

082122 Sermon "Freedom in the Lord" Luke 13:10-17

The story is told of a zoo that was noted for their great collection of different animals. One day the gorilla died, and to keep up the appearance of a full range of animals, the zookeeper hired a man to wear a gorilla suit and fill in for the dead animal. It was his first day on the job, and the man didn't know how to act like a gorilla very well. As he tried to move convincingly, he got too close to the wall of the enclosure and tripped and fell into the lion exhibit. He began to scream, convinced his life was over...until the lion spoke to him: "Be quiet, or you're going to get us both fired!"

Well, I don't know how many people are in the zoo acting like animals? I don't know if there are real animals living in that zoo. After reading this story, I thought about what does it mean for us to live as Christians today? It means believing in Jesus as your Lord and Savior and changing your behavior according to the word of God and living that way. It's not about acting in front of people. We need to be real! Living as Christians is not pretending to be holy. It really means trying to live according to the words of God and live with God. Let's consider this through the Gospel of Luke today.

Today's scripture is divided into two parts. Verses 10-13 are the story of Jesus healing a woman, and verses 14-17 are an incident derived from the healing of this woman. First, let's look at the story of Jesus healing this woman. The woman who had been ill for eighteen years did not ask Jesus to heal her, nor did she repent with tears. But why did Jesus see her, call her, and heal her? Was she just lucky?

There are clues to consider in today's scripture. Verse 11 tells us about this woman. It says, "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." This woman was so sickly that she was bent over and couldn't even stand up straight at all. But notice, where is the place Jesus met this woman? Yes, it was a synagogue. What was this woman doing in the synagogue on the Sabbath? Yes, she went to the synagogue to keep her Sabbath holy according to Jewish law. She was ill and unable to move freely, but still she went to the synagogue.

Although this woman was afflicted with this, I can easily guess that she must have been in the synagogue on the Sabbath on a regular basis. If I were her, I might have thought, 'I can't go to the synagogue because I'm so crooked that I can't even stand up straight!' or 'What has God done for me until I'm like this?' Rather, this woman went to the synagogue every Sabbath to hear the word of God and pray... I think that Jesus did not meet this woman by accident. Rather, Jesus had come to the synagogue to meet this woman! How precious is it? In verse 13, Jesus laid his hands on her and said, 'Woman, you are freed from your sickness.' Although she was bent over and couldn't straighten a bit, Jesus raised up this woman. Even if there is an unresolved problem in your life, Jesus can make it right by the grace of God.

Dear beloved, whether you are healthy or not, on time or out of season, I pray that you will join us in worshiping God, learning God's Word, and praying with joy. Because God can help us beyond our expectations. Just as Jesus paid attention to, called, and healed this woman who remembered the Sabbath day and kept it holy, I pray that God's special grace will come to you as well.

2. Second, as soon as this miracle of healing occurred, in verse 14, the synagogue leader became angry. When there is the work of God, people rejoice and praise God, but there are also people who are jealous and angry about it. In today's Bible, the leader of the synagogue saw this and became angry. At the time of Jesus, a synagogue was built when 10 or more Jewish families gathered. The synagogue is called [beth am] in Hebrew, which means "house of the people." The word "synagogue" is a compound word of syn (together) and ago (to lead, take). Bible reading, praise, prayer, and interpretation of the Bible were mainly performed in the synagogue. And the synagogue leader at that time was not a church building manager. He was in charge of the finances, rituals, and administration of the synagogue. Compared to today, it can be seen as the role of the senior pastor.

As soon as Jesus' miracle happened, the leader of the synagogue became angry for one reason, because that day was the Sabbath. He said to the people, 'There are six days of work, and in the meantime come and be healed, and not on the sabbath.' At first glance, he may be right. According to the Sabbath law at that time, they were not allowed to work. For the

Jews, the Sabbath was “the day of the most thorough observance of the law.”

Jesus pointed out their hypocrisy, however, who lost the true meaning and purpose of the Sabbath because they were preoccupied with thinking that they should not work. In today's Gospel of Luke, Jesus gave an example of a common practice among Jews at the time, namely, watering livestock on the Sabbath. The animals kept in cages were released from their harness on the Sabbath and led them to water. Then, "You must have mercy on an animal like an ox or a donkey on the Sabbath, how much more should it be to release this woman from a much greater suffering? This woman is Abraham's daughter, "Shouldn't you show mercy to such a daughter as you are due to an ox or a donkey?" Jesus challenged them. Jesus said of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:3, “Therefore, whatever they say, do and observe, but do not imitate what they do, for they speak only and do not do.” We must live such a life that our actions and words are in harmony.

For the Jews, the Sabbath was “the day of the most thorough observance of the law,” but Jesus’ Sabbath was different. Visiting the synagogue, hearing the word of God, and experiencing freedom from bondage was the true rest that Jesus showed. Today's Bible verse makes us really think about what we should be paying attention to on the day of the Lord, because Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. It is not a day of doing nothing or a public holiday, it is a day of prayer, praise, Word, almsgiving, fellowship, and a day of freedom from bondage.

Henry C. Morrison dedicated his life to evangelical mission in Africa. During his 40 years of missions in Africa since the early 1900s, he lost his health and family. He was now on a ship back to his hometown in America. On the ship, there was President Roosevelt who was returning from Africa. When the ship arrived in New York and the President got off the ship, there was a red carpet and he was greeted by much fanfare and welcome from the crowd. When the President and his attendants left the port and Morrison exited the ship, there was no red carpet, no fanfare, not even one person who came out to greet him. “Jesus, is this what my homecoming looks like after forty years of youth and life dedicated to your work in Africa?” Morrison looked up to the sky with a sense of defeat. But the Lord said to him in his

mind, "Henry, you haven't come home yet. When you do, I will greet you with a golden carpet and trumpet sounds of angels."

Hebrews 11:16 says, "Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them."

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, the Pharisees only valued whether they broke the Sabbath or not, but Jesus enlightened them of their wrong thinking. God's true will is to raise up others, benefit others, and enable those who do not know God's love and grace to know so that they may be saved. We haven't arrived home yet. Until you reach your heavenly home, 1. Live as true worshipers. 2. Don't be a hypocrite, instead experience freedom in the Lord and live a life that sets others free in the name of Jesus. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.