

Rev Ken Wratten

August 25, 2019 – 11C Pentecost: Proper 16

At St. Luke's Church

Isaiah 58:9b-14

Hebrews 12:18-29

Luke 13:10-27

False Worship vs True Worship

Not fear of Mt Sinai, but joy at Mt Zion- because of Jesus

Jesus healed the crippled woman – on the Sabbath.

In the Gospel reading today, **Jesus performs another miraculous healing**. The story also shows us yet another case of **Jesus arguing with the religious leaders** about their obsession with rules. The Pharisees took it quite literally that absolutely nothing that hinted of ‘work’ was to be done on the Sabbath; not even the work of healing somebody. Jesus saw that extreme interpretation as ludicrous, and he had no reservations about telling them so. Jesus supported the Law; he honored the Sabbath. But the Sabbath is meant to ensure that we take intentional time to focus on God’s gift of creation. Jesus would not allow that responsibility to prevent helping a human being who needed help.

Example: Stephen Ministers asking if it was okay to talk with people at coffee hour!

But there is **another dimension to this story** that has nothing to do with the Sabbath, and everything to do with **the healing Jesus brings to US**.

The crippled woman did not call out to Jesus, or beg for healing. **She was resigned to her place in life**. There were things she knew she could never do. There were people who felt that she had brought her condition upon herself. In their eyes, she had sinned, and her bent-over frame was God’s punishment for her sin, and she was just going to have to live with it. Some people believed that this was Satan attacking her. So don’t get too close... This physical deformity would have separated her from her community, and maybe even her family.

Jesus saw her, called her to him, and said simply, ‘Woman, you are set free from your ailment.’ Then he laid his hands on her, and she was healed. **NOW she could be the functioning part of her family she had not been for eighteen years**; NOW she could be a welcome and active member of her community. But I think there is another important change that happened: This crippled woman could now stand up straight and praise God.

Jesus took away her apathy for God, and introduced her to a new life – a life where she could feel God’s presence and love. She had not come to the synagogue to hear Jesus; or for healing by Jesus. She was used to her life, and really did not have any plans to change it. But Jesus had plans for her.

Jesus was and is focused on enabling US too, to break away from all the things that we think disable us – physical, or mental, or spiritual challenges - and to encourage and empower us to live a life that brings glory to God. The crippled woman gave the glory to God for her healing. She turned from apathy to praise; from allowing herself to be demeaned as a cripple, being denied her status as a child of Abraham, and being denied her potential, to standing and giving praise to God in front of everybody.

While I was growing up, I had to be very careful what I said around my dad. I still don't know if it was my tone of voice, or the words I used, or what I would do wrong, but I knew I had to be careful. So I would be quiet most of the time. I learned to not share ideas or opinions with other people, especially adults, because my ideas and opinions were always wrong. (Be seen and not heard.) I believed it.

Engineering seemed like a good profession. I could be in my cubicle and design circuits and systems, and not worry about putting my foot in my mouth. But God had other plans. My engineering work led to applications engineering, which led to customer presentations and meetings, which led to program management, which led to engineering management. I found myself doing technical seminars for several hundred engineers and managers. NOW I know that was training for me to be ready for YOU. God enabled me, empowered me, to step out for Jesus.

Look at the course of your life. See if you can recognize the work God has been doing, either in an instant (like for the crippled woman), or over time (like my technical seminars). When you realize the path God has laid out for you, it is IMPOSSIBLE to be apathetic about God. God enables every one of us; God empowers us; to step out to reflect God's glory into the world.

Think about the skills you have learned. Think about the things you love to do. Think about the special abilities you have, some that may have taken you years to realize you have.

Think about the experiences life has given you.

Take all of those resources, claim God as their source, and then stand up straight, decide to live for the purpose God created you for, choose the Life of Grace, and give the glory to God. Amen