

Luke Chapter 13 v 10 - 17

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everybody. I'm just going to read a few verses from Psalm 8-6 this morning to begin our service.

It says this, Among the gods there is none like you, Lord. No deeds can compare with yours. All donations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord.

They will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvellous deeds. You alone are God. Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness.

Give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name. I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart. I will glorify your name forever.

We're going to begin by singing the first hymn this morning. I think it's 625, which takes up that theme. Oh, my soul, arise and bless your maker, for he is your master and your friend.

[1 : 08] 625. And we'll stand to sing. Now let's come to the Lord in prayer.

Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you for the words, for the chorus of that hymn. Lord, we come this morning to praise you because you're a wonderful God.

You're a God who loves his people. You're a God who not only cares for us, but lifts us up in times when we are in despair. And, Lord, that you continue to be with us, that you sent us your Holy Spirit, that even as we meet this morning, we can meet knowing that you're present with us and always will be with your people.

Lord, we truly want to worship you this morning for all that you've done for us. And, Lord, we come knowing that we come before a God who has paid the price for all our sins.

And, Lord, we want to just come before you and glorify your name because you're a God who's worthy of our praise. So, Lord, we pray for all those churches this morning who are meeting together to remember you and to worship you.

[2 : 57] Lord, to sing their songs of praise to you, bring their prayers before you. And, Lord, we do thank you that you're a God who hears our prayers and answers them.

So, we come before you to ask you to be with us now, to feed us from your word. And, Lord, to enrich the joy in our hearts of knowing you.

And, Lord, we pray all these things and ask you to bless our time together, for we ask them in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Luke chapter 13.

We're going to read verses 10 to 17. This is the description of Jesus healing a crippled woman on the Sabbath.

So, Luke 13. It's on page 1046 in your Bibles, if you've got a church Bible. On the Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues.

[4 : 02] And the woman was there who'd been crippled by a spirit for 18 years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.

Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leaders said to the people, There are six days for work, so come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.

The Lord answered him, You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?

Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for 18 long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her? When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

Amen. May the Lord bless his word to us. I'll just open up in prayer.

[5 : 24] Heavenly Father, we thank you for the freedom we have in this land, and we thank you for the freedom we have to come and worship you, and we thank you for the freedom that has been brought for us by Christ, as we've just sung.

We thank you for the saviour that we have. I pray that as we look at your word now, that you'd reveal yourself in the face of Christ, you'd make yourself known to us, and speak to us now, we pray.

In Jesus' name, amen. Well, we're looking today at a story of Jesus where he exposes hypocrisy in a man.

What is hypocrisy? Well, it's saying one thing, but acting in a different way. And we see a religious leader, one who's supposed to teach the law, one who's supposed to look after his flock, in a sense. But we see his actions don't portray the message he's supposed to be preaching. And you've probably heard many people say of Christians or the church, I don't want anything to do with the church because it's full of hypocrites.

[6 : 53] And, you know, perhaps partly they're right sometimes. We can all be hypocrites sometimes, can't we? We can all say one thing but live another thing. Well, this man is a ruler of the synagogue.

And he sees one of the women in his congregation healed miraculously. And you think he should be praising God, shouldn't he? But what's his reaction?

His reaction is one of indignance. It's not, you know, it's not one of joy. He sees a woman praising God. He sees a woman healed.

But his actions show his heart, don't they? They reveal something about him. Well, we're going to look at hypocrisy today, hypocrisy in our own lives.

Perhaps we've been the victim of hypocrisy. Well, we'll look at that as we look at this story. So I want you to picture the scene. There's this woman who's bent over double.

[8 : 01] She's had this condition for 18 years. And you can imagine as she's walking through the streets of Israel, people would stare at her. In that society, they would probably think she was a sinner.

They would probably think she deserved this condition. They'd see her as unclean. And even in this story, we see that her own spiritual leader doesn't acknowledge her, does he?

And she faithfully comes to the synagogue. You know, she probably has to scuttle along, in a sense, looking at the floor. And what do we see?

Jesus is teaching on the Sabbath. And this woman, she doesn't cry out to Jesus. But Jesus sees her in the congregation. He calls her up. He speaks healing over her.

He lays his hands on her. And in a moment, after 18 years of humiliation, 18 years of pain, she's healed. Just like that. Now, what's the reaction to the ruler of the synagogue?

[9 : 07] Well, you'd expect him maybe to, you know, go up to her and give her a massive hug. You know, congratulate her. Rejoice. He's a leader of the synagogue.

As we said, one of his congregation is healed, is set free. God is being praised. But in verse 14, it says that this man, this ruler of the synagogue, is indignant.

He's angry. What should have been a beautiful moment, a moment of rejoicing, is turned to anger.

And actually, we see, probably his heart is revealed in this, that he doesn't even address Jesus.

