

Closing Prayer

Today, O God our deliverer,
you raised up our Saviour Jesus Christ
and set us free from the power of death.
Let all we do this day
be directed to your glory
and to the freedom of those
who are oppressed or burdened.
We ask this in the name of Christ,
for with him and the Holy Spirit
you are one God, blessed for ever and ever.

Celebrating the Christian Year · Proper 16, Year C²

CPL • LBC Year C Proper 16.odt • 2022-07-26

² *Celebrating the Christian year : prayers and resources for Sundays, holy days and festivals, years A, B and C / compiled by Alan Griffiths. – 3 vols. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 2004-5.*

Proper 16

21 to 27 August inclusive · Week 21 in Ordinary Time

Principal Service readings

Isaiah 58.9b-14	The Lord will strengthen you if you care for the afflicted
Psalms 103.1-8	God is loving and tender
Hebrews 12.18-29	You have come to the city of the living God,
Luke 13.10-17	Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath

¹⁰Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. ¹¹And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' ¹³When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.' ¹⁵But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? ¹⁶And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?' ¹⁷When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Luke 13.10-17 NRSV¹

¹ *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Comments and Questions

Is this discrimination against someone who is disabled or a woman, or both? The story is unique to Luke. The last time Luke had mentioned Jesus healing was in 11.14, where only a single line was given to the exorcism of a the dumb demoniac, whereas here the story is fully developed. There is conflict over the legitimacy of healing on the Sabbath. Jesus is forthright in charging the synagogue leader with hypocrisy (13.15). Jesus contrasts the treatment of animals on the Sabbath with the heavier matter of 'loosing' human beings. Faced with such a human need it is *necessary* to heal on the Sabbath. Predictably, the crowd supports what Jesus does, but the opponents are 'put to shame' – increasing their hostility towards Jesus as he progresses towards Jerusalem.

Quotations

1

In Jesus' time there was a strong emphasis on keeping the Sabbath, because only a few hundred years earlier, the Jewish people had been exiled from their land because they didn't obey God's laws. So they carefully defined what "work" meant and what activities were forbidden.

However, if human life was in danger, all rules regarding not working on the Sabbath could be set aside for the reason of *pikuah nephesh* – to "save life." (To this day observant Jewish doctors and nurses go to work on Saturday, because even the possibility of saving a life is enough to set the Sabbath aside.)

But certain types of healing activities were also prohibited, because they involved grinding herbs or other "work" activities not allowed on the Sabbath. Many people had long-term illnesses and simply lived with them through the Sabbath. It appears that even Jesus did not generally heal on the Sabbath. Mark 1:32 describes how people would wait until after sunset to come to Jesus for healing, after the Sabbath had ended.

But that day when Jesus encountered the woman who was crippled and bent over, her pitiable condition couldn't wait even a few hours. So he pointed out one other place that Sabbath rules are set aside. Even though a donkey could not be untied to go out to work, it could be

taken out to be fed and watered, so that it wouldn't suffer all day. This was called "tzar baalei hayim" – preventing suffering to living things.

Jesus seems to be using this logic in his statement about healing the woman. It was not a life-or-death need that she be healed that day, but she had "bound" by her affliction for 18 years. If an animal can be untied to be led to water to prevent its suffering, shouldn't she be "unbound" too?

Interestingly, the one "breaking" the Sabbath was not Jesus in this case – he merely prayed for her healing, which was not prohibited. (Those who protested even this prayer would have been seen as extreme by the rest of the Pharisaic community.) According to Jesus' logic, the one who did the "unbinding" was God himself!

<https://ourrabbijesus.com>

2

Jesus doesn't give an explanation for the pain and sorrow of the world. He comes where the pain is most acute and takes it upon himself. Jesus doesn't explain why there is suffering, illness, and death in the world. He brings healing and hope. He doesn't allow the problem of evil to be the subject of a seminar. He allows evil to do its worst to him. He exhausts it, drains its power, and emerges with new life.

N. T. Wright, 1948–

3

I am convinced that when we bring our griefs and sorrows within the story of God's own grief and sorrow, and allow them to be held there, God is able to bring healing to us and new possibilities to our lives. That is, of course, what Good Friday and Easter are all about.

N. T. Wright, 1948–

Related topics

For further study:

healing; suffering; traditions and rules