

It's A Matter Of Perspective

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Date: 11 January 2026

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[0 : 00] Before we get into Luke, there's something that I wanted to share with you that is somewhat a little bit of a history lesson. Some of you may not know this about me, but there was a time in my life where I was running from God.

I was running from His call in my life. Even though I had some training to be a pastor and my degree was in the Bible, I thought God didn't want me to be a pastor.

I didn't qualify. I wasn't good enough. I had this idea of what a pastor should be and a pastor should be basically perfect and that wasn't me.

So I let that get to me and I ran. During that time, I thought, well, what am I going to do for a job? I thought, well, maybe I'll be a history professor because I love history.

So I started taking some master's level classes in history toward that end. I didn't follow through with that, and I praise the Lord for that because he got a hold of me and said, you dummy, this is not what I have for you.

[1 : 11] But still, I have this love for history. It's a part of why I think it's wonderful that Rebecca Beringer is leading our TPUSA thing because she's a history buff too.

So I think that's pretty cool. So I want to give you a little history today, if that's okay. Can I do that? It has nothing to do with Luke. I just want to share with you a little piece of history that starts with this guy.

This is William Tyndale, who was one of the men who translated early translators of the Bible into the English language.

This was back in 15, the year 1526. And this is one of his famous quotes, spoken as it were to the Pope. He wasn't speaking to the Pope, but it was as if he was speaking.

This is his desire that the Pope get this message, that if God spare my life ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow, shall know more of the scripture than thou dost.

[2 : 13] And he's referring to the Pope because he thought the Pope didn't know any scriptures. That's probably true, or at least very few of the scriptures. And so his goal in translating the Bible into English, and he paid for it with his life.

They strangled him and burned him at the stake because he translated the Bible into English. And you would think, well, how is that a crime? Well, back then, that was considered a crime. And so some of his inspiration came from another fellow a couple hundred years before him.

This is John Wycliffe. Now, when I look at John Wycliffe's picture there, there's a couple of faces in our congregation that come to mind.

First, I think of if Tom Noteware had gray hair, he might get him that hat. And then I looked at his face, and I thought, that's Matt Langfeld.

Matt, if you could grow a beard like this, you could pull off John Wycliffe. Anyway, that's beside the point, too.

[3 : 27] Sorry about that. He said this. Now, he also translated the Bible into the English language. But this is even before the Greek. He translated from the Latin Vulgate into English.

And his goal also was that the common man would have the ability to read the scriptures for themselves. Because to this point, no one in the English language could.

It wasn't in English. They would have to learn either Latin or Greek in order to be able to read the Bible or the New Testament. He said the laity, which is the common people, ought to understand the faith.

And since the doctrines of our faith are in the scriptures, believers should have the scriptures in a language familiar to the people. And it's like, hear, hear. Praise the Lord for men like this in the past who fought and gave their lives for us to be able to have the scriptures in our language.

We need this. And what's interesting is that John Wycliffe also said this. This was in his opening remarks in his English edition of his Bible.

[4 : 41] He said this. This Bible is for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Is there a phrase in there that rings a bell to any of you?

Does that hit home anything that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people? Is that? There was another famous fellow, actually from American history.

This guy, Abraham Lincoln, at his Gettysburg Address, famously ended that address, talking about the soil that these men had died on and how we ought to honor them.

That this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom. And that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

There's something about having the scriptures in our own tongue, our own language, that makes how we live our lives and how our lives are governed.

[5 : 57] It helps us to be able to participate in that and to govern ourselves according to not our own desires, our own selfishness, but according to the principles that are found here in the Word of God.

In recent days, this is a little bit more modern picture, and I don't know if you can tell that. This is Oz Guinness. Some of you may not know who this is, but a wonderful believer and proponent of faith in our culture.

He said this, when we put the Bible in the hands of ordinary people, then you have a chance of government of the people, by the people, for the people.

Because the Bible will be the foundation for self-government and self-rule, and without that, freedom will be impossible. And understand that believers of previous generations and of previous nations believed that the scriptures were important to our own self-government.

Our founding fathers understood this. They got it and designed a government that is not perfect, but in terms of how we ought to govern ourselves, it is a government that is informed, very clearly informed by the scriptures, so that we can govern ourselves in a way that would not only succeed, and we would be prosperous and great as a nation, but would honor God at the same time.

[7 : 38] He said this, No more can America today stay half the child of the American Revolution, which was largely biblical, and half the child of the French Revolution, which was anti-biblical.

He connected the dots to what's happening in our current culture today, to half of the country wanting to live, in a sense, in some degree or other, from a biblical perspective, from having a biblical foundation, the foundation of which the American Revolution was based.

