

LUKE – CHAPTER 13

PRAY

Spend a few moments together in prayer asking that you would be open to God's voice speaking through his Word today.

READ

Take time to read through Luke chapter 13

EXAMINE

This chapter is a continuation of the group of teachings of Jesus that we looked at in the last study. Once again, the tension is building between Jesus and the religious leaders. In this chapter it is a synagogue leader. For this study we will focus upon vs 10-21 where Jesus heals a woman on the Sabbath. The first thing to note is that Jesus continues to teach in synagogues (v 10). This reminds us of the time he taught in his home town of Nazareth and the rejection of the people because of his teaching (4:14-30). We're also reminded of Jesus' ongoing encounters with the broken and lowly.

1. Take a moment to consider the personal situation of the woman in this passage. "...crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all." (vs 11). Talk together about how her life would have been impacted by this terrible affliction.

She would have been noticeably different to others. Her bent over posture would have immediately signaled her difference to others. In practical terms, her ability to engage in face to face conversation would have been hindered meaning that any contact she had with others created a situation where she was looked down upon, literally.

2. In the light of this, take note of Jesus' actions – he "saw her," he "spoke to her," and he "put his hands on her." As a result, she is healed and she praises God. What amazes you about all of this?

To be seen, to be spoken to, to be touched, and all actions that "rehumanize" this woman. They give her dignity and treat her as a person; not a disease/cripple. Her response (praising God) is exactly the thing that this building was created for (synagogue). In stark contrast, the synagogue leader complains. While the leader whines, the one who has felt the most ostracized for 18 years takes the lead in praise.

3. Take note of the response of the synagogue leader. He is indignant and gives us a terrible example of leadership. Take note of both *what* he says, but more specifically *who* he speaks to (the people). Rather than take up his concerns with the woman directly he makes a group directive to everyone. Furthermore, he blames the victim for breaking Sabbath rules, not Jesus. What does this say about leadership? Have you encountered this kind of behaviour in your life?

I suspect examples will be easy to come by for this question.



4. Luke uses Jesus' title – Lord – to prepare us for his response. The response itself makes three direct comparisons. An animal with the woman. The temporary binding of the animal and the long-term binding of the woman, and the purpose of their release – water for the animal, freedom for the woman. This comparison highlights the blatant hypocrisy of the synagogue leader. Note too that Jesus names her a “daughter of Abraham.” This is a title given to heroic women who, during the time of the Maccabean revolt (167-160 BC) were faithful to God despite violence and even death.¹ In using this title Jesus elevates her from one to be despised to one who is worthy of honour and reverence. Discuss Jesus response to the synagogue leader, the people's response, and how the woman must have felt.

REFLECT

1. Consider this passage and where you might find yourself in the passage. Are you the woman bound but then freed by Jesus, standing upright praising Jesus? Are you the synagogue leader, blinded by rules and regulations so much that the humanity of the people is lost? Or are you in the people – delighted with all the wonderful things he is doing?
2. What lessons have you learned about leadership from this passage?
3. What have you been freed from that you can give praise to God for?

IMAGINE

1. List three things that have really stood out from this study.
2. Without worrying about any restrictions, what would the church look like if those things were always present? You might like to consider this from a global or local perspective (or both).

PERFORM

1. What action can you take today (taking account of real world restrictions) that is a step towards that dream becoming a reality?

PRAY

Spend time in prayer for each other, particularly for the actions you've committed to.

For next week....

1. Long Slow Read (LSR). Read chapter 14 slowly over the course of week. You can do this as many times as you like.

¹ For those interested, see the intertestamental writing 4 Maccabees 15:27-32.
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=4+Maccabees+15&version=NRSV>

2. Tempo Read – Read and reread Chapter 14 several times. Take note of verses/phrases/characters that stand out – e.g. Jesus, Holy Spirit, poor, women.
3. Repeats – Choose one verse to memorise. Repeat it many times throughout the day and over the course of a week or so. Meditate on the verse and pray it in and out. Repeat the verse many times throughout your day.