

PP Beautiful Feet: The Good News Demonstrated

Luke 13:10-17

5/11-12/2019

It is interesting, and helpful to step into the world as it was at the time Jesus walked our earth
 In our day and age of increasing world-wide hostility toward the Jewish people, it is good for us
 to remember that the bible is essentially a Jewish document
 And central to it is a God Who came into this world as a Jewish man to save sinners
 So if we are to truly understand Jesus and His message and mission, we need to understand
 Jewishness, and the culture from which the events of the gospels take place
 Let's look at the setting, the sufferer and her Savior through 1st century Jewish culture

PP 1-The Setting

We are just months before Jesus' death, and He has entered a synagogue for the last time and was
 invited to teach: ***"Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath."*** 10
 Synagogues are believed to have been created after the Temple was destroyed and the Jews were
 in captivity in Babylon, hundreds of years before Christ was born
 Jewish law required any town or village with at least 10 Jewish men to have a synagogue and in
 Jesus' day there were around 500 synagogues in Jerusalem alone
 They were places for the Jewish people to assemble for learning, prayer and worship
 They were also schools for their children
 They were built on the highest ground and if possible, a tall pole was placed on its summit to
 make the building more conspicuous
 Most of them were built in a common pattern to allow every Jew to feel at home when traveling
 At one end was a cupboard, or ark, where the scrolls were kept
 Those called to read ascended the stairs nearest them and descended by another set of stairs
 In the center a raised bema or pulpit was placed, the seat Jesus referred to: ***"The scribes and
 Pharisees sit on Moses' seat"*** (23:2)
 The ***'ruler'*** or director oversaw the service, and he would invite learned men to speak and teach
 The ***minister*** was responsible for taking out and storing away the sacred rolls on which the
 Scriptures were written and keeping the synagogue clean
 They took a collection for the poor, the very poorest were given 14 meals per week
 He also blew the blasts on the shofar to let everyone know the Sabbath had come
 The morning of the Sabbath, men, women and children would arrive to the synagogue
 The men entered the main door, if they were important members, they sat on benches lining three
 sides while other men sat on mats on the dirt or flagstone floor
 The women and young children entered a separate door and in a rear galley or balcony
 One particular Sabbath, the trumpet sounded the call to worship and Jesus entered the
 synagogue, and the ruler, seeing Him, invited this massively popular teacher to teach

PP 2-The Sufferer

Luke introduces us to one woman who was there: ***"And behold, there was a woman who had
 had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully
 straighten herself."*** 13:11

We need to view this woman through the eyes of the gospel and when you look through that lens,

you actually see that Luke placed this story right between a series of parables of parables. This is important as in **1:1**, Luke says he wrote an **‘orderly account’**

In verse 6, a man had planted a fig tree in a vineyard, and after three years, he found the tree to be producing no fruit and decided to cut it down, for it was using resources that could be better used

He had a man who worked the vineyard and he asked for another year, to work at helping the tree

bear fruit and the owner agreed

The point Jesus made is that dead religion is dead, yet God is patient for a time, and through the preaching and ministry of Jesus, He is giving time for the tree to bear fruit

He is contrasting dead religion to the kingdom of God in **13:18**

Yet it is a limited time offer

In between these parables, Luke places an event that will underscore the parables of dead religion versus the kingdom of God

It is the final time that Jesus would preach in a synagogue which emphasizes the limited time offer of God’s grace and mercy: ***“there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself.”*** Luke 13:11

Here we have a woman who has come to a failed, dead system full of religious activity

She was suffering terribly, hunched, bent over, unable to even look up without difficulty

She had come to the synagogue, and probably had every saturday for those 18 years, sitting at the rear or in a balcony, listening to the reading of scripture, of a God Who loves her

Yet she continues to suffer, where is her help?