But again, if you know anything from history, the French Revolution was quite different. Although the French were inspired by what happened in the United States, they instead went a different route, and their revolution was not based on scripture.

It was actually anti-God and anti-Bible, and that revolution became very bloody, very nasty, and was very short-lived as a result of that.

But what we have happening in our country today, we see that spirit of the American Revolution behind those who want to stand on the foundation of the scriptures, and the spirit of the French Revolution on those who want to have a nation actually, in a sense, try to tear down the nation, and based on the spirit of the French Revolution, a revolution that was holy without God, without biblical foundation.

[9 :11] He goes on, we have all these challenges, protests, scandals, outrages today. Anybody pay attention to the news last few days?

I got to tell you, and I told this to Rebecca, I was beating myself up today, not today, this week, over what to do with my sermon, partly because the sermon was tough.

Sometimes as a pastor, you come across a passage of scripture that's just tough, and today's passage will be tough, and so we're going to have a little bit of a struggle section once we get to Luke together, in the Gospel of Luke.

But also because of what's happening right now, currently in our nation, and the temperature of our nation, and how do I address this?

And so I'm not really addressing it, as much as I am reading from people, and sharing this with you from other folks, and what they're saying. We have all these challenges, protests, scandals, outrages, and so many people are responding in what I call a whack-a-mole style.

[10 :14] Ban here, protest there, boycott there. We need a leader who will help us to see the choice before us, kind of like a Moses, a Joshua, that would put before us a blessing or a curse, a life or a death.

We choose. What do we choose? And then one more, and this is even more so, the young pastor in Dallas, Texas, Josh Howerton said this, and this is more directly related to what's going on in our nation currently.

Sin is called lawlessness in the Bible, and whenever we sin, we are choosing to go against God's law, so that would be lawlessness.

And in the scriptures, there is a reference to a man who is known as Antichrist, who is a man of lawlessness, meaning a man of sin, the author of sin, if you will, the one who promotes sin, or lawlessness.

It's interesting that lawlessness is something that is promoted by Satan. Whenever you see groups of people protect lawbreakers and attack just law enforcers, and you have to put the word just there because there are some law enforcers who are not just, and the people that those unjust law enforcers enraged the most are the ones who are just.

[12 :00] more so than anyone else. Because just law enforcers are the ones who want to do it the right way. Whenever you see groups of people protect lawbreakers and attack just law enforcers, you can make a pretty educated guess as to what spirit is behind the situation.

It is the spirit of lawlessness. It is the spirit of Satan himself. That is telling people, go protest.

Go break the law. Go let prisoners who are guilty of heinous crimes, let's protect them. Let's set them free.

Let's put them out on bail. Let's not punish the evildoer, which our government and our law enforcement have the God-given calling to do.

Romans 13. And so what are we doing? As a nation, we have to be those who would honor and protect those law enforcers.

[13:17] those who are doing their job, their God-given calling. As I have been called as a pastor, I believe God also calls law enforcement to do what God has given them the responsibility to do.

And much, and greatest number, 99% more, they do it in an honorable way.

And what we see happening in our country today is a travesty. So let us pray for, let us honor the government, and let us do that for our law enforcement people today who are suffering because of what they see happening.

We don't see it in Mason County, do we? We're not seeing it right here, but it's certainly in our nation. And we need to be aware of that and to pray for those who are having to face it head on.

All right, moving on to the Gospel of Luke. Perspective, it makes all the difference in the world.

[14:33] We just talked about this perspective. Am I viewing events from an American revolutionary spirit or from a French revolutionary spirit? From a biblical perspective or a not-so-biblical perspective?

And that's what we're going to see in our passage today in the Gospel of Luke. We're going to see something that is based on your perspective, how you try to understand what's happening in the text here today.

Let me give you a for instance. The son of a farmer is going to have a different viewpoint of manure. The son of a farmer's viewpoint of manure is something that he's got to deal with by having to go shovel out the barn every day, right?

You got to go shovel it out of the barn. You got to handle it that way. But to a flower gardener, manure is a precious subject. It's something that you want to have.

And they're willing to play in the manure and shovel it around their flowers. So it just depends on where you're coming from when you see this. Subject of ice.

[15:43] If you're an elderly driver, subject of ice is something like, ooh, I don't want to do that. Some folks are not so thrilled about going out on the roads today because of what ice, right?

But if you're an ice fisherman, a woman, if you love to ice fish, it's like, ooh, best time of year. I get to go out on the ice and go fishing.

So it depends on your, and even in a Christian perspective, it depends on how God has wired you and what makes you passionate, what your giftings are.

