

**8/24/25**  
**11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**  
**For Group Meetings from August 17<sup>th</sup> – August 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**OUR MISSION:** As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

**Prayer of the Day:** O God, mighty and immortal, you know that as fragile creatures surrounded by great dangers, we cannot by ourselves stand upright. Give us strength of mind and body, so that even when we suffer because of human sin, we may rise victorious through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER**

**Share:** How did last week's scripture (Luke 12:49-56) work in your life this week?

**Mission:**

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

**Hear:** Luke 13:10-17

**Explore Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. How is the woman's condition described? How long has she dealt with it?
2. How does the ruler of the synagogue respond to Jesus actions? Why does he respond this way?
3. What is Jesus' argument in response to the criticism of healing this woman?

**Connect Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What is easier for you: to love your neighbor as yourself or to make, observe, and enforce rules? Why?
2. What's an area in your life where you need to be set free?
3. Share a time where you experienced healing or a return to wholeness? What stands out about that experience?

**Memorize this verse:** "When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God" (Luke 13:13) What are you praising God for this week?

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:**

**Obey:** During this week follow through on your intentions.

**Meditate:** Meditate on Psalm 103:1-8. How does this speak into your life?

**Reflect:** What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

## Notes for ChristCare leaders:

How many dreams had the woman in today's gospel story gotten to live out before meeting Jesus? This isn't to suggest that people with long standing disabilities or illness don't have dreams or can't achieve significant accomplishments. Of course they can. But it is to recognize how different and difficult life would have been for someone like this woman who was so stooped over so she couldn't stand up straight for eighteen years. Little wonder that after being healed she immediately began praising God, as I suspect that whatever other dreams she harbored, this one was closest to her heart and now, because of Jesus, it was coming true.

In reading this story, it's easy for us not only to sympathize and rejoice with this woman, but also to mentally chastise the leader of the synagogue. How could he be so cold hearted that he would object to the gift of healing Jesus offered? But before moving too quickly to judgment, it may help to understand a bit more about the origin and nature of the Sabbath commandment. You may remember that the Sabbath has two origins in Scripture. One roots it in the story of creation. As God rested on the seventh day, so also should all creation have a time of rest and renewal. It's second "origin story" comes from the Exodus account, as Sabbath rest comes not as a command but as good news to slaves who never, ever had a chance to rest. The command/promise of rest was extended to all. Rich or poor, adult or child, human or animal, everyone needs a time to rest, and so God makes it a commandment to safeguard rest for all.

The synagogue leader was trying to defend a law that was at the heart of the Exodus covenant with God. He wasn't saying, "Don't heal." He was rather saying, "There are six days on which to heal. Why not heal on one of those days and respect this core tenet of our faith?" More than that, I suspect this synagogue leader had a deep respect not only for tradition but for law and order. If one starts breaking the Sabbath law what will go next? Law helps to protect us, offers the possibility of creating order, and at its best provides stability, all of which are essential for human flourishing. And so, this leader of the synagogue may have been trying to stick up for the principle of law and order with which most of us would support.

But whether it is respect for tradition, the value of rest, or the principle of law and order that is at stake, Jesus places this woman's health and wellbeing above all of them. Jesus while also respecting the law, recognizes that the law itself was given as a gift to serve God's children and draw them more deeply into the abundant life God offers. And so perhaps Jesus' sharp critique is that the leader of the synagogue had forgotten that the law was intended to serve God's people and instead revered it for its own sake. He forgot that the law is meant to create the conditions in which we can help each other live into our dreams and so ended up sacrificing this woman's dreams to satisfy his sense of law and order. When we receive the law as God's gift to help us live into God's dream of abundant life for all, we recognize that we are most faithful to the law when we use it to help and protect each other, not insist on it for its own sake or for personal gain. And suddenly, rather than looking out for ourselves, we have a whole community of people looking out for us, even as we look out for all others.

## Thanks be to God,

Pastor Thadd ([tbook@desertcross.org](mailto:tbook@desertcross.org))

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### *Traditional version:*

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us  
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,  
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

### *Contemporary version:*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those  
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial  
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the  
power, and the glory are yours,  
Now and forever. Amen