

## 11th Sunday after Pentecost

*Note: This homily is based on Luke 13:10–17. Please read that passage to the congregation before preaching this homily.*

The events recorded in the gospels keep revealing Jesus to us in fresh light. The writers know that Jesus is a man, but he keeps doing and saying things which show he is so much more than just a man. The things he does reveal his real identity to us. We get to know him, just as the original witnesses of these events did. And today, we'll get to know Jesus better through this story.

The apostle Luke, who was also a doctor, was with Jesus and noted that it was his custom on the Sabbath to teach in the Synagogues. A portion of scripture would be read and Jesus spoke about it. On this particular occasion Jesus noticed one particular person in the Synagogue. A woman - bent over; she cannot stand up straight. Luke tells us she had been like this for 18 years. She had been crippled by a spirit, a spirit of weakness. If we saw her today we'd probably say, she's losing calcium from her bones and that's causing this change. Like others of us may have crook knees, or arthritis, or cataracts, or some other condition. It's a disability she suffers with. All of these are signs of age and are the result of being born in a world where death is part of life.

In vs. 12 Luke tells us what happened:

*When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her,  
"Woman you have been completely released from your weakness."*

## 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Before we consider the various responses to this event, did you notice that **the woman did not ask to be healed**. She had not come to Synagogue expecting to go home changed. Perhaps you have come to church today not expecting to go home changed! Through the scriptures God speaks to us, and nourishes our soul. Today expect that God will use this passage to nourish you spiritually.

I wonder if the room hushed - expectant ... surprised? I wonder what the woman thought?

Jesus takes her by the hands and immediately she stood up straight. She had not done that for 18 years. Can you imagine how she would feel?!! Vs 13 tells you her response: *she praised God*. She knows what's happened for her. She attributes her healing to the direct action of God in her. She praised God.

But not everyone had that response. Some in the Synagogue are seething with anger. The leader of the Synagogue does not speak to Jesus, but blames the woman and the people - vs. 14:

*"This is the Sabbath - we are not to do any work. Come on a different day to get healed."*

Jesus' first word of response reveals what he thinks of this attitude: "Hypocrites!!" And in vs. 15 he explains how they all work on the Sabbath by taking their ox or donkey to get water. Then in vs. 16-17 Jesus reveals to the people what has really gone on in their Synagogue and how this event gives them a peep into heaven.

## 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Notice Jesus' description and interpretation of this situation. He describes the woman as a **daughter of Abraham**. She is one of God's chosen people. She is not insignificant. She is not just a crippled woman. She is not being punished for something she had done. Her suffering is the result of living in a world where suffering and death are part of life. Jesus describes her as one "whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years".

Satan is out to harm, to ruin God's good world. Disease, illness, disability, death are what he brings. What we see in this event is that Jesus gives us a glimpse, a foretaste of what heaven is like. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, he not only paid for our sin, he came to undo the devil's work. He came to give life. Because he rose on the third day, those who trust in Jesus will also rise to life in the resurrection. God will give us new bodies with none of these defects. No arthritis, no personality disorders, no disability. The healing of this woman shows us that in heaven the brokenness of this world is made whole. Jesus' promise to us in Revelation 21 is that in heaven: there is no more death, dying or disease. No more crying, no more pain. The old order has passed away, the new has come.

The woman knew where her healing came from: she praised God - rightly so!

When you're around the throne in heaven, you'll praise God too! With all your heart! So look forward to that time. Jesus knows the brokenness of this world - a brokenness you also experience in part. Sometimes our brokenness is the result of our actions, sometimes it comes from the actions of others, and sometimes it comes from our world and the circumstances of life. Sometimes we are born with various defects. Because we live in a world where death is part of life we will all experience brokenness in some way. We all need encouragement and support - what might this woman have appreciated from those around her? Are there some you know who you could encourage?

## 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Jesus has given us a taste of the world to come - a world where brokenness is made whole and new. Jesus has secured that future for all those who come to him in trust and dependence. He is the Saviour we need and the Lord we can trust.

How has God used this passage to help you to know Jesus better?

Perhaps when you're chatting with neighbours and friends, and everyone is sharing their latest ailment, perhaps you could also say: *In heaven it won't be like this*. The risen Lord Jesus is making everything new; The old things that cause pain, frustration and disappointment won't be there. When Jesus was here he gave us a look into heaven and showed us. And perhaps you could read the passage we have looked at today. It's worth while getting to know Jesus.

Take time now to praise and thank Jesus for giving us a taste of heaven and real confidence in the resurrection to eternal life.