**8/24/25**

**Healing, Calling Out, and More**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 13:10-17 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

You know as many times as Facebook might manage to consume my time, or even give me a temporary break from reality and my responsibilities, it actually manages to help me out and give me some really good information as well. So, it is by no mistake that when I was researching and trying to compose this sermon that I happened to stumble along my former New Testament Professor’s breakdown of this particular scripture reading. Mark Vitalis-Hoffman has such a knack for breaking down text and challenging others to do the same. That of course is not just the text you have right in front of you, or even the text that you prefer to read. That is the text from several different translations of the Bible, while also throwing in the Greek, as he is extremely versed in it as well. With this approach he challenges all of us to look at the root or context of each word, and really pushes us to focus on the presentation to help with the aspect of hearing and understanding things better. Just think about that in these simple terms. Have you ever read a text or email from a person in the tone you suppose they might be speaking it? Does it put things in an alternative context than they might have even intended? Unfortunately, our brains manage to work in concrete ways at times, and we really need to force ourselves out of that if we desire to hear a text or email differently, or if we desire to read and study the Bible as it was intended.

So, at first look and read through I am sure we all can agree that today’s story is of Jesus healing a disabled woman. I am also fairly certain that we all caught Jesus calling out the religious leaders for their interpretation of Sabbath law in today’s story as well. Both stories are front and center, and they manage to make things rather cut and dry, but… that is actually only to a degree. For when we really dive into it much deeper, then we come to realize that things are much more complex, and way more unfolds here. For our first look or read through are just that, and we are indeed challenged to find more than what initially meets the eye and ear, and even our initial understanding. So, as we do just that, I thank you for joining me here in this community. I thank you for challenging me to look past the surface, and I thank you for being willing to do the very same thing with me as you sit in those pews or listen in on the conference call.

One thing I really want to put in perspective here is that Jesus was doing nothing out of the ordinary. He was out with his community teaching and learning from the scripture in a house of worship. Now, traditionally or culturally speaking, we know that the men were front and center back then. We even know or realize that anyone with an infirmity or sickness would have been even further on the outskirts of the group or gathering, if even allowed to be around it at all. However, we come to realize time and time again that we have no ordinary man here, we have no ordinary Rabbi, we have Jesus. He does not keep on going about his normal preaching or protocol as one might do. Jesus looks out deeper into the crowd. He calls in and draws special attention to this woman. He does not do it to make more of a spectacle of her than has already been done time and time again. Jesus does not call her in and draw any special attention to her for any other reason than, He has simply had enough. Jesus has had enough of this woman dealing with a sickness, an infirmity, or even a spirit that had been taking over her life and health for far too long. Eighteen years is how long we hear this woman had been hunched over and side eyeing everyone, or just simply staring at her own feet. Her vision and her presentation had been altered for such a long time. Her pain and her torture had met the Ultimate Physician on this day, and there would be no more pain or suffering, and there would be no more casting out of society. This woman would be called into full restoration of mind, body, and spirit. As well as full release and restoration back into community. She would be so happy with this healing and restoration that she was praising God immediately in front of everyone.

I know that we have undoubtedly heard this story in similar accounts over the years, and it was just three short years ago when we visited this in our very own lectionary cycle. I also know that we have read this account or heard similar stories over the course of our studies and time together over the years as well. I even know that you have probably read this story on your very own a time or two, or a similar one, as you conduct your own personal studies. However, this very return to normal, this very release of pain and suffering, this very evoking the spirit to release her, this very restoration back to community manages to spark some outrage and confusion in this particular context. And, you may be thinking why. You may be thinking that Jesus did the right thing and healed this woman. That He did not avoid her, allow her to be cast out, or allow her to suffer any longer. Well hello folks!!! It’s the Sabbath!!! You’re not supposed to do that kind of thing on this special day… or are you?!?!

Now, this is the part of the story that can get really fuzzy here folks. This is the part of the story that we can be placing blame on someone or even a group. This is the part of the story if we enter into a divided context and mentality, we can really get ourself in the proverbial weeds or mud. We can easily say that Jesus did the right thing, and those Jewish leaders and people were wrong for questioning Him. We can easily say that Jesus was and is God, but they did not fully understand or accept this at that moment for he had not died and risen on the third day like we all know and believe. We can even go as far as to say that Jesus was in the right for healing, and maybe if it was a man that the entire matter may not have even been called into question. There are many different views and mentalities here that we could flesh out, and we must realize that the times and the culture were much different back then for sure. However, we are talking about the Sabbath here folks, and we are talking about devout Jews following the Torah and the laws set down before them. So, this alteration, or this change in direction is not something they welcomed or were even prepared for. There was fear that if they deviated from the law that God would indeed strike them down or cast them out even though God was in the flesh and doing the work right in front of them. So, their fear and their arguments are justified. Their fear and their arguments are not as off base as we often make them. What Jesus simply calls them to, or tells them is, stop being so stuck on the law that your eyes and your heart do not allow you to interpret it wholly and entirely different. Stop being so stuck on the law that you do not see that transformation of a person and community are right there in the law. Jesus calls them to a perspective and mindset that makes them uncomfortable and scared, and those are totally normal reactions or responses of course. So, just like you and I, they need to hear and explore more, and they have the perfect teacher right in front of them to give them some more mindset.