For instance, the subject of John Mark might come up. Mark is the author of the Gospel of Mark, but early on, he had kind of a rough start.

He traveled with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey and then deserted them. Went back home to Jerusalem. And then when Paul and Barnabas were getting ready to embark on their second missionary journey, John Mark says, hey, I'll go.

[16:46] And Paul, who had a different mindset, was more of a visionary, was more of a discernment kind of a guy, and hey, you bailed on us once, and no, you're not going with us again.

Barnabas, on the other hand, whose very name, he was renamed Barnabas, means he's the son of encouragement. So when he looked at John Mark, he thought of an opportunity to rebuild and build back into a young man's life.

And so two different responses to the same person based on perspective, where you're coming from. And that's what we're going to see in our text today.

Two vastly different perspectives. And when we look at, we just mentioned current events, our perspective is, are we going to look at it from a biblical perspective?

Are we going to look at it from a secular humanist perspective, which I don't think secular really fits, because even secular humanism is a form of religion? Another long story.

[17:55] We'll move on. And so I want to look at these events that we're going to be reading about. And these first two events have to do with a massacre and a tower that falls, a falling tower.

So let's read about this. And as we read about this, I'm not going to give you that much information about these two events. One, because we don't know that much about them too, because they're not really important to the story.

So let's read about it. There were some present that at that very time, remember now he's preaching to these massive crowds. And for some reason, there's a small group of people that are there that are like, hey, Jesus, were you aware of this current event that was happening in their time?

At that very time, who told them about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, now we know from history that Pilate was a very vicious man and ruled with an iron fist.

We see that in the accounts of the crucifixion. But that was not a one-off for Pilate. He was that way all the time. And so whenever he had opportunity to express his anger or his control of the people, he did that.

[19:11] And apparently there was a group of Galilean men who came to the temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices. And because whatever reason, nobody knows, Pilate had them executed right there and then took their blood and mingled it with the blood of their sacrifices that they had brought to the temple and desecrated the temple in that way.

So heinous, right? It's a horrible event. And Pilate was known for this kind of thing. Apparently something like that had happened right about this time.

And so, hey, Jesus, what do you think about that? What's up with that? He answered them, do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans?

Because that was the common way of thinking about terrible events that would happen. We have some of this kind of thinking even in our day that when terrible things happen to someone, we think, were they the cause of it?

What did they do to bring this horrible circumstance upon themselves? So Jesus is asking the question in response to them, do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered in this unique and horrible way?

[20:43] And Jesus says, no, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. So Jesus has a different perspective than the people.

And so another event, Jesus brings this one up, or these are those 18 men on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them.

And again, this is pretty much all we know about this event. There was a tower that was under construction and these men, the tower fell on them and they died.

And so the people just thought, well, what did these guys do to deserve this terrible accident? What evil did they commit?

How was God judging them or why was God judging them by allowing this tower to fall on them? We have this kind of thinking when, for instance, a hurricane comes along or an earthquake comes along and some famous, somebody wearing a Christian label will stand up and say, well, God is judging this particular city because this hurricane is coming or this earthquake happened because of all the evil that's going on.

[22:02] And I think Jesus would say, really? So you're better than all those people. That's how you want to go with this? This is what you want to think? So do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem at the time?

No! They're not worse than you. You're just as bad off. Unless you repent, you will meet the same fate.

You also will perish in this way. Now, before we get into the specifics of this particular story and what we're looking at, this is chapter 13, verses 1 through 21 now.

And in this section of Scripture, there are three stories. The first two we just looked at, short stories, and then we have another one that we'll come to. But then there's also three parables.

One that's a little bit longer and then the last two at the very end are very brief. Three stories, three parables, and how we look at them, how we come to understand what Jesus is teaching in these is going to depend on our perspective.

[23:16] Whose perspective are we going to have as we approach this reading, this section of Scripture. And so, here's what I want to start with on your notes.

The key to understanding these passages is in seeing the perspective of those involved. So, Jesus, we have one point of view that's coming from Jesus and another point of view that's coming from somewhere else.

And I want to start with that. The most prominent perspective at that time was that of the Jewish leadership and of most of the people.

Okay? Most of the people, including the Jewish leadership, would have said that when something terrible happens to someone, the question then becomes what did they do?

What did they do wrong? We see it when Jesus healed the blind man in the Gospel of John. The disciples were asking what did he do or what did his parents do to make him to be blind?

[24:18] It's that kind of faulty thinking that asks that question. And again, we still see that kind of thinking prevalent today in our world.