He doesn't address the woman. But he turns to the crowd. He turns to the congregation. And he gives this rebuke. Not to Jesus.

He doesn't even acknowledge Jesus is there. But he speaks to the congregation. And perhaps what's going on there is that this man is jealous.

[10 : 08] He's jealous of Jesus. He's used to running what happens in the synagogue. This is his territory. He's, you know, he's the ruler. He's the teacher. And here's Jesus getting all this attention.

And so he doesn't even acknowledge Jesus is there. But what does he say? What does he say to the congregation? Well, verse 14, we'll take up the reading.

It says, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, there are six days for work, so come and be healed in those days and not on the Sabbath.

Well, what's going on here? He's accusing Jesus of breaking the law. He's a teacher of the law. And he's accusing Jesus, one who's claiming to be a teacher of the law, of breaking this.

But had Jesus really broken the law? Well, actually, he hadn't broken anything that is written in the Torah, in the Bible. He hadn't broken anything, any of God's commands.

[11 : 16] But he'd broken a man-made rule. And the religious teachers in those days, they were famous for putting these man-made rules, these burdens on their congregations.

And what does Jesus say? And so, again, it's that accusation of hypocrisy, isn't it?

It's, you claim to be experts in the law, you claim to be religious, but you make up all these extra rules, extra laws, you place them on your people, but you yourselves, you don't do a thing.

And actually, apparently, there were over a thousand laws just regarding the Sabbath that the religious rulers had made above the teachings of the law.

But really, they'd missed the point, hadn't they? You see, for the religious leaders, it was about externals, it was about following rules, it was about appearances.

[12 : 32] But what was the point of the law? What was the point of all these rules? The point was love. The point was love for God. In another place, Jesus says this.

He's asked, what is the most important command? And he says this. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the first and greatest command.

The second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets hang on these two commandments. And so, what was the law, therefore?

The law was fulfilled in love. Paul says that in Galatians, that the law and the prophets are fulfilled in this, that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

The law was really about love. And so, this religious teacher, he'd made the law something else. He'd made it about externals.

[13 : 33] He'd made it about pride. He'd made it about just a list of rules. You do these, and God will bless you. But he'd missed the point. He'd missed the heart of the law. And his heart was in the wrong place.

And ultimately, he'd made it about himself, hadn't he? He could no longer rejoice at this act of compassion that Jesus had done, this freedom that this woman experienced.

But he'd made it about himself. He'd ignored the woman. He'd ignored Jesus. And, you know, he made himself look like the superior one, in a sense.

So, he'd reduced the law merely to rule-keeping. And even the Sabbath itself, the Sabbath, it wasn't there as a burden.

It was there as a gift. You can imagine, if you're working hard six days a week, probably many, many people in the fields as farmers in those days, a day of rest was very welcome.

[14 : 35] The Sabbath was a gift. It was a time of rest. And it was a time of devotion to God. It was an opportunity to come before God and worship him. Jesus says this in Mark 2, 27.

The Sabbath was not made for man, but man, sorry, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. But this man, he'd made the Sabbath a thing of rule-keeping.

Actually, it was very appropriate that she would be healed on the Lord's Day, wasn't it? That she would be set free on this day of rest, that she would find her ultimate rest on this day.

Well, I want to say this. Our view of God will inevitably affect the way we view ourselves and the way we view others. See, what was this man, what was his view of God? Well, I think perhaps he had this mindset, that his relationship with God was primarily one of transaction.

You know, if I obey God, if I do these rules, if I keep these laws, God will bless me. And inevitably, that will cause pride in us, won't it?

[15 : 51] If we think we've earned something from God, if we think, you know, I've kept these rules, God should bless me, then it will cause pride, it will cause us to want people to look at us and say, you know, look at that man, he's keeping the laws.

I think that was the heart of this man. This man's reaction, you know, he sees God being praised, he sees someone being set free, it reveals something of his heart. You know, I want the attention on me.

In a sense, he was jealous of Jesus, wasn't he? He wanted the limelight for himself. But where is his heart? He had complete disregard for the woman. Well, I wonder in our own lives, can there be religious pride in our own lives?

What's our reaction when we see others praised, when we see others doing well? Is it one of rejoicing? Or do we get jealous? What about when we see someone get that promotion that we want?

We see people getting praised by others, maybe someone has good news, someone gets married, someone gets a new house. Does that cause jealousy in us? Or can we rejoice with those who are

rejoicing?

[17:13] This ruler, he couldn't rejoice with a woman, could he? Or what about when we see the person struggling, when we see the person in need?

Do we have compassion like Jesus had compassion? Perhaps we have situations like Jesus did where we see someone in pain, someone struggling, but the general consensus of the people around isn't one of favour towards this person.

Perhaps there's someone in your workplace who people avoid. Perhaps there's someone in church who people avoid. What about the person who's... Sorry, the person who doesn't use his money well.

