

Luke 13:10-21

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 13 verses 10 through 21. Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath and there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for 18 years.

She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, woman, you are freed from your disability. And he laid his hands on her and immediately she was made straight and she glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, there are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed and do not on the Sabbath day. Then the Lord answered him, you hypocrites, do not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it. And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for 18 years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day. As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

He said, therefore, what is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden and it grew and became a tree and the birds of the air made nests in its branches. And again, he said, to what shall I compare the kingdom of God?

It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until it was all leavened. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Good morning. It's good to be with you. If Jesus walked in the service this morning, which of us would be the first to greet him? Would there be a rush to meet him at the door?

Would there be a course of praise that would go up and say, thank you? And what would be the great list of things that you would give him thanks for?

[2 : 28] Glorious things happen when Jesus is in the house. Today's text takes us to a setting where Jesus was, in fact, in the house.

He came to church on that particular day. You see it there in chapter 13 and verse 10. Not only was he in the house, there's a sense in which he was in the driver's seat and that, according to verse 10, now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day.

This is not the first time that we see Jesus in church. The first time that we see him in that setting, as a matter of fact, turn all the way back to Luke chapter 4.

And there we will take a look at the first time that we actually see Jesus at church in the synagogue of that day.

That was the way that he operated. That was the way that he rolled back in that day. Look at chapter 4 and verse 14. This is what's happening.

[3 : 59] He's giving sort of this general report of how Jesus operated or functioned in that day. But let's not leave that page because there's something that we need to see very specifically because Luke takes us from the general in verses 14 and 15 to the specific in verse 16.

Notice what he says. And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up. And here it is. As was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day and he stood up to read.

Jesus is in his hometown pulpit, if you will, speaking to hometown people. And what kind of hometown reception would Jesus have there?

Let's read on in chapter 4. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written.

The word, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. And he sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind and to set at liberty those who are oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

[5 : 30] Look at verse 20. And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Perhaps you heard when Matt Buffy closed the reading.

He said, this is the word of the Lord. And we said, Jesus didn't say that on that day. Notice what he did say in verse 21.

Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. Matt, thank you for not saying that on this morning. But Jesus could say it because in fact he was announcing his agenda.

This is what has been known as the Nazareth manifesto. On the front end of Jesus' ministry, he is giving his purpose statement for why he came.

And as we look through the book of Luke, as we have traveled with Jesus up to the point that he's setting his eyes toward Jerusalem, he's doing these very things.

[6 : 38] That is the way that he functioned. That's the way he operated. Huh? And here in today's text, he's a man on a mission.

And just as it was back in that day, Jesus' mission was a mission of liberation. It was a sense in which he was announcing in the spirit of the year of Jubilee.

Jubilee. And during the year of Jubilee, which is the 50th year, that is the year after the seven times seven. Huh? You might say it was a perfection.

Jubilee was a perfection of the Sabbath day itself. And it was the time when, listen to this, that liberty was to be proclaimed throughout the land.

Huh? Captives would be released. Displaced people would go home. Property would be returned. Debts would be forgiven.

[7 : 43] Just payments would be made. And throughout the book of Luke, Jesus is doing the very things that he would, he announced that he would do on that fateful day back in Luke chapter four.

The spirit of the year of Jubilee characterized the very ministry of Jesus. And so in our text, once again, we see him in the synagogue.

He's teaching on the Sabbath. And this is the last time that we see in Luke's ministry that we find him in the synagogue.

So there's a sense in which we're looking at some bookends. Chapter four. This is the way he rolled. And here it is in chapter 13.

And he's doing the very things that he said that he would do. Consistent with this mission statement in Luke chapter four. We note that.

[8 : 45] And here's what we see. The ministry of Jesus brought life giving liberation. Huh? The ministry of Jesus as he did in the book of Luke and even here in chapter 13, it brought life giving liberation.

And did you know that he does the same thing today? The life giving liberation that Jesus gives is not something that is relegated to the past.

It's something that is very alive and present and available in the present. Do you need that kind of life giving liberation that comes from Jesus?

Ah, it's here. Because when Jesus is in the house, folks, glorious things can happen. So in the synagogue, Jesus encountered a woman.

