

This Can't Wait Until Tomorrow **Luke 13:10-17**

¹⁰ Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹ And a woman was there who had a spirit that had disabled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not stand up straight. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are freed from your disability." ¹³ He placed his hands on her, and immediately she stood up straight and began to glorify God. ¹⁴ But the ruler of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. He said to the crowd in response, "There are six days to do work. So come to be healed on those days and not on the Sabbath day!" ¹⁵ The Lord answered him, "Hypocrites! Doesn't each of you untie his ox or his donkey from the manger on the Sabbath and lead it to water? ¹⁶ Here is this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years! Shouldn't she be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" ¹⁷ As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame. But the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things he was doing.

Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tinman, and the Lion did exactly what the Wizard of Oz instructed them to do. In order for him to help Dorothy return home to Kansas, and help the others get a brain, a heart, and some courage, he had said that first they needed to go and defeat the Wicked Witch of the West. Of course, against all odds, they do! Dorothy melts the witch with a bucket of water and returns to the wizard. "We'd like you to keep your promise to us, if you please, sir."

Shocked that they actually returned and asked him to make good on his promise, he says, "Not so fast. Not so fast! I'll have to give the matter a little thought. Go away and come back tomorrow!" "Tomorrow?" Dorothy asks with such disbelief and sadness. "Oh, but I wanna go home now!"

"Do not arouse the wrath of the great and powerful Oz! I said come back tomorrow!" shouts the Wizard, who is neither great or powerful. He's stalling, because he has no idea how he might help.

At the start of our gospel reading, the great and powerful Jesus is holding an audience. We are told, "*Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.*" All the usual suspects were there, the every-Sabbath worshipers, the synagogue ruler, the upstanding members of the community. But then, in walks a woman even more small and meek than Dorothy. We read how she, "*had a spirit that had disabled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not stand up straight.*" She doesn't seek an audience. She's done no great thing like slay a witch. She's bent over. Her spine is so curved and so damaged that she can't even straighten up. She has no companions with her. There's no one to notice her. In some way or another, she had been afflicted by a demon! And Jesus the great and powerful, well, he's kind of busy. Maybe she should just come back tomorrow.

But who sees her? Not the synagogue ruler. Not the pious listeners. It is Jesus. He's not too busy with his sermon to interrupt it when he sees her. We are told: *When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are freed from your disability."* As Jesus

looks with compassionate eyes, this can't wait until tomorrow. He doesn't want to wait one more minute. He calls her to the front. Jesus the great and powerful says, "Woman, from this moment on you are free!"

This woman whose been hunched over for 18 years, doesn't even know what it means to stand up straight. So our Lord guides her. *He placed his hands on her, and immediately she stood up straight and began to glorify God.*

Can you picture it? Jesus straightens her out. Like never before, she can now stand up straight. She never realized how tall she was! And notice what else happens. Until this moment, she has done nothing. We've heard nothing from her. She's just there—hunched over, unseen, and uncared for. But what do you see immediately after Jesus preaches this living sermon? *Immediately she stood up straight and began to glorify God.* Not only is her body made straight. Through Jesus' power and love her soul is raised up. Just as quickly as Jesus had compassion on her, she responds in praise to her God.

You step into church, maybe shuffling into the back pew. It's not because its where you sit. It's because you don't want to be noticed. Or you come to your normal pew and try to look normal. But inside you are hunched over with the demands and demons of this life. They're fighting against a soul that is curved in on itself because of sin and the devil. You are helpless. You don't deserve to be here in the audience of the great and powerful Jesus.

For a moment, don't look through your eyes, or the eyes of other people here, or the pastor's eyes. Look through Jesus' eyes. He sees you, all of you. Every last crack and creak of spine and soul. Look at your weekday morning through Jesus' eyes. You open your Bible. The coffee hasn't kicked in yet. You can barely see the words on the page. In every devotion, you have more of Jesus' attention than he has of yours. You gather the family for a devotion. You feel self-conscious, "We're not *that* family. We're not put together enough." See yourself with his eyes. He sees how helpless you are without him. But he doesn't wait, he speaks! He has to. This can't wait until tomorrow! He speaks with the living and active Word of God: "Woman, man, child, you are loosed from your infirmity!" And once again, from that moment on, you are free!

That's what the Sabbath was all about. It was the day when God led the Israelites to enjoy the rest only he can provide. That is still what the third commandment is about. That we don't despise preaching and God's Word but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it. In them God gives us rest from our sin and infirmities. Jesus knows our every weakness. He knows that this cannot wait until tomorrow. We need his presence every passing hour.

And if you want even more proof of that, look no further than the rest of the account here. Jesus does this incredible miracle, giving further testimony to the fact that he is the one everyone needs. He's the promised Messiah who would suffer, die, and rise so he could "*preach good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted and proclaim liberty to the captives*" (Luke 4:18).

And how does the synagogue ruler react? He's outraged. "Why didn't you come to be healed tomorrow." This is proof that wherever Jesus' word is, there is also opposition. Wherever Jesus does something wonderful, the devil is working hard, and so is the sinful nature to ignore it, avoid it, or put it off. The synagogue ruler is not the only one who comes with sorry excuses to tell Jesus that he should come back tomorrow. We can do that too! Every day and every weekend, Jesus gives us a chance to pause and rest in his Word. But whenever it's time for worship or the study of his Word, it seems inconvenient. Can't this wait until tomorrow?

Jesus' argument that puts the synagogue ruler to shame puts our excuses to shame too. *"Hypocrites! Doesn't each of you untie his ox or his donkey from the manger on the Sabbath and lead it to water? Here is this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years! Shouldn't she be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?"*

You wake up on your day off, and you want to sleep in. But your dog needs to go for a walk. Your dog will not wait until tomorrow! You get up and let it out and give it water and food. So why wait, when our Lord sees not a dog but a person who needs to be led away from Satan? This woman was bound by Satan for 18 years. This cannot wait until tomorrow!

We're often better at putting off Jesus than we are putting off our pets. But today, look through the eyes of Jesus. He sees your heart. He sees how Satan wants to bind you again. He sees how much difficulty you are facing in this world. He sees the sin at work in your heart and how helpless you are against it. And whenever he sees you, he knows: This can't wait until tomorrow. The time is now. It's always the right time for Jesus.

If you think it's not going to work out, like it will be too inconvenient—you'll be put to shame just like Jesus' adversaries were. But when Jesus breaks into your routine and does glorious things for you like he did here, you'll find that not only was it at just the right time for him to help you, but also just the right time for you to glorify him.

In the Wizard of Oz, when the wizard tells them to come back tomorrow, Dorothy responds, "If you were really great and powerful, you'd keep your promises. The Wizard of Oz isn't; he's a fraud. But Jesus is great and powerful. He keeps all his promises. So come back to him day after day, week after week. Pause and seek the rest that only he can give. As you see opportunities to glorify him in return you, too, will say, "This can't wait until tomorrow."