Do we bless them anyway? See, Jesus, he didn't care about what other people thought about him, but he acted the same in every situation. He didn't care.

He knew what the religious people would say. Yet, he acted in compassion anyway, didn't he? He didn't let appearances hinder love for this woman.

[18:29] And we see Jesus' compassion for this woman. We see Jesus' compassion for us as well. And we see a true picture of God in Jesus.

We see the character of... Sorry, we see the... We see God in the face of Jesus, don't we? Jesus is the manifestation of God on earth. And we go back to this story.

We see Jesus exposes this man to hypocrisy, but in doing so, we also see some of Jesus' heart for this woman. In verse 15, it says this, the Lord answered him, you hypocrites, doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?

Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for 18 long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her? And so what is Jesus saying to this man?

He's saying, look, you treat your animals better than you treat this woman. See, on the Sabbath day, you're happy to bring your animals to water to feed them.

[19:47] The Pharisees, the religious leaders, they were happy to look after the animals. But here was someone much more important than an animal. She was a woman. She was a daughter of Abraham.

And here, Jesus healed her. You know, he hadn't just given her water, he'd healed her from this disease she'd had for 18 years. He'd set her free. And we see this man's hypocrisy, we see this man's true heart, that actually, he cared more for his animals than the people that God had entrusted him to look after.

In a sense, he was dehumanizing to this woman, wasn't he? He was treating her as less than he would have treated his animal. Notice he says, you hypocrites.

He doesn't say, you hypocrites. Those who are complicit with this man's mindset, who are just going along with this man, with this man's teaching, they were also hypocrites in the same way. And what's Jesus' heart? Well, he says, this woman who's been bound for 18 long years. They weren't just 18 years, they were long years because they were painful for her. Jesus knew her situation.

[20:59] Jesus felt her pain. But what does Jesus say about this woman? Well, he uses this phrase, this daughter of Abraham.

And what's he saying there? Well, you can imagine how this woman would have felt. She's ignored by the leader of the synagogue. She's probably thought of as a sinner. She's been in pain.

She's been in bondage for 18 years. But what does Jesus say? Jesus dignifies her. Where the leader of the synagogue had ignored her, he says this, daughter of Abraham.

You know, there's no other place in the Gospels that I can think of where Jesus actually calls someone a daughter or a son of Abraham. Abraham. And what does this phrase mean, daughter of Abraham? Well, it means she's one of God's covenant people.

She is one who will inherit the promises that God has promised to his people. She's one of God's chosen. You can say this, she's one who's destined for unspeakable glory.

[22:08] She's one of God's people. And whatever the world thinks of you, however you feel, if you're God's, if you've been forgiven by God, if you know God, then he sees you in the same way.

He sees you as a child of promise. He sees you as one of his covenant people. One who has an inheritance in store for them. One who is destined for heaven.

Jesus doesn't see us as the world sees us. Jesus sees us as a son, as a daughter, as one of his own. And so, God doesn't look at her disability.

God doesn't look at her exterior. But he looks at her as one of his own. And the same way God sees us in that way. Well, finally, I want to say, how do we see ourselves in this story?

Well, I think actually, in a sense, we can see this story as a picture, as a parable. Because how does Jesus describe this woman? Well, he describes it as one whom Satan has bound, Satan has kept bound.

[23 : 26] And actually, her physical disposition, you know, her bent over back, in a sense, it's a picture of someone in bondage, isn't it?

It's a picture of a slave, someone who's used to manual labor. You become bent over, you become bound, like you're carrying a burden. I think it's a picture of this woman's spiritual situation, in a sense.

You know, perhaps she would have come to the synagogue and heard passages like this read. Leviticus 26, 13. God speaking to Israel says this, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians.

I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high. So what's he saying? You know, you were bent over, you were under a yoke, you were a slave, but I've set you free so that your heads could be held high.

To walk straight, it's a picture of freedom. But in a sense, we are all like this woman in a spiritual sense, aren't we? Those words, kept bound by Satan can be equally used to describe any of our spiritual states.

[24 : 46] We've all been slaves to sin. That's how the Bible would describe us. Maybe you'd react against that statement. You'd say, I'm not a slave to anything. You know, I'm free, I do what I want.

What does it mean to be a slave to sin? Well, I think we'd all admit that we have sins. We have things in our lives which we wish we could conquer.

Things in our character, things which we just continually do over and over again, which we wish we wouldn't. None of us act like we want. The nature of sin is addictive.

Anything which we want to do but we can't, the Bible describes as being under bondage to, in slavery to. We're all slaves to sin. Where we cannot exercise self-control, we're mastered by something else, aren't we?

We're in bondage to sin. We're in bondage to Satan. Or perhaps we can be slaves in another sense. You can imagine being under this man's teaching, the law, the religious teaching, all these burdens that the Pharisees put on this woman.