You notice that there in verse 11, he encountered a woman with a disability. For 18 long years, this woman had been bent over.

[9 : 55] She was unable to straighten herself. Ah, but Jesus was in the house. Jesus was in church on that day.

And when Jesus is in the house, glorious things can happen. Ah, the text of those that Jesus met her, he sees her there.

You see it in verse 11. He was bent over and Jesus saw her. Verse 12, he called her over and said to her, Woman, you're free from your disability.

You see the word free there? It's the same word that we see in verse 15. It's translated there, untie. It's the same word that we see in verse 16.

It's translated there, loosed, huh? And notice we're going to see, we're going to make some connections with those. But Jesus tells her, Woman, you are loosed from your disability.

[10 : 56] So he calls her to himself. He lays his holy hands on her. And when holy hands meet crooked body, crooked body yields to those holy hands, huh?

She's made straight. She's moved in ways that she hasn't moved in 18 years. Ah, and with new movement came new praise. You see that there from her mouth? Her mourning is turned into dancing. Sorrows turn into joy. She acknowledged that it was the hand of God.

Verse 13, She glorified God. She offered up praise and worship to him. Now tell me, what would your response, if you were in the house, if you were in church on that day, when Jesus had done this, what would your response be?

Oh, Sister Smith, she's been coming in for a long time. She makes her way to the pew, and all of a sudden, holy hands touch crooked body. She's made straight. How would you respond if you were in the house?

[12:05] This place would go up and pray. Some of you folks who have been sitting quietly ever since I've been here and before, you would go up in praise on that particular day because it's right.

Huh? If this was something which was worthy of getting on the hand organ and the piano and all the other instruments, striking up praise because Jesus is in the house and when Jesus is in the house, glorious things happen.

Huh? But listen, I think I hear a siren. I see blue and red lights flashing and it's not Chicago PD, it is Temple PD.

And they're pulling over and here it comes, the Temple God. He's got this badge on and he's going to write a citation. This guy wants to write Jesus up for what he had done in the house.

Look at there. Don't you see that? In verse 14? But the ruler of the synagogue, indicted because Jesus had healed on that day.

[13:15] Huh? He was not impressed with what he had seen. In his mind, what had happened was a violation. Jesus had crossed the center line and he cried foul on the basis of what was going on.

So while on the one hand, the ministry of Jesus brought life-changing liberation, note also that the ministry of Jesus was met with hypocritical opposition. That's what we have here.

Huh? Huh? This guy was furious. Work was not supposed to be done on the Sabbath. And in his mind, what Jesus had done for this woman was in fact work.

Huh? Something was drastically wrong with such a perspective, was it not? Huh? Was that this woman experiencing what the God of heaven had actually ordained to happen on the Sabbath day? here in fact was rest and release and refreshment and restoration. Oh, but the traditions of men as they often do had squeezed the real meaning from that blessed day.

[14:26] It had been shackled with stipulations and regulations that had trumped the very commandment of God. And here they were. Here this woman, her chains had fallen off.

She was free and the attendant was angry because it had happened on the Sabbath day.

The day in his mind had been sullied by this glorious act of liberation. How sad. The reality, there was more than one crooked person in the room.

On the one hand, there was one who was physically crippled. On the other hand, there was one who was out to lunch and spiritually crippled. Huh?

Such anti-Jesus sentiments revealed, friends, the sad state of religion and the religious leaders of that day. The barrenness of the nation that we see in the verses that precede here.

[15:30] is exposed. The blindness of this leader couldn't have been greater. Here, friends, was a live illustration of that the tree was fruitless.

The fig tree was not bearing fruit. And we see it illustrated. The lack of fruit that prompted the words in verse 7.

Cut it down. Here is an illustration of the barrenness of the nation in living color. You notice Jesus' response in verse 15.

You hypocrites. Stinging words, but they're not new. Look at chapter 12, verse 56. You hypocrites. And again, it seems like that this particular characteristic was somewhat pervasive and it showed up with many faces in many ways in that particular day.

The synagogue ruler was not alone. Verse 17. There were other adversaries. There were people in league with him that were present. while they appeared on one hand to be defenders of the law, they in fact were the guilty ones.

