking, we're a twisted, mangled wreck. Like this woman, we're bowed over, bent down in some way, and that's whether it shows up on the outside or not. Sometimes very well put together people, they are dying on the inside.

Because of our sins, we're socially disabled, relationally disabled. More importantly, we're, we're social outcasts. But

here on this earth we find people that look a lot like ourselves. You know, we're social, social outcasts in the company of heaven. We're not fit to be there. We don't belong in the presence of God because we don't possess righteousness.

We're aliens and strangers to the covenants and the promises. Like this woman. Just like her being utterly dependent for outside help. So we wait on him to deliver us. This woman waited eighteen years. How long have you waited? Starts with a powerful Word of God and the Word of Christ, the message of the Gospel, and it will end with our full restoration, soul and body.

Brings up a second observation here. Notice the sequence. There's a sequential order. Jesus started with the verbal pronouncement in verse 12, and then it followed with the physical laying on a hands of verse 13. You see the chronology here. A chronological order there's a short gap of time between the declaration of freedom and then the full realization of that freedom and physical healing, a fullness of restoration. There's a chronological order here.

And when we think about the sequential order and observe the chronological order, that allows us to reflect and discern the reason for that. What's the reason for that? Why would that be? The chronology and liberation and the sequence with which Jesus liberates and sets someone free are based on a prior ontological order.

Ontological, the id, the idea of being. What we are is human beings. The most fundamental human need, that's why the order is like this, because he takes care of the most fundamental human need, first, spiritual deliverance, and then he moves outward to the physical symptoms. What good does it do to have perfect bodies but dead souls?

So it's because of our ontology, because of the nature of our being as human beings. We are formed from the dust, we are material, we're made of atoms in this body. But we're created in the image of God. He's breathed the breath of life into us.

So created in his image, we are immaterial and material beings, spiritual and physical beings. But we need to understand

that the spiritual, the immaterial that is the more fundamental of our essential parts as human beings. And that's why Jesus goes deep first. His healing goes to the deepest need.

Starts with what's most fundamentally wrong with us. It grants us life where there was nothing but deadness. This brings us to a third observation. The God whose power accomplished the greater liberation, setting us free from sin. He will surely see it through, won't he? He'll see it through the very end.

We are sure of this Philippians 1:6, "that he who began a good work in us will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus." In all the works of God, he starts inward, moves outward. He starts with the internal and moves out to the external. When he heals at the immaterial and the spiritual level, that has an effect on the material and the physical as well.

Paul said it and this, this way in Romans 8:23, "We [who] have the first fruits of the Spirit, we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons [and what is that] the

redemption of our bodies." The older you get, can you say amen to that? The God who made the one made the other also. The God who made the body, made the spirit, made the spirit, made the body. He cares about both. The God who liberated the spirit from bondage to sin also sets the body free from its bondage to decay. In faith, we've trusted him in accomplishing the deepest work. In hope we trust him to accomplish the rest as well a full restoration.

Which brings up a fourth observation. I should say this is more like an exhortation, this one. We ought to be more like this woman, we ought to be more like her. Eighteen years she suffered. In and out, every single week, in and out of the synagogue, eighteen years. We ought to be more like her. Faithfully attending to Jesus teaching. Faithfully waiting on him. You know waiting is a spiritual discipline.

Waiting well, waiting biblically. Waiting in faith. Trusting, waiting. Not complaining. Not grumbling, not moaning. Never discouraged, always encouraged. Do we experience depression, periods of depression? Absolutely we do. Do we ever get down? Sure we do.

What does God want us to do? When we're pressed down. When we're oppressed. Look up. And sometimes, like it must have been for this woman. Crooked, bent, hardened in that direction. It was a fight for her to look up, Christ, wasn't it? Sometimes it's a fight for us. Sometimes it's just difficult to put two feet on the floor in the morning.

But we trust him. We wait upon him. He liberates us from all maladies, he who began a good work in us, liberating us from our sins, from Satan's power, from the very power of death itself. He who began a good work in us, doing the deepest work of saving us from our sins, he will be faithful to complete it.

Like her, as partakers of God's grace, salvation by his grace through the means of faith and the finished work of Jesus Christ. We too, like her, we share a lot in common with our sister here, this daughter of Abraham. Maybe we don't have the same physical debilitations. Maybe we don't have the same dramatic experience of healing. But like her, we can attest to the liberating power of God in us, can't we? Who by Christ set us free from sin. No longer under the bondage, enslaved to



Satan. No longer fearing death. No longer seeing the effects of death in our life because we pursue righteousness.

He is transforming us. He's renewing our minds by the Word, and he's transforming our lives. By his Spirit, by his Word, he's bringing us into full conformity with his son. And he's doing that on the outside as well as on the inside. What he put on the inside is coming out to the outside. Like a seed planted in good soil growing strong. Like a tree planted by streams of water.

So look again in verse 13. Notice the final verb. What's this all about? She, she glorified God. She glorified God. Jesus called her from the periphery, called her from the fringes, called her to come in, into the middle, and she glorified God. That's where he wants God's glory to shine. He's in the middle with many witnesses.

Jesus is the one who saw her. He's the one who summoned her. He declared her freedom. He's the one who touched her. He

made her to stand erect again, and she glorified who? Not Jesus, but God, right?

What's that about? Is she wrong here? Is she misguided? Actually, she's spot on. She's theologically precise. She understands that working through Jesus in his ministry is the power of God himself. Who else can heal with a word? Who else can touch her and make her stand erect again, changing all the bone structure, muscles, ligaments, nerves, everything inside of her to make her stand erect? Who else but God?

And Jesus recogni, he rejoices in recognizing this. He rejoices in the fact that she has seen who is the source of her healing. His lips are the liberating voice of God. His hands are the channel of God's power and God's healing work. So when this woman glorified God. You think Jesus kind of said, "Well, you know, I kind of had a part, too."

He later prayed in John 17:4, "I glorified you on Earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do." He lived for this. He lived to see people bring glory and praise to God.

He's so fulfilled in this moment, so cheerful, so rejoicing, so joyful and gratified, that this woman looks through him and sees God at work.

Profoundly grateful to see his Father honored as God by this woman, proving that she is a true daughter of Abraham. So much more to see in the story. I hate stopping. But this is the liberating power of God, and we've had a chance to rejoice here. Strange. Strangely, strangely, not everybody is happy with this.

I mean, go on and read and you're like, what is wrong with this guy? Wow. How thick is he? Well, we're going to find out next time how thick this guy is. But we'll get into that next time to see the separating power of God. Let's pray.

Our Father thank you so much for the Lord Jesus Christ. We, we do as we as we kind of think about this woman's situation and which, what oppressed her, what, what pressed her down and made her suffer. We can see so many parallels in our own life. We can see so many reasons that, that we too are so like her, dependent and unable on her own to stand and give glory to God. But

because of your grace, Father, because of your electing grace, we are before you now to give you thanks and praise, to honor you as God and give thanks for your saving work.

We rejoice to come before the Lord's table today. And pray that you would direct our minds and hearts toward joy and rejoicing, toward gratitude and contentment, because of this great salvation that we share. Thank you for the fellowship of the saints and the opportunity to do this today in Jesus' name. Amen.