

Luke 13:10-17

10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." 13 When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. 14 But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day." 15 But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? 16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" 17 When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Today we are following along in the Gospel of Luke lessons that we learn from Jesus. In today's Scripture Jesus is teaching in one of the synagogues. A woman is crippled. The Scripture tells us that she is bent over. Jesus lays his hands on her and sets her free. In today's Scripture we have action and reaction. The action of Jesus sets off a sequence of events. The woman does not come to him seeking healing, he sees her and takes the initiative to heal her. So, the 1st thing is the action of Jesus. While he is teaching in the synagogue he sees a woman that needs help. He does not ignore her need. He does not pray for her and wish her well. He responds to the need. He calls her over to him and says "You are set free your ailment." As he says this he lays his hands on her and heals her.

The reaction of the woman is immediate. The Scripture says "She stood up straight immediately." So, there is no doubt that this healing is from Jesus. Notice what happens next. She began praising God. The glory goes to God. We learn a lesson from the woman, from her action, and from her attitude. After years of suffering she had to have been discouraged and frustrated, living on the margins of society. Imagine being her. She lives her whole life restricted. She has limited ability and limited movement. She is unable to meet people face to face. She spends her life looking down at the ground and at peoples feet. Yet, she still sought God. She came to the synagogue to worship God. She came even though it was inconvenient for her to do so. She did not come expecting to be healed. In spite of her physical ailments and setbacks in life she sought God. So, her response to the healing, her reaction, is to praise God. This is the proper response. It should be the only response.

The reaction of the leader of the synagogue seems a bit unusual at first. The synagogue leader, of all people, should be praising God. But no, he is indignant that Jesus healed on the Sabbath. His response is to heal on any other day but not on the Sabbath. Before we blame him, remember that he is just one part of the whole religious system. The problem is that the whole religious establishment has placed a priority on rules. To them the rules come first. The system is a form of totalitarianism. It is a system that is ruled by power and requires obedience to the rules. So, the synagogue leader is just one link in the power and rules dynamics. In this system care for the individual person gets lost. So, the synagogue leader gets upset and intervenes because this is what he knows. He addresses his protest to the people instead of directly to Jesus. This shows that he does not have the courage to confront Jesus and reveals his motive is to control the

people. The Scripture tells us that he kept saying that you can't heal on the Sabbath. Repeating the objection means it was very important to him. He was adamant that Jesus broke the rules.

Then Jesus reacts to the synagogue leader. Jesus responds by teaching a valuable lesson and calling out the hypocrisy. Jesus invites reason from lesser to greater. What you would do for an ox is what you should do for human beings. Jesus perspective is that the concern for a suffering human takes precedence over Sabbath laws. It is not that it should take precedence; it does take precedence. Jesus broke the rules because he knows that care for humanity is more important. It is not that he wants to do battle with the synagogue leader. Jesus stands his ground to defend God's honor. Jesus defends the people that God cares about and that the system neglects. Jesus knows they are way off track by putting the rules ahead of care for humanity. So, Jesus heals the woman and addresses the broken religious system. Jesus has to fix it. It takes the Son of God to fix the broken religious system that fails to care for the suffering. Jesus addresses the leader of the synagogue by contrasting what you would do for an animal with what has been done for a person. In their rules it is legal to care for animals. So, if you can care for an animal you can care for a person. Jesus also elevates her status as a daughter of Abraham. They should do more for a daughter of Abraham than for an animal. If an animal is bound you untie it and lead it to water on the Sabbath. This woman has been bound for 18 years. Her release is long overdue. If Jesus had postponed her healing and allowed the suffering to continue, there would be no criticism. Instead, he stopped the suffering.

I will conclude with the reaction of the crowd. They rejoice at all the wonderful things that he was doing. The congregation observed everything that happened. They saw Jesus do the work of God, the woman praise God, and the synagogue ruler complain. The congregation gives a joyous response to God's blessings. That's what we should do too. My advice is to always follow Jesus. Put a priority on learning his lessons and doing his mission work. Put love and care for others as a priority and always praise God. The Good News alone is reason to praise God. Rejoice at all the wonderful things that he has done and make walking with Jesus your daily walk.