[16:50] Hypocrites. Are you not in the loosing business yourself? That's what he says. Essence. Does not each of you, verse 15, on the Sabbath day, there's the word, untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, from the feeding place and lead it away to the water?

Huh? You're kind. You're sensitive to animals. But you're merciless when it comes to one of your own.

One in your own congregation. One in your own midst. Huh? Huh? Covenant mercy was not extended to one in the covenant family.

Huh? Huh? And that was sad. Here were the gatekeepers or one of the gatekeepers of that day. And kinder to the animals.

Huh? They had religion but they had religion minus mercy. Huh? In verse 17, several things were made, come into clear focus.

[18:07] adversaries, they are shamed. Huh? You see that there? Ah, he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame.

Shame on them for being members of the anti-cruelty society for the sake of domestic animals but insensitive to people who were made in the image of God.

Shame on them who shared covenantal space with this daughter of Abraham but their refusal were insensitive to covenantal mercy that's to be shared among who are all who are in the family.

Shame on them for diluting the law with man-made regulations that were at odds with what Jesus was actually doing. The Lord's liberating intent.

Shame on them and shame on us when we find ourselves doing the same thing. Their practices put them in league with Satan who had bound this woman for 18 long years.

[19:18] Huh? And they would have her deliverance delayed. Put on hold. Ah, you got six days to come. Well, why weren't you doing anything on those six days?

Huh? You got six days in which work ought to be done. Huh? The actions revealed that the disabled woman was not the only one who was in the bonds or the grip of Satan. And should we not be ashamed when we put barricades and systems in the way they get in God's way of really what he wants to do.

Find ourselves criticizing and finding fault with kingdom order rather than cooperating with it. Do our systems get in the way of Jesus' agenda of mercy?

Do we have an agenda that clashes with the true advance of God's kingdom? Shame on us when we erect such systems that hinder mercy rather than serve as channels for God's mercy as was Jesus.

[20:28] Oh, but not just were the enemies shamed. There was humiliation on the one hand, but then here we go, finally we get some celebration and all the people rejoiced at all the things that were done for him.

The glorious things. we know glorious things when we see them, don't we? It's more than a shot being hit on a basketball court that brings people on their feet, or more than championships, and more than all of these things, and we give credit where credit is due, but glorious things.

we know. Have you ever seen someone who was morally crippled and spiritually lost and blind? That individual comes to Christ.

That's a glorious thing, friends. Have you ever seen a family that was broken and battered and shattered, and Jesus becomes at the center of it, and that family is put back together, a husband comes back home, a child returns to his or her moorings, that's a glorious thing.

When mercy of the mercy of God comes and is centered in the hearts and lives of people, it's a glorious thing.

[21:56] We know when we see them, and the release of this disabled woman from her crippledness, from her disability, was indeed a glorious thing, and the people rejoiced, that all the glorious things that were done by him, not only were his works glorious, his words were glorious, his handling of these religious jerks, if you will, was worthy of praise, huh?

Because he set them in their place, his words were corrective and clarifying and comforting, huh? And this resonated with the people of God who knew the hand of mercy when they saw it being extended to one who was in need, huh?

Well, so in the verses before us, once again, here we have it. It's the manifestation of God's kingdom rule, rule, and it came through Jesus in the form of mercy.

Listen, friends, it did not come with military might and the toppling of earthly kingdoms. The manifestation of God's rule was not through a crippled religious system.

Ah, here we go, here we go, listen to this. It came at street level, in street level kinds of ways, through Jesus. And it came one person at a time, huh?

[23 : 27] In verses 10 through 17, there had been a clear manifestation of God's rule, of God's reign, of God's kingdom. It was not without rejection on the one hand and opposition on the other.

So what does Jesus do in verses 18 through 20? On the one hand, manifestation, here he goes, he's going to give an explanation about God's rule.

What it looks like, how it shows up. You see it there? What is the kingdom of God like and to what shall I compare it? Here he goes. How do you compare?

There are ways in which God's kingdom reign compares to, number one, it compares to a mustard seed that's planted in a garden. And number two, it's like leaven that's hidden in flour.

In both examples, there are several things present. There's something that's plain and simple, yet it's dynamic. Huh?

