

## 1. How is This Woman Viewed?

- a. She is invisible to the leaders – having been broken for decades
  - i. The woman is described as having a "spirit of weakness"
    1. She could not stand up fully, thus was hunched over in infirmity
    2. She lived in a posture of forced humility, face always to the ground, the eyes of others always unseen but onlooking
      - a. Two decades of looking into the dirt, as if searching for a coin, a crumb, a grave
      - b. Two decades...humiliation...invisible...unseen and unappreciated by the sons of Abraham who were to care for her
  - ii. It's as if her curved spine and bent frame revealed the visible question mark at the end of the invisible questions in her synagogue of solitude: "Do you see her? Do you love her? Do you honor her? Does the LORD see me? Does the LORD love me? Does the LORD value me when these around me do not?"
    1. Her very posture screams of uncertain significance and inclusion in God's blessing
- b. She is seen as less important than livestock!
  - i. They were "indignant *because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath*"
    1. They were angry that Jesus had healed an image-bearer of God, yet they themselves would work to "heal" an animal that is of use to them
    2. This "of use to them" showed the greater crimes of their hearts – they were users of God, not servants of God and thus users of His creation, both animals and people
    3. The question is not about the righteousness of healing the infirm, but rather about the sanctity of the Sabbath
  - ii. Jesus finds this not only hypocritical, but repulsive
    1. Mark 3:1-5 – Jesus gets "angry" when the synagogue rulers would not call it good to save a life on the Sabbath
    2. When we are willing to complete our power or our possessions, but not work for the completion of persons using worship as an excuse, Jesus is not pleased
  - iii. What is the Sabbath?
    1. The Sabbath was instituted by God as a consistent reminder that God rested from His works; that His works were sufficient and we are to rest in them
    2. Thus, there remains a Sabbath rest for the Christian as we rest in the completed works of God's grace in Christ Jesus
      - a. We cease from striving to perform and gain God's acceptance, but rather we wait (the Sabbath *remains*) for its conclusion
      - b. We wait for the arrival, but not for the completion, for it is secured and accomplished by Christ
  - iv. Thus, the Sabbath rest is not about a mere day, but about daily worship of the One whose works are finished for our redemption and a deep reliance upon His sufficiency over anything that we could ever offer.
    1. The Sabbath is about Him bringing wholeness and redemption and us taking the time to see and savor Him as "the Lord of the Sabbath"
  - v. The synagogue leaders were not resting in the works of God, glorifying Him (she did, however!)
    1. They were treating the Sabbath as the work itself!
    2. Thus, the wholeness and completion of God's gracious works which they were to rejoice in and celebrate on the Sabbath was utterly rejected when this woman was made whole
    3. These were the men charged by God to care for this woman by revealing YHWH to her!

- c. Jesus sees her true condition: bound by the Adversary
  - i. Thus, in the sense of purity and consistency with the heart of the Sabbath, the completion of God's works, Jesus moves forward to complete her, to make her whole, to straighten what is crooked and make right what has been bent by sin's presence in the world
  - ii. This is a decidedly spiritual root of a physical problem, both of which Jesus has already shown authority over
    - 1. This is not to say that her condition is due to demonic possession, for there is no indication of such
    - 2. What is indicated is that the Adversary of God and His image-bearers finds his deceptive plan to harm both being lived out in the divinely ordained curse which proclaims that in the end the dirt which bore the first man will swallow him back up
  - iii. Thus, Jesus refers to her as being "bound by Satan" in this context, indicating the broken Sabbath of the Genesis, whereby Satan deceived Eve and Adam transgressed and in his self-righteousness brought the curse of death in every form, i.e. a decided lack of wholeness
    - 1. In a similar Sabbath-breaking way, Cambodians are enslaved to the duty of sacrificing to their ancestors for good fortune, living hunched in fear all the time
    - 2. They work, perform, chant, etc. in order to receive good fortune from ancestors or to pay back karma so that their lives will go well and avoid tragedy
    - 3. Only Christ turns it around, and this is freedom for the broken and enslaved!!
  - iv. Jesus is reversing this curse, restoring Eden to greater glory, and this means that Eve is redeemed to wholeness and this woman is an icon of the greater wholeness in Christ Jesus for all women and men alike whom He raises from the deadness of sin's curse by faith in Him alone

## 2. How Does Jesus View This Woman?

- a. "Behold!" – Luke uses a strong interjection to describe this woman's presence, drawing attention to her in the story *because Jesus was drawn to her in her infirmity*
- b. Jesus sees her as a "Daughter of Abraham"
  - i. This is a deeply inclusive term for the woman, for it is the very defense that the elders used to defend themselves against John the Baptizer's call to repentance: "We are sons of Abraham!"
    - 1. So is she! She is a woman and Jesus' message to these elders is that this woman is a fellow heir of the promise of Abraham and is more important than your damned ox!
    - 2. She is fellow heir of the covenant of promise, the glory of Israel, and the apple of God's eye! So is she! See her! Value her, you hypocrites who do not know the mind or heart of God!
  - ii. The believing women in your midst, men, are co-heirs with you of the promises of God, fully included and important, significant and sealed by the Holy Spirit, gifted and to be gloried in as the supreme opus of the hands of God Himself.
    - 1. They, too, are those who will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt 13:43) and on whom all the blessings of God flow like water from the throne of God.
    - 2. They, too, glorify God with words of holy fire and living water which pours forth from the Spirit of God in them.
    - 3. **DO NOT BELITTLE THE GLORIOUS WOMEN IN YOUR MIDST!!**
      - a. In the end, we're all God's Queen, the Bride of Heaven
      - b. Glory in her role now, in the honor that God has poured out upon Eve's daughters and Abraham's covenant receivers of God's blessing
  - iii. Jesus is using Abraham as "the father of faith" here, which is to say that Abraham was included in the covenant of God based not upon his righteousness or perfection, but upon faith alone (Gal 3; Rom 4).
    - 1. She is in the synagogue!