And then the often missed perspective is the perspective of Jesus, the viewpoint of Jesus, who is the Son of God. And so this is God's perspective. And let me ask you a real quick question here.

Whose perspective should we rather have? God's perspective. We have to know that, right? Hopefully we're on board with that. now here, I might receive a little bit of pushback from you on this, but that's okay.

I'm still going to say it. Our approach should be to assume that our perspective is warped and distorted by the world and by our own sin. I'm saying that about me and all of us.

Okay? That when I'm approaching a passage of Scripture like this, and I've been, we've been doing some Bible study tips here these last few Sundays and how to deal with parables and how to deal with sections of Scripture like this.

[25:27] And what I want to tell us here is this, and tell myself, is that when we're approaching a passage of Scripture like this, I want to start from the viewpoint, the perspective that says, my mind is warped.

I'm approaching this from a worldly perspective, from a, my own sinfulness perspective, and my mind needs to be changed. My mind needs to be transformed.

Where do I learn that from? Where do I get that from? Well, I, we go back to this passage of Scripture. I, I probably show you this verse, I don't know, 25 times a year, even when we're not teaching through the book of Romans, because it's such a key verse for us as believers.

Do not be conformed to this world. Why? Because we are. Even if you grew up in the church, your mind is conformed by the world. Do not be conformed by this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind by testing, that by testing you may discern what the, what is the will of God is good and acceptable and perfect will in the word of God.

So, when you, when you read this passage and you understand that when it says do not be conformed to this world, the tense of the verb here is stop being conformed by the world.

[26 : 55] In other words, it's not that you're not conformed by the world and don't do it, but that you're already conformed by the world and you need to stop it and you need to keep on stopping it.

It's in the, it's in the, passive perfect tense in the sense that you need to stop and you need to keep on stopping it from happening. Stop being conformed by this world.

And we do that by training our mind and our heart in the scriptures so that over time, yes, your mind is going to be less and less conformed by the world, but even at 61, and I've been a Christian for, for 40 years, longer than 40 years, I'm doing the math in my head and it's like, wait a minute, I missed something.

I'm still needing to obey the scripture because our minds are so easily influenced by the way the world thinks, the way the world operates, and how my own heart, my own sinfulness, my own sinful nature wants to pervert the reality that I see and take me away from what God's perspective is.

And so when, when we approach scripture, all scripture, we need to approach it from this, this mindset. So this, this, these two stories there, we'll start with the faulty thinking and we're going to get the majority of this down here in, in, in this passage and then we'll get shorter and shorter as we go along in terms of each one of these stories or parables.

[28 : 36] The faulty premise here is that these victims were greater sinners than others. That's just wrong thinking. Jesus made that clear. Do you think that these guys were greater sinners than yourselves?

No, they weren't. Jesus was pretty blunt with that, with response to that question. And, and then, do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners?

Do you think that they were worse offenders? No. And you need to do something about it. You need to repent. Again, this, this wrong thinking thinks this way, that your suffering in life is directly proportional to your sin.

Okay. And then, the opposite is also a false way of thinking that is very prominent in the church today. That, your prosperity is proportional to your piety.

Now, the word piety there, it just means holiness or piousness or righteousness or goodness or sometimes the, the, probably the most popular word that's, that's placed in there today is faith.

[29 : 50] That your, your, your prosperity is proportional to your faith. That's just another way of saying the same thing that what Jesus was talking about here.

Okay. It's a false way of teaching. It's a false way of thinking that, that God is either going to curse you or bless you based on the way that you behave.

Based on the, the measure of holiness that you have or the measure of faith that you have. And it's actually tied to an Old Testament mindset where God told the nation of Israel, okay, Israel, if you do things the right way, if you honor me and obey my law, I'm going to bless you as a nation.

And if you dishonor me and disobey me, then I'm going to curse you as a nation. And that kind of thinking, and if you look at prosperity gospel teaching, much of what they draw from are these Old Testament passages that are a reference to Israel, but not a reference to New Testament believers whom Jesus promised that we would have trouble in this life.

And if you go by the prosperity gospel way of thinking, what are you going to do with someone like the Apostle Paul? The Apostle Paul who knows how to be a base, knows how to live in wealth, knows how to do both.

[31:20] We can't look at someone in our New Testament teaching in a New Testament church age and say, well, because this person has money and has health that they're with God.

We can't do that because this person is poor or is sick and dying that God is judging. We can't do that because what do we do with the martyrs?

What do we do with someone like Stephen? We need to understand here and we've talked that we've been talking about this the last few weeks that when Jesus is making these statements, he's talking directly about the nation of Israel.