[24 : 30] It's like when seed gets in soil. It's like when leaven gets in flour. There are processes in play that yield results, may not be able to see them initially, but it yields results that are both visible eventually and they are tangible results.

Mustard seeds, when they get in the ground, it grows and becomes a tree where the shelter, the birds of the air can come and they can build their nests. And if you would look back in the Old Testament, when it's talking about the nations coming, Daniel chapter four, verse twelve.

And I know about this, when my wife puts yeast in flour, something happens, folks. And then when she bakes the bread, something happens. I eat the bread.

When a woman puts leaven and flour, it works, listen to this, it works invisibly, it works quietly, it works pervasively, but it works effectively.

And a similar dynamic is in play with God's kingdom in the world. So in the ministry of Jesus, through him, God's kingdom was advancing, it was advancing in ways.

[25 : 44] That may not have fit the bill of the religious leaders or worldly powers, but it was moving, it was unstoppable, and it was moving and going.

It comes dynamically, it comes conspicuously, not with military might, flashy or showy. It was not manifested in massively dynamic ways in huge scale where armies are toppled and governments were transferred, reins were transferred.

Those to whom it came knew it. They knew it. Forgotten people knew that God was in charge as Jesus made his way into Galilee and villages.

The nobodies, those at the bottom rungs of society, they felt the weight of Jesus' ministry and mercy to them. God's kingdom was made known through the life-giving liberation that came through Jesus.

The carpenter turned preacher, it came ultimately through crucifixion and through death.

[26 : 58] You don't get any lower than that. But it comes mightily eventually and pervasively.

And those of you who know Christ here today, you know about the coming of the kingdom that invaded the darkness and the blindness and the deadness of your life.

And you know that when he came, glorious things have happened because he has come. The coming of the kingdom in Jesus was such that even organized religion rejected it.

But friends, it comes to those who recognize their need. And it grows like seed in the ground that cannot easily be overlooked. Huh? It comes, you know, seed is easily trampled upon, huh?

Like lemon loaf. It doesn't rise without something dynamically present there, huh? What was Jesus, what Jesus was up to represented a small movement by comparison, barely, huh?

[28 : 07] Yet God's kingdom is manifested in Jesus. And he was poised for growth that it would eventually include those from outside of Israel. This is the idea.

Insiders were going to become outsiders and outsiders were going to become eventually insiders, huh? So Luke places this particular story in the midst of two, two different ideas about growth.

We've seen Luke chapter 13 verses 6 through 9. No growth. And here we have on this other end the mustard seed and the flower.

There is growth, huh? A fruitless fig tree on the one hand, but this story illustrates there is going to be growth on the other.

Insiders are going to become outsiders. Outsiders are going to become insiders. The personification of Jubilee, huh?

[29 : 09] It was in their midst. The kingdom was going to go and grow. So what am I saying today? Simply this. Through Jesus, verses 10 through 13.

God's kingdom advances, verses 18 through 21, in spite of rejection and opposition, verses 14 through 17. Will there be rejection and opposition even today?

You better believe it. If you're going to join this mission with Jesus, you can expect opposition. What kind? Religious, as we see in the text. You may be in an academic domain.

You can expect rejection there. In the political sphere, the public square, you're going to be rejected and there's going to be opposition if you join Jesus. Huh?

In his kingdom movement, one of his kingdom associates, as a kingdom church, we can expect opposition, but we also can expect growth and expansion. And that should give us courage.

[30 : 12] This passage, in an implicit way, calls us to recognize the glorious things that Jesus has done. And join, to join him, friends, in the advance of his kingdom.

Huh? Has he done glorious things? You better believe it. Huh? Has he done glorious things for you?

Huh? The glorious things that he has done for us call for our loudest praise from us. Join me in giving him praise, even as we sing.

I'm going to pray the musicians are going to come all for a thousand times to sing our great redeemer's praise.

Lord, we thank you for the glorious things that you have done. thank you for Jesus and helping us to see how the kingdom advances. May we join you in your mission of mercy and may crippled and crooked things, even our own souls, be made straight because we trust in you.

[31 : 32] Blessed be your name. Amen. Amen. Amen.