

Adult Teaching Resources

August 25, 2019



Season After Pentecost (June 16-November 24)

On the Road with Jesus

Luke 12:13-21 – “An Investment Gone Bad”

Luke 12:32-40 – “A Word to the Wise”

Luke 12:49-56 – “A Really Sharp Word”

Luke 13:10-17 – “A Straight-Up Answer”

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A Straight-Up Answer

Luke 13:10-17

FIT Teaching Guide

by David Woody

This adult teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Bible Background

“When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.”
Luke 13:13

Wholeness is something we desire. We want to be well mentally, physically, and spiritually. When all three are working in alignment, we are at our peak performance. When one is off, even just slightly, we aren't able to give our best.

Today, we spend time with a woman who had not known wholeness for decades. Physically, she was a mess. Jesus came to her and made her whole again. In the process of her healing, those around her learned an important lesson from Jesus.

Opening

After everyone arrives, give everyone a small piece of paper and a pen. Ask each person to write down something in the life that was a burden/obligation/duty that held them down and kept them from experiencing freedom and release. Our Lesson Writer mentions graduation ceremonies, financial debts, deteriorating joints. What has your group experienced?

After everyone has written one burden on their paper, collect all the slips, and write all the burdens on the board for everyone to see.

Spend some time talking about the burdens. Instead of focusing on who wrote each burden, spend your time in conversation about how each burden affected day-to-day living.

How can this burden hold you back from achieving success?

How can this burden keep you from being whole?

How can this burden affect you physically? Emotionally? Spiritually?

How can you rid yourself of this burden?

Reading the Bible

Where and when was Jesus teaching? (in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath)

How long had the woman's been crippled? (18 years) What was her posture? (she was bent over and quite unable to stand up)

What did Jesus say to her? (Woman, you are set free from your ailment.)

What happened when Jesus laid his hands on her? (she stood up straight and began praising God)

How did the leader of the synagogue react? (he was indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath)

How did he justify his anger? (he said, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day.")

What did Jesus call the synagogue leader? (Hypocrites!) Why did Jesus call him that? (vv15-16)

After Jesus spoke, how did his opponents react? (they were put to shame) How did the crowd react? (they rejoiced in all the wonderful things he was doing)

Making Connections

When have you experienced a time of worship or religious gathering, when a visiting preacher/official was asked (maybe even on the spot) to share a few words with the congregation? What happened? How did his/her presence affect the overall worship experience/gathering time?

What is your experience with physical healing from a religious ceremony? Do you know of anyone who was healed by powers other than medicine? What was the situation? How was that person healed? Do you know someone who claims to have the power to heal? What have you seen that person do?

Where do you stand on the idea of physical healing through religious means? Is it possible? Does it happen? What role do you think God plays in healing? What role do you think medicine/treatment plays in healing?

Our Lesson Writer explains the energy shift in the synagogue after Jesus healed the woman, "This would have created quite a ruckus amid the normally sedate service. The synagogue ruler angrily tried to bring it under control. As one who closely followed the law and encouraged others to do the same, he took offense at the idea of seeking to be healed on the Sabbath." Which do you think is more important—following a known, expected, structured pattern for worship; or following an unknown, unexpected moment of worship? Why do you say that? Is it possible to have both experiences together?

When have religious leaders used scripture and tradition to justify their actions? How do you think Jesus would respond to them?

Making Connections *continued*

What is your understanding of the Sabbath day? What did you do, or not do, on the Sabbath when you were younger? How has that changed as you have grown and gotten older? What is an ideal day of Sabbath for you? Is there anything, in your opinion, that should not be done on the Sabbath?

In our passage, the crippled woman was crippled because of Satan. Our Lesson Writer points out though, “Jesus’ comment that she had been bound by Satan for those 18 years should not be taken as an endorsement that she had been singled out by a conscious evil entity. Rather, it reflected a common belief that all bad things were due to the power of evil in the world.” Why do you think things like this crippling, happen to people? Where is God when things like this happen?

Which would you rather be a part of: a rule-following group that follows God strictly through written doctrine recorded by humans; or a spirit-following group that follows God on the whims and perceived movements of God interpreted by humans?

Where in church/religion is there room for strict doctrine and spirit following? How does that happen? What does that look like? Is it even possible?

So What?

Our Lesson Writer brings the passage to a close with a strong statement about the metaphor of the “bent-over woman.”

“The “bent-over woman” provides a metaphor for the plight of all people. Our tendency is to look after ourselves, focusing on what is in front of us rather than those around us, spiritually bent by the deforming power of sin and selfishness. Jesus’ liberation of the bent-over woman offers hope that we, too, will not only stand up straight, but live a more upright life.”

In the large group, ask questions like these for conversation and clarification on the passage and our role with it.

When it comes to matters of religion and faith, how often do we look out for our own self-interests? How does that affect those around us, who don’t have the same interest?

When it comes to matters of religion and faith, how much freedom should we have when it comes to interpreting rules and expectations written in the Bible? How do you think we have abused scriptural rules over the years? How do you think we’ve been too restricted by scriptural rules over the years?

What group needs you to step out of your comfort zone and “be Jesus” to them? What are you willing to do for them?

What can Jesus do for you, to help you shed your burdens, so that you can stand up straight and live a more upright life?

The Challenge

This week make a list of the burdens—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—that hold you down. Pray each day for Jesus to take those burdens from you.