Jesus was speaking to the nation of Israel at this moment, specifically that generation of Israel which had seen God's Messiah.

they were looking at him right in the face. He was pounding on the drums. The kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand. He was standing right in front of them and they missed it.

[32:40] And Jesus was now at the end of three years of his public ministry. He's on his way to Jerusalem to be crucified because they're rejecting him and he knows that that's what's happening.

And so he's speaking directly to this generation of people who rejected Christ. They had seen God's Messiah and they rejected him as their king.

He was the heir to David's throne. They rejected him. And he was saying to that generation, guess what? Your time is coming. Matter of fact, it's looking at you right in the face.

If you do not repent now, your destruction is coming. It's exactly, if you look at history, it's exactly what happened to Israel.

After the crucifixion of Christ, after the very public and very real rejection of Israel, of Christ, Jerusalem was destroyed, utterly destroyed by Rome.

[33:41] He said it was coming and it's exactly what happened. So, right thinking here for us, if we're going to take a lesson from this, is this.

Let us not bother to ponder the sin of others. Let's not look out and say, oh, look at what terrible things happening to them. What did they do wrong? We've got to knock that off.

We've got to quit looking at other people and just assuming either the best or the worst. Usually we think of the worst. That's how our minds are. But instead, we ought to focus on ourselves and let us repent of our own sin and do it quickly because Jesus is coming.

That's our warning for us as New Testament believers. Jesus is coming and we don't know when that's going to happen but it could be at any time and we need to be ready.

Repent. Repent. It's basically the same message that he was telling Israel at that time. Repent. It's coming.

[34:52] And so then Jesus tells this parable. This parable of a fruitless fig tree. And understand, in the Old Testament, there are times where a fig tree represents the nation of Israel and that fits here in the context of this parable.

So he told this parable. A man had a fig tree planted. That word planted is key. Okay? We're going to come back to that at the end, at the very end.

And so I want you to remember that I said this about verse 6. The fig tree was planted in his vineyard and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.

So a man plants a fig tree in his garden and he keeps coming back and there's no fruit on this fig tree. And he said to the vine dresser, look, for three years now I've come seeking fruit on this fig tree and I don't find any.

There's none there. What's going on? Cut it down. It needs to come down. Why should it use up this ground? Right? It's a worthless fig tree.

[35 : 55] They didn't grow fig trees for beauty. They grew fig trees for figs for the fruit that they provided. Okay? This is a picture of Israel.

God planted the fig tree. The fig tree was fruitless. Israel was worthless in terms of the way that it honored God and how it thought of itself and now it was rejecting God's Messiah.

It's worthless. It's time to cut it down. And he answered him, Sir, let it alone this year also until I dig around it and put on manure.

We talked about manure earlier. Apparently the farmers they like manure. And if it should bear fruit next year, well and good. But if not, you can cut it down. In other words, God, just a little more time.

A little more time. Let's just give it a little more time. So understanding the parable, Jesus used this parable to understand the utter failure, to underscore the utter failure of Israel to live up to God's expectations, God's standards, and also to warn of the nearness of its destruction.

[37 : 04] The destruction of Israel was right at hand. So when Jesus was pounding the drums and saying, the kingdom of God is at hand, the kingdom of God is at hand, it's the same drumbeat as your destruction is here, your destruction is here.

It's the same message because they rejected Jesus as their king. And the application for us then is the time of his death drew near, so did the time of Israel's destruction as I just said.

Yet God's mercy was still being offered in that moment. Now for us, for you and I, there's a sense where we can say the same thing. as the time of the return of Christ draws near, we still have this short period of time to repent.

God is still in this short period of time offering his mercy. But that's coming to an end. Because when Jesus comes back for his bride, the church, and this is now trying to understand what's going on prophetically, what's happening in the future.

When Jesus comes for his church and the true believers of his church are taken out of the way, and then for seven years period of time, God is once again going to be dealing with Israel directly.

[38 : 37] And what's he doing? He's pouring out his wrath and his judgment on the earth for what Israel and the rest of the world did in rejecting Christ.

And so, in a sense, the message is very similar. Destruction is coming. Destruction is coming. And for our world, we need to understand this.

It's not a pleasant message to share or to grapple with. For us, New Testament believers, we're thinking, okay, the rapture, great, we're going to be gone.

Woo-hoo, I'm out of here. The rest of the world is in some deep trouble. And we need to recognize that and remember this urgency that we have to share the gospel with those that we love.

To live out the gospel in our own lives so that it's genuine, so that people see that. We're going to see the same thing now in this next incident with this healing of this disabled woman.

[39 : 46] Now, he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. This is the last time that we see in Luke's gospel that Jesus is teaching in a synagogue. So this is it. This is the end of, he's toward the end now of his public ministry.