- a. She is there to worship, even if others didn't desire her or want her wholeness
    2. We must not view our sisters in Christ through the lens of perfection or physical beauty, or even spiritual maturity, but as Jesus views them – righteous by faith and daughters of the covenant who will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God!
    3. Neither must you, women, view men through the lens of expected perfection and emotional strength, or even spiritual maturity, but through the lens of the Word of God – righteous by faith and sons of the covenant that God has made in Christ who will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.
    4. Only when we view the genders rightly, through the lens of needy faith, will we see each other rightly, as Jesus does here, and move in compassion to loose bonds of spiritual destruction and straighten, through the Spirit's power, to gospel wholeness so that all of us, men and women, stand strong in absolute dependence on Jesus
      - a. Can we view each other this way? In the light of eternity and the promised glory to come?
      - b. In the twinkling of an eye we will all be changed, made like our Savior into a glory which we cannot fathom now, to have such glory that we shine like the sun!
3. How Does Jesus Treat This Beloved Woman of Faith?
- a. Jesus seeks her out, calls her out, straightens her out, so that she sings out!
  - b. Seeks her out
    - i. Jesus *sees* her!
      1. Imagine how invisible she had become over 18 years
      2. How accustomed are we to seeing a person's suffering over so many years that we don't even notice, much less move toward with compassion?
      3. Maybe you're the suffer, and year after year after year you are both still enslaved to such suffering, but also feel the eyes drift off of you
    - ii. Jesus is constantly seeing the invisible people
      1. When you feel invisible, unappreciated, unseen, unloved by others around you, remember this about Jesus!
      2. Women, when men fail to value you as co-heirs of the grace of God and belittle your presence or divinely ordained role in the church or the family, Jesus sees you!
    - iii. Note that she never asked him for healing
  - c. Summons her out
    - i. Not only does Jesus notice, but He calls her near to Him
      1. Can you see the look in his eye when he sees her?
      2. Did he get down to look her in the eye? He must have!
    - ii. Imagine this! This is Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man, the Breather of Life, the Spinner of Stars, the Alpha and the Omega who calls her out to Himself
      1. What the synagogue leaders didn't see, and refused to see, was that this woman was the most blessed person in the room
      2. Jesus valued her, desired her, delighted to bring her near
      3. He touched her broken disfigured body
        - a. This would mean a LOT
        - b. As Pope Francis held and kissed the face of the disfigured man last year – so Christ-like!
      4. He love her more than he loved his own body
  - d. Straightens her out
    - i. He makes her whole! He restores her to completion – the true Sabbath rest come early for her in small writ.

- ii. It is not her performance, but His that makes her straight
- iii. There is great freedom from sin's curse and Satan's tyranny here accomplished by the supreme authority of the true King over all Creation, both material and immaterial
  - 1. Satan stands no chance before Jesus, and the battle is between them

“Be still, troubled Christian, and know that the contest is not between the church and Satan, but between Christ and Satan. These are the champions of the two sides. Stand still, army of saints, by faith, to see the all-wise God wrestle with a subtle devil. You shall behold the Almighty smite off this Goliath's head with His own sword, and take this cunning hunter in the trap of his own schemes.

That faith which ascribes greatness and wisdom to God will shrink up Satan's subtlety into a thing of nothing. Unbelief fears Satan as a lion; faith treads on him as a worm.” (William Gurnall)

- iv. The mercy of Jesus in healing her body gives her great joy, but also the truth that Jesus sees her, touches her, summons her near all in the midst of her infirmity must have been great reason for joy
  - “That Christ should love man when he was most unlovely, that man's extreme misery should but inflame Christ's love and mercy, this melts the believing soul.” (Thomas Brooks)
- e. She sings out
  - i. She glorifies God!
    - 1. The joy of a person set free from bondage is unparalleled in its fervency, its sincerity, and its abandon.
  - ii. What joy was expressed, what truth proclaimed, what affection and passion portrayed with fierce abandon to convention came from the lips of this woman whose questions became a resounding exclamation point of GLORY?!
    - 1. From her mouth poured out prayers to God, delight in Him, recollections of His goodness and glory with fervency and enthusiastic joy!
    - 2. It's dry and brittle kindling, emptied of its own strength, that bursts into flame at the first flicker of the Spirit's holy fire!
  - iii. What hardness of heart had subverted these men who dared to *complain* in this moment of God being glorified!!
  - iv. At the end of this story you are left with two responses to Jesus
    - 1. One group is complaining that He had made a suffering woman whole
    - 2. The other is glorifying God

Jesus sees you, Sufferer. He came to complete the works of God, your redemption of soul and body by His blood. For, “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-- every one-- to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Jesus came to die the death that you should have died, to bear up your infirmities, to live the obedient faithful life that you should have live, and instead of glorying in His own power, he poured it out or you. He seeks you out, summons you out, and straightens you out. Which response will you have to this? Will you sing out or will you shut him out? Let us see the bent spiritual backs of Cambodians and summon them to Christ to be straightened. Then, together with all the saints, we will rejoice in the glory of God at the completion of all our works and the freedom from sin's slavery and the fear of death because Christ has blown open the door of the grave and is leading forth from captivity a host of beloved men and women in His train. That's whom God is seeing. That's whom God is summoning. That's whom God is straightening. That's why we shall sing!