[26 : 01] We can try our hardest to obey God's commands. And if we're trying to obey God's commands so that he'll forgive us, so that he'll bless us, we're never going to do it, are we?

We're never going to obey God 100%. If we're trying to earn our salvation, again, we're in bondage, aren't we? We're in bondage. We're in slavery to the law. We'll never free ourselves.

But Jesus came to set us free. Like this woman, he looks out into the crowd and he calls us individually. And in a moment, he can forgive us.

Jesus can set us free. Jesus came to set us free. It says in the Bible, whom the Son sets free shall be free indeed. Jesus came to take the weight of our sin upon himself, the weight that we couldn't bear, the weight of the law.

He lived a perfect life. He lived the life we couldn't live. And he says, I'll take your sin and my good deeds, my following the law, I'll put on you.

[27 : 08] My righteousness I'll place upon you. And he sets us free. And he puts a new heart in us, a heart which wants to obey the law, a heart which obeys the law out of love, a heart which desires to obey God.

And obviously, none of us are, none of us live 100% as we should. But God is the one who changes us. We'll never bear this burden by ourselves.

Perhaps some of you have read Pilgrim's Progress and there's that scene where Pilgrim, he's carrying this burden for years and years and he's on this journey and he's conscious of this burden and he wants to get rid of it.

And he comes to the foot of the cross and his burden comes off his back and rolls down the hill. That's a picture of what Jesus wants to do for us. Jesus wants to set us free.

And the more that we remember what Jesus has done for us, the less prone we will be to fall into religious pride, to fall into hypocrisy.

[28 : 26] Because none of us are good, are we? None of us have kept the law. None of us have followed God as we ought. But we've all been forgiven. We're all saved sinners.

And therefore, we should be able to rejoice when God works in someone else. Because we don't deserve God's grace and neither does our neighbor.

But we rejoice. We rejoice in God, don't we? And if God looks at this woman and sees her as a daughter of Abraham, as a child of promise, how much more should we look at our brothers and sisters in Christ and see them in this way, see them as children of God?

how much would our attitude be changed to our neighbors, to those in the church, if we had this attitude, if we had Christ's attitude? What is your response to Christ?

In verse 17, it says this. So Jesus has just exposed this man to hypocrisy. And it says, when he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

[29 : 42] And I think in a sense this speaks of two types of people. Are we those who, when we see God working, when we hear the gospel, when we hear of God changing lives, does it cause us to rejoice?

Are we delighted in what God does? Or rather, are we opponents of God? And what does it say? The opponents were humiliated.

Now perhaps some of these people, when they heard this, perhaps some of them repented. I hope some of them did. But the truth is this. This is the last time we see Jesus teaching in a synagogue. He's not welcome in the synagogue anymore. That's probably the reason. And ultimately, the religious leaders, they didn't repent, but they hated Jesus, didn't they? And eventually they crucified him.

And there's two options for us. We can either accept Jesus' teachings, and ultimately we'll rejoice, or we can oppose him. And there will be a day when God, just like he exposed this man, he'll expose our hearts, our hearts will be exposed before him, our pride, our thoughts will be exposed before him.

[31 : 03] And if we haven't come to him for forgiveness, if we haven't been set free by him, we'll be humiliated like this man. That's the truth. We'll either be humiliated, we'll be exposed and humiliated, or we'll rejoice.

They're the two options. So I want to ask you, I want to plead with you, don't leave it until that day. Don't leave it until judgment day. Repent now, come to God now, let him free you, and they'll be rejoicing in that day.

What does Jesus say? Take my yoke upon you, take my burden upon you, my yoke is easy and my burden light, and you will find rest for your souls. Jesus came to give us rest for our souls.

I'll just close in prayer. Father, we look at this passage, and we look at the compassion of Jesus on this woman who is in bondage, and we see ourselves in this story.

We see that in the same way we have been in bondage, but you have set us free. We cannot set ourselves free, but you have set us free, and we thank you for that. But we also acknowledge that so often we can have pride in ourselves.

[32 : 35] We don't rejoice when others rejoice, but we have, like this leader, we have selfish ambition. We want attention upon ourselves. And we ask for your forgiveness.

We acknowledge that it's all by grace that we've been saved. And we ask again that you give us a fresh glimpse of who you are, what you've done for us, and you give us that heart of humility, that heart that rejoices when others do well, when others are healed, when you move, Father.

And we pray that likewise you would make us people of compassion, as Jesus was, and people of humility. So we thank you for the gift of salvation. And we pray for any here today who don't know you, who don't know this freedom, who feel in bondage to sin, perhaps in bondage to trying to impress God, trying to make God accept them because of their own merits, Father.

We pray that you would take us away from that mindset, and that we would experience the freedom, the forgiveness in Christ. Help us to understand grace, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.