It's the last time that we see him teaching in a synagogue. And so, oftentimes, a visiting rabbi would be invited to speak at the synagogue on the Sabbath day.

And I highlight it on the Sabbath day because, once again, we've seen this all throughout Luke that Jesus healing somebody on the Sabbath day was a big problem for them. And that's true here in this case as well.

Behold, there was a woman there who had a disabling spirit for 18 years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her over.

Now, imagine how this is working. They've been through all of the first part of the service in the synagogue there as they would have some singing and they would have some reading of Scripture.

[40 : 53] And then, perhaps, the rabbi or the leading elder in the synagogue would recognize that Jesus is there, would have probably already spoken to him beforehand to make sure that he was okay with coming to teach.

And normally, they would teach on the passage of Scripture that was read. And so, Jesus now has come up to the front of the synagogue. And we talked about this almost a year ago now.

When Jesus would teach at a synagogue, he would, the synagogue, the rabbis or the teachers would sit and they would assume this seated position at the front of the room and begin to teach from the passage of Scripture that they had just read from the Old Testament, from their Scriptures.

So, Jesus is now seated. Everyone's looking at him. And he notices this woman and he calls over to her and says, hey, can you come here?

Can you imagine this woman who has this disabling spirit and she's bent over and she can't straighten up? And notice where she's at, first of all.

[42 : 13] where is she at? She's in the synagogue. She's worshiping God still. She could have had any excuse to say, well, I can't.

I can't go. I can't participate. I'm too broken. I'm too... Not her. She comes in.

She goes to the synagogue and there Jesus is and I'm sure she would have heard about Jesus and now Jesus is calling her up and imagine her embarrassment maybe, her fear, her people noticing her, probably the last thing she would have wanted to happen.

Those feelings would be very short-lived, by the way. and Jesus said to her, woman, which is the equivalent for England would be like, dear lady, you are freed from your disability.

And he laid his hands on her and immediately she was made straight and she did what? Glorifying God. Praise the Lord.

[43 : 30] What a wonderful thing. Right? Someone's not happy though.

The ruler of the synagogue might have been the same guy who invited Jesus to come and speak. Right? Who introduced Jesus. We don't know. But the ruler of the synagogue, he might have been just the guy standing in the back like Tom is right now.

just kind of sitting there with his arms crossed and he's kind of like, no, I'm kidding. Tom's not doing that. The ruler of the synagogue was indignant.

Ooh. I'm guessing that means mad. Because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. Not allowed to do that.

Get a load of what he says. He said to the people this, there are six days in which work ought to be done. He had the audacity to tell this woman, come on those six days and be healed.

[44:40] Can you imagine if she had showed up at the synagogue on any other day of the week? Jesus wouldn't have been there. Was she going to be healed on any other day of the week?

What a buffoon. What insensitive. Come on those days and be healed, but not on the Sabbath day.

Do you think Jesus was happy with that remark? Oh, you got me. No, I don't think so. The Lord answered him, you hypocrites.

Because there's more than one in the room there that are upset. Okay? The leader was, but this is plural. So this is, you hypocrites. Notice Jesus doesn't, well, maybe we ought to look at it from a little different perspective.

does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it.

[46:00] That's work. But you do it anyway, right? Why? Because you care about the beast.

The beast has value to you. And so you do what is unlawful on the Sabbath to take care of the beast. Ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham.

Someone who has more value than your donkey or your ox. Someone who God cares about.

Someone who is absolutely, you know, a child of God. Because when Jesus calls this woman a daughter of Abraham, he means by calling her that that she's a child of God, that she's saved, that God sees her, that God knows her.

Okay? They're saying that about themselves is just self-righteous. But when God says that of us, it's genuine. Whom Satan bound for 18 years, shouldn't she be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?

[47:23] just like you loose the bond of the donkey or the ox to take them to be watered? Whew.

And he said these things and all his adversaries. What does it say? It doesn't say they repented.

It doesn't say they considered what he was saying. It just says that they were put to shame. And all the people, all the other people, rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

Whoa. Huh. Again, it's perspective. It's perspective. And here's how the perspective of the leaders and those who were with him and thinking the Sabbath was being broken and that's what matters.

And the faulty premise was this. The religious leaders felt that they were righteous. Oh, boy. They felt that they were righteous.

[48:36] And it's almost hard to say this out loud. They were deserving of divine blessing. Can you imagine the audacity, the chutzpah, to use a Jewish term, I think, to say, I deserve God's blessing.

That's what they thought. That's what they thought. Do people think that today, by the way? Even people who aren't Christian.