We hear yet again, “You hypocrites!” just like last week. Now, if that does not make you uncomfortable, let me tell you, it surely makes me uncomfortable. It again is calling out our action versus our acting. It again is calling out our perception versus reality, and is challenging us in ways that we just do not seem to understand or even desire at times. So, what does “You hypocrites!” mean in context here yet again today? What do we need to explore as we start wrapping up things together here?

It says that we do things on the Sabbath day that we know are right and need to be done. We actually qualify things instead of fully follow the law as one might intend or interpret. It says that just as we might unleash our ox or donkey to drink, or feed our cat or dog or bird in today’s context, that we do the right thing. More so it says that if we are going to do that and take care of our animals or pets, or these extensions of our family, that we should do the exact same thing for the extension of our family that exists in faith. We should feel the very same responsibility to care for one another each and every single day of the week. Doing that shows our love. Doing that shows our understanding. Doing that shows our faith in action. For we are indeed called to love one another, and love everything that has been created. Furthermore, we are to rejoice together just like the very people in this Gospel Reading today, because we get to truly encounter and experience all the wonderful and magnificent things our Triune God has created and done for sure!

**Healing, Calling Out, and More** really do occur in our Gospel Reading today. First off, what we must come to realize that sometimes it is not always the physical healing we desire. Sometimes it is the miraculous and wonderful healing of our mind and spirit that occur, for unfortunately human sickness and infirmity still exist even though we rebuke them or desire them to leave us. We must also realize that they are not God’s punishment, and that they are just things that happen with our earthly bodies. Secondly, calling out one another out at times despite how uncomfortable or undesirable it may be is natural. We are called to live a life of faith unlike any other, and interpretation of the law is just that. Most importantly we must ensure that we allow love to guide and refocus us on all matters just how Christ did. Lastly, we must always accept that there is more to a story or a text than meets the eye, and we must always dig in so that we can find that additional stuff. We must keep that hunger alive as we explore scripture time in and time out.

We all realize that we have a gracious and merciful God who is and will always be in our corner. Unfortunately, we may struggle in different ways than He did on this earth, but that struggle is only temporary if we keep our eyes and focus on the eternal kingdom as we build up our neighbors in this earthly kingdom here and now. Or even more simply put, just remember that, “The church is not meant to be a country club, a health spa, or a gated community but, rather, a place where those who are seen and freed by God are empowered to see others with eyes of faith.” (4)

**Amen****.**

**Luke 13:10-17 (NRSVUE)**

Jesus heals a woman on the sabbath, offering her a new beginning for her life.

When challenged by a narrow reading of the sabbath command, Jesus responds

by expanding “sabbath work” to include setting people free from bondage.

10 Now [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And

(Look here!)

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 to water? 16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom

Satan bound

(Look here!) 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 being done by him.

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

Preaching

Year C 2025

August 24th, 2025

11th Sunday after Pentecost

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

Revised and Updated

A Guide to Biblical Preaching

Paul Scott Wilson

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Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost

When you do not see others, Jesus confronts you. When others do not see you,

Jesus does.

August 24, 2025

Commentary on Luke 13:10-17

Jared E. Alcántara

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

This little story gets straight to the heart of Jesus’ mission in Luke.

August 25, 2019

Commentary on Luke 13:10-17

Ira Brent Driggers

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost

Mercy is at the heart of what God is doing in Jesus

August 21, 2022

Commentary on Luke 13:10-17

Carolyn J. Sharp

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Two things are important to remember for framing this particular episode in Luke

13:10-17.

August 21, 2016

Commentary on Luke 13:10-17

David Schnasa Jacobsen

(8) WorkingPreacher.org

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

In Luke’s narrative, two scenes of Jesus’ teaching sandwiches this account of

healing and controversy with religious leaders.

August 25, 2013

Commentary on Luke 13:10-17

Emerson Powery

(9) WorkingPreacher.org

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

She had gotten used to looking at people out of the corner of her eye, by looking up

and sideways.

August 22, 2010

Commentary on Luke 13:10-17

Jeannine K. Brown