

Gospel and Sermon Transcript -11th Sunday After Pentecost - August 24, 2025

Good morning.

Whoa.

Sorry.

And welcome, especially to our fellow brothers and sisters.

And from 1st Luther, we're delighted to have you guys
with us here this morning.

We really appreciate you coming.

One quick announcement.

The food is still out in the fellowship hall, so after service.

If you'd like something to munch on, please come and help
yourself once again.

And there's certainly enough for all.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Our gospel today is from Luke, the 13th

chapter, beginning at the 10th verse.

Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

And just then, there appeared a woman

with a spirit that had crippled her for 18 years.

She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight.

When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said,

"Woman, you are set free from your ailment."

When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight
and began praising God.

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."

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?

And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham,
whom Satan bound for 18 long years,
be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?"

When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame.

And the entire crowd was rejoicing
at all of the wonderful things being done by him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Maybe seated.

During the summer, synods prepare sermons
for use by congregations across the country
because pastors take vacations too.

The Sermon

This sermon today is written by Deacon Michelle Collins, who is the assistant to the bishop in the Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Senate.

And it's interesting to me how it fits with the things that are going on in our own community.

What is it like to feel bent over and unable to stand up straight?

Some of us have experienced spending a few hours in the garden or doing a task that requires us to bend over and then groaning as we stretch into a standing position after a while.

Others of us are familiar with the impact and effect of age as we realize that our joints and our muscles aren't working quite the way they used to.

Others just learn to live with the bodies that they have.

All of us probably know the limitations of perspectives, feelings, or experiences that restrict us from leaning into our full selves.

In our gospel reading today, Jesus is teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

And notice is a woman who has been bent over for many years.

She was unable to stand up straight.

Most scholars suspect that this woman
was suffering from a physical ailment that
was affecting her spine.

But it's just as likely that the weight that burdened her
was a result of direct and indirect messages
and experiences that had informed her sense of who she was.

Our virtual and physical spaces are filled with people
who cannot stand up straight for a variety of reasons.

Some are built bent from physical disease and disorder.

Some are bent over from trauma.

They are unable to process.

Some are bent from prejudice and bias
against various aspects of their identity.

Some are bent over from their age
and what the common opinion is about what value they
bring to society.

Some are bent from generations of internalized shame.

Our world is full of people who are bent over and unable
to stand up straight.

And Jesus sees these people.

He sees the woman in the synagogue.

And he sees you and me.

Jesus' first word to the woman is a word of freedom
and validation.

Woman, Jesus says, you are free from your ailment.

Jesus extends a word of invitation and freedom
without hesitation.

Later in the story, he identifies her
as a daughter of Abraham, including her in the family
of God and connecting her to God's covenant promise.

How can we do this?

How can we create spaces where people who cannot stand up
straight in other places hear a word of freedom and inclusion
from us?

Child, you are free from your ailment.

Refugee, widow, victim of trauma, gender-diverse sibling.

In this space, you are free to stand up straight
because we see you.

You are welcome here.

You are part of God's covenant community.

The woman is not the only one in need
of a word of healing and release.

There's someone else in the story who's in need of healing.

But this person is less aware of their ailment.

A religious leader who we can assume is faithful and devout,

committed to following the traditions

and with the desire to please God,

sees what Jesus does and is upset.

Jesus, it's not the way we do it around here.

We have rules and processes that dictate how someone like that

is to be treated.

The religious leader's responses might

sound like this in a setting in our own community.

We can't deal with her.

We have classes for her down the hall.

We have a support group for her diagnosis

that meets on Tuesday mornings in the basement.

We can direct her to services where

she can get the help she needs.

But today, she's interrupting our worship and our learning.

The religious leader's objection to both the woman

and to Jesus' response to her demonstrates

that he was just as much in need of restoration and release.

He had become so burdened with the rules and the rituals

that he had lost the ability to enter freely
into the invitation and welcome of worship and community.

Does that happen to us?

Do we get so focused on our routines and traditions
that we respond negatively to people who come into our spaces
and then make us uncomfortable?

Perhaps we point back to the rules and procedures
that have served us, those with privilege and prestige.

But Jesus responds differently.

He sees the woman.

He initiates connection with her.

He speaks to her and declares a word of freedom.

He lays his hand on her, a gesture we know
as a sign of blessing, anointing, prayer, and proclamation.

Today, when an infant, child, or adult is presented for baptism,
the pastor lays hands on them and offers a word of promise.

When someone goes through the rite of confirmation
or the affirmation of baptism, we lay hands on them
and offer a word of promise and prayer.

When we commission someone into a particular role
or opportunity, we lay hands and pray for them.

When someone is ordained as a pastor or a deepen,

we lay hands and pray for them.

In these and other times, when we extend a gesture of blessing
and a word of promise and prayer,
do we realize that we also declare a word of healing,
freedom, and wholeness?

The religious leaders object to what Jesus is saying and doing
only because it goes against their rules,
especially the commitment to rest on the Sabbath.

They're not so upset that he healed the woman.

It's that he healed her on the Sabbath.

Then Jesus uses their argument against them.

"Today is for rest," you say.

This woman cannot rest because of what is keeping her bent over.

It is exactly the day of rest that compels me to heal.

Can we rest when those in our communities
who are bound by disease, prejudice, oppression,
inequality, or our ignorance are excluded from experiencing rest?

Some among us are excluded because of something
that is limiting wholeness.

Jesus' words and actions become more than just physical healing.

They also become prophetic, convicting, and revealing
a system that prohibits and limits

a full experience of God's intention for God's people.

By exposing the ways traditions and teachings have become limiting,

he shows that the woman is not the only one who is bent over.

In fact, the entire system needs restoration

so that everyone can experience rest.

Our systems are bent over from attitudes and beliefs

that are crippling us and denying rest.

We are called to participate in making that rest possible.

Rest for children and youth burdened by limited expectations

and assumptions.

Rest for marginalized communities exhausted

by the burden of systemic injustice and generational trauma.

Rest for housing and food insecure neighbors

exhausted by the burden of finding

the very basic necessities of life.

Rest for those exhausted by the burden of labels, prejudice,

hatred, and exclusion.

Rest for those exhausted from working for justice, reconciliation,

and equality for the most vulnerable.

And rest for you and me exhausted by the burden of grief,

loneliness, shame, fear, and insecurity.

Jesus saw the woman who was bent over under the burden of disease.

He revealed to religious leaders that they
were bent over under the weight of legalism and tradition
and in need of healing and release.

We who are bent over in all kinds of ways
need transformation, healing, and release.

By the goodness and grace of God, Jesus sees us,
reaches out to us with love and declares that we are set free.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

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[MUSIC - "HAPPY DAY"]

Oh, happy day when we just had the little apple of gold.

And we'll sing with us from every wind.

The looser has to song.

The looser has to song.

Oh, happy day when we just had the little apple of gold.

And the looser has to sing.

Jesus has to sing.

And Jesus has to sing.