How many people in our country, let's just narrow it down to our own country, how many people in our country who care nothing about God, nothing about Christianity, don't go to church, aren't interested in that, you ask them, well, what about heaven and hell?

Well, I think I'll go to heaven when I die. What makes you think that? Well, because my good will outweigh my bad. That thinking is pervasive in our world today.

People have their own view of their own self-righteousness and they think, well, I've got enough good to outweigh my bad and so I'm good with God. Are you kidding me?

[49:52] Wow. It gets worse if that's possible. They not only rejected the grace of God as seen in their response to the healing of this woman.

They were rejecting God's grace. Not only that, they despised it. When someone else was the recipient of God's grace, they hated that, that this woman was healed in their midst.

they indignant, mad, angry, despised. How else are you going to explain this woman being healed?

Right? They're in the synagogue. They're in Israel. God's chosen people. Here's this rabbi who just says, hey woman, come up here and now you're healed.

Praise the Lord. No. Their explanation of how a woman could be healed in a moment like that, we saw it in chapter 12.

[51:12] They thought it was from Satan. What in the world? What kind of upside down world are they living in?

And we might look at our own things that are going on in our world today and say, what kind of upside down world are we living in?

And it's because we need to have the perspective of Christ. Christ. When we approach the scriptures to understand that our mind is warped by all this teaching from the world and how the world thinks, how my sin muddies the water, I need to retrain my mind, have my mind be transformed by the word of God.

And then as I do that, as I look out at the world, I'm going to see the world in a different way. I'm going to see the world through a different lens. It's going to be completely different. different. And you see the brokenness and you see the lies and you see all of this and it's like, wow, how did I miss this before?

They despised the grace of God. And then there's two more little parables here. As you're reading through this section, I would encourage you, just read through it all.

[52:47] Maybe when you get home, read through this whole section and at first glance it's like, these are different events. These are different things. You've got some like, you know, guys falling tower, dying and massacre at the temple and a parable of a fig tree.

And now you've got this woman in the synagogue who's healed and now you've got a parable about a mustard seed and some leaven. How are they all tied together? They're all tied together because of perspective.

How are we looking at these events? And again, we have to look at these two little parables. Each parable is two verses long, a tiny little parable. But we have to view them from God's perspective in the context Jesus is speaking to Israel and their rejection of him as Messiah.

So you see that in their view of these terrible things that happen, in their view of the parable of the fig tree, fig tree, in their view of this woman being healed at the Sabbath, and now in these two little parables.

And I want you to notice how these parables are introduced. He said, therefore, what is the kingdom of God like? What is the gospel message that he is proclaiming?

[54:11] We saw this at the beginning of Luke, and it's been consistent throughout the gospel. Okay? His gospel message, the kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand.

It's consistent throughout. The kingdom of God is at hand. So if the kingdom of God is at hand, what's it like? What are we looking for? Let me tell you what it's like.

Let me tell you what you're looking for. What shall I compare it to? It's like a grain of a mustard seed. Now, wait a minute. Before we read this, don't look at me.

Before we read this, whenever we hear about mustard seed and leaven, we already have a preconceived notion and idea of what they mean, right? The mustard seed is all about the size of the mustard seed, and it's the size of...

Stop that. In this parable, that's not the point. With leaven, it's like leaven is like sin and it gets in and it... Stop that. It's not what it's about.

[55 : 11] Is it possible... Let me just ask you this. Is it possible for Jesus to use the same item, in this case a mustard seed, or in this case yeast or leaven, and use them to teach different truths, especially when you put them in context?

Okay? So what's he talking about with a mustard seed? Let's take a look. It has nothing to do with the size of the seed. It's not even mentioned. Okay? It's like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden.

Stop there again. I'm sorry we're stopping and starting and stopping and starting, but we've got to do that again. Okay? Because some of the modern translations don't help us here. Okay?

Remember back in verse 6, I told you about the man who planted the fig tree in his vineyard. Okay? The word for sowed here is not the word for planted.

It's a different Greek word altogether. And the one translation, and the King James gets this right, and also not the New King James, not the NIV, not the Holman Christian Standard, here's the NASB, the New American Standard.

[56 : 32] It is like a mustard seed which a man took and threw. The Greek word here is like the first verb when I took Greek class in college.

The first verb we learned was this word, ballo. It means to throw or to cast. You're just throwing it. Okay?

And it's not what's happening with someone who's planting a seed. Planting a seed, you're digging a little thing, you're putting it in there, you're planting the seed.

Okay? That's planting. This is throwing. Casting. He threw it into his own garden, which you wouldn't do.