Prayer

Loving God, we all carry those things that hold us back and keep us from becoming whole. We pray that you will come and take our burdens away, like you did for the “bent-over woman.” We want to experience the total freedom that comes when your hands are laid on us. Amen.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Parallel sections—Luke 13:10-14:35 is marked by an interesting sequence of stories in 13:10-35 that are followed by a group of very similar stories in the same sequence in 14:1-35. The story of the bent-over woman in 13:10-17 is echoed by the account of a man healed from dropsy (also on the Sabbath) in 14:1-6. The healing of the woman is followed by two related parables about the kingdom in 13:18-21, and the healing of the man is followed by two parables about the kingdom in 14:7-14. The following verses in each chapter, 13:22-30 and 14:15-24, are concerned with who will enter the kingdom of God. Finally, Jesus’ approaching suffering in Jerusalem in 13:31-35 is paralleled by the question of followers taking up their cross to follow Jesus in 14:25-35.

Jesus and synagogues—Luke’s gospel includes several stories about Jesus teaching in synagogues, and notes that it was his custom to attend synagogue services on the sabbath (4:16). This is not the last sabbath prior to the crucifixion described in Luke (Jesus heals a man on the sabbath in 14:1-6), but it is the last time that Luke portrays Jesus being in a synagogue.

Judaism—We don’t properly refer to Hebrew people as “Jews” before the later post-exilic period, as the religious and ethnic framework of Judaism developed. During this period, rabbis concerned that Hebrews who had returned from exile would forget their identity led a movement to emphasize keeping the “law of Moses” in every aspect, probably adding to it as time passed. Many scholars believe that some of the more legalistic requirements of Exodus and Leviticus, for example, were formulated during this period but inserted into the older traditions so they would appear to have Mosaic authority. The purpose of this was not just to maintain faithfulness, but to preserve a close sense of ethnic identity among Jewish people.

In addition, the rabbis sought to “build a hedge about the law” by defining the law in such narrow terms that one who kept the oral law would safely avoid breaking the written law. The oral law was later preserved in a collection of rabbinic discussions known as the “Mishnah” and a later commentary on it known as the “Gemara.” Together, these make up the “Talmud,” and they are just as authoritative as scripture for Orthodox Jews.

The oral law was especially popular among the Pharisees, fervently religious Jews from among the middle and lower classes, in opposition to the more elite Sadducees, who controlled the temple. While the Pharisees considered the Law, the prophets, and the oral law to be authoritative, the Sadducees held only the written Law to be scripture.

A popular tradition in early and medieval Judaism held that there were 613 commandments, 365 negative “thou shalt nots” (one for each day of the year) and 248 positive ones (one for each bone then thought to be in the body).

Digging Deeper *continued*

Jesus as “the Lord”—Luke first refers to Jesus as “the Lord” at 7:13, and does so periodically after that. Luke uses the term far more often than the other gospels, and it is also very common in Acts, which Luke likewise wrote. For early Christians, saying “Jesus is Lord” was an early confession of faith in Christ’s divinity (Rom. 10:9, 1 Cor. 12:3).

A lot of dough—In vv. 20-21, Jesus spoke of a woman who mixed a little yeast into “three measures of flour.” That’s a lot of flour: three “seahs” would be more than a bushel of flour, about 40 pounds. Fuel used in the outdoor clay ovens was often in short supply, so it was not unusual for families (especially large ones) to bake a lot of bread at one time.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

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What is work?

The printed lesson includes a number of examples of what is and isn't considered acceptable work. Here is a bit more information to add color to the discussion. The Mishnah, in section 7.2 of a tractate called *Shabbat*, defines various types of work (*melakhot*) in the following way:

The [number of] principal *Melakhot* is forty minus one.

[The forbidden *Melakhot* are]: Sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, sorting, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, whitening it, combing it, dyeing it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying [a knot], untying [a knot], sewing two stitches, tearing for the purpose of sewing two stitches, hunting a deer, slaughtering it, skinning it, salting it, curing its hide, scraping it, cutting it, writing two letters, erasing for the purpose of writing two letters, building, demolishing, extinguishing a flame, lighting a flame, striking with a hammer, carrying from one domain to another. These are the principal *Melakhot* – [they number] forty minus one.

(source – https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Shabbat.7.2?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en)

Note that these are classes or types of work, not an exhaustive list. Theoretically, every act could be related in some way to one of the classes, though the connections are not always obvious. Using a saw, for example, would have been connected to “striking with a hammer,” since both were related to construction work.

The Talmud contains many more sections regarding debates and conclusions about what was and was not considered to be “work.” The rabbis could debate for weeks on end, for example, whether someone who threw out the dishwater on the sabbath was guilty of cooking, sowing, or carrying.

When they could not agree (and they often didn't), the Mishnah would record the various opinions as “Rabbi X says so and so, but Rabbi Y says thus and thus.” People naturally aligned with rabbis whose opinions they preferred. During the early part of the first century, two prominent rabbis and their followers were known for divergent views. Rabbi Shammai and the “House of Shammai” tended toward stricter, more legalistic interpretations, while Rabbi Hillel and his followers tended to be more liberal in their approach.

The Hardest Question *continued*

They and many other respected rabbis are quoted in the Talmud and still fervently debated as Orthodox Jews seek to apply the law to contemporary life. One current conclusion, for example, is that pushing a button to control an elevator constitutes work, but riding an elevator does not. Thus, hotels in Israel have a designated “Shabbat elevator” that is set to stop on every floor on the sabbath, allowing the Orthodox to get on board without doing the work of pushing a call button or choosing a floor.