Because if you know anything about a mustard tree, you wouldn't plant one in your garden. And it grew and became a tree.

[57 : 33] And these things, they grow extremely fast, big, bushy. It's almost more of a bush than it is a tree. And it gets massive pretty quickly and then just stays like that.

And the birds of the air nested in its branches. What's that about? Again, in the Old Testament, a mustard tree is equated to Gentiles.

Gentile nations. The birds nested in the tree. That picture is a picture of the Gentiles. And again, so that's the first parable.

That's all we got. That's all we got about the mustard seed. Mustard tree. It's actually more the mustard tree than the mustard seed. And again, he said, to what shall I compare the kingdom of God? So again, we're back to this idea of, all right, so we understand this, what's the kingdom of God?

It's like leaven, yeast, that a woman took and, here, key word here, hid. Hid. Not placed. Some of the translations say placed.

[58 : 39] But she took it and she hid it. This is intentional. She hid it in three measures of flour until it was all leavened. That's it.

What do we learn from that? There's no explanation of the parable. There's no explanation of the mustard tree, of the yeast, the leaven.

What's he talking about? And both of these instances, these are pictures of what would happen when Israel rejected its Messiah.

Remember, this is who he's talking to. He's talking about that generation of Israel that would reject Messiah as king. And so what would happen?

Remember, when God called Israel to be his nation, when God called Abraham and said, I'm going to make a great nation of you, part of that calling meant that they were to be a light to the Gentiles, a light to the rest of the world to show this is creator God.

[59 : 45] You must worship him. Come and be like us. Because we love the one true God. Live according to his ways, according to his laws.

What did Israel do? The opposite. They hid it. They said, no, it's for us only. And all those Gentiles out there, they're all just a bunch of pagan idol worshipers and we hate them.

Remember the story of Jonah? Jonah who didn't want to go to Nineveh. Why? Because he was afraid they would repent and put their faith in God. So rather than have that happen, he, thinking he is protecting the true message, decides I'm getting on a boat and going the other way.

That's what the whole story is about. Instead, they're hiding it. And what is she doing? She's taking the yeast and she's hiding it in the flour.

And yet, it's going to spread. And that's exactly what's happened with the gospel. Because now that Israel has rejected the gospel and the gospel has gone out to the Gentiles, the gospel has spread throughout the world.

[61 : 08] That's why we're sitting here halfway across the world in Michigan on a Sunday morning worshiping the Lord. It's because the woman hid the leaven in the flour and it spread.

It's because the farmer cast the mustard seed aside and the mustard tree grew and spread and the birds nested in its.

So in understanding these parables, it's the rejection of the Messiah by Israel has brought salvation to us Gentiles.

and we can rejoice that this has all come to pass.

All of it. And we can know that we are saved today, 2,000 years later, because Jesus went to the cross, paid the penalty for our sin, died, rose again from the dead, and that when we simply place our faith, our trust in him for what he has done for us, that gift then we receive and we become forgiven, saved, part of his family, a full-on son or daughter of the king, when we trust him as savior, with all of the rights and privileges and benefits that come with being a child of the king because as Romans tells us, we've been grafted in part of the same tree, and it's wonderful.

[62 : 57] Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for what you do for us. Thank you so much that this gospel message has been proclaimed throughout the world, and we've been able to be participants in that message.

We get to now be a part of your coming kingdom, and we look forward to that day when you come again, because for us, we're like the faithful stewards that are looking for your coming.

Not the homeowner who is dreading the thief in the night who's coming. And we don't know when you're coming, but we know that you are.

So I pray that we would be prepared, that our hearts be ready. I pray for those who have yet to trust you as savior, that they would recognize the urgency of the matter at hand.

They would recognize that, yes, you are coming again, and even beyond that, no one of us is guaranteed tomorrow. Death may come calling for any one of us at any moment, and we don't know.

[64:28] And it would be wrong for us to presume and to think otherwise. realize. And yet, when we understand your great grace and your great love for us, why would we want to delay?

How could we ever want to put that off? And think, oh, I'll do that another day. I'll do that sometime in the future when I'm not feeling good, when I'm older.

I'll do that. I'll do that. No. Help us to sense the urgency today, and help us to see your wonderful grace and your goodness to us, the great love for us, and providing for us all that we could ever need.

for those of us who are saved, who belong to you, Lord, we thank you. Thank you. Thank you. For what you've done for us.

We are a part of your family. It's forever. We thank you for that promise. I pray that we would live worthy of the calling that you've given to each of us.

[65:42] To be faithful. faithful, to share the gospel, to live out what it is that we believe. Lord, again, we love you.

We thank you now for all of this. In Jesus' name, amen.