I imagine that the religious leaders in that synagogue just accepted her suffering, shrugging it off as they continued on their way in their system

There are a great many churches and denominations that have a lot of religious activity, but are dead, with no fruit, no life, no godliness or holiness, or repentance

Jesus would identify one such church in the book of Revelation, **PP *“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write... ‘I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but***

***you are dead.*”** Revelation 3:1

Here we have a suffering woman attending a life-less religion that cannot help her, a barren tree

Did you know that there are around 4,200 world religions?

Billions of people, all that religious activity, yet it’s dead, and the worshipers continue on, bent over under the weight of sin, trapped in a power greater than themselves, no help coming

The dead fig tree is that synagogue service, and Jesus is about to show the fruit found in His kingdom as she will have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, the Son of God

Look again at the cause of her disability, she had ***‘a disabling spirit for eighteen years.’*** 13:11

The cause of her disability wasn’t scoliosis, wasn’t subluxation or cancer in her spine

She hadn’t fallen off a roof, wasn’t born deformed, and there was no personal sin that caused it

Certainly not all pain, disease and sickness is caused by evil spirits, but this one was

13:16 tells us she was a ***‘daughter of Abraham’***, which could mean she was chosen by God to come to faith, or she was a descendant of Abraham, or she was righteous woman of faith

My view is that she had, like Abraham, believed and it was credited to her as righteousness
 Paul would later say, **PP** ***“For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.” Romans 2:28-29***

I believe she was a believer, faith in her heart brought to life by the Spirit
 Yet like Job who was attacked by Satan, Paul given a demonic thorn in the flesh, the devil had sent a demon of disability to afflict this daughter of Abraham for 18 years
 I don't believe she was 'possessed' by a demon, yet she was in the grip of its suffocating power
 Satan hates believers, and will at every opportunity he is allowed, will seek to harm us
 God allowed this for a time, for such a time as this, but that time was over!

PP 3-The Savior

“When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, ‘Woman, you are freed from your disability.’ And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.” Luke 13:12-13

Jesus shows us what the Vinedresser is doing in the vineyard of God
 There is great compassion in that kingdom, as this suffering woman caught the eyes of Jesus
 He saw her condition, invited her to Him, and laid both His hands on her
 Don't you find it interesting that the God Who spoke the world into existence, commanded a storm to stop on the Sea of Galilee, called a dead man to life, first spoke her free, and then healed her by touch?

He didn't speak to the disabling spirit but to her
 I believe that again we see the grace and mercy of God demonstrated
 We've been teaching you that there is a difference between God's grace and His mercy
 His grace gets to the root of the problem, which is in this case is a demonic enemy
 His mercy begins to restore the person from the damage that root problem has caused, her suffering body

His grace is given by command, His mercy by personal touch
 Jesus has no interest in just freeing her from this demon's harassing power and grip
 He frees her from spiritual bondage and heals her from her physical suffering
 What a demonstration of fruit, what a vinedresser!
 We would expect that the religious leaders would be full of joy and praise!

“But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, ‘There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.’” Luke 13:14

The ruler of the synagogue was furious, and doesn't even speak to Jesus, but to the congregation!
 Talk about a bully pulpit!
 Some evidences of dead religion are no joy, no compassion, no power, a lot of control and anger
 He was furious because this healing took place on the Sabbath and notice that word is capitalized
 Keeping the Sabbath set apart was one of the 10 Commandments, and the Jews protected it from being broken, even accidentally, by building a fence of prohibitions around this Law
 The Rabbis created 39 categories of what work was, and each category had dozens of

subdivisions, until they totaled 1,521 prohibitions, all considered authoritative
 One category was called ‘*carrying a burden*’, but what a burden was needed further defining
 The question of if a man was allowed to lift his child on the Sabbath was answered by yes, unless
 that child had a stone in his hand, for the stone is a burden
 Can you untie a knot on the Sabbath... Yes, if it could be done with one hand
 Teaching was permissible on the Sabbath according to Jewish oral tradition, but not healing
 It strikes me that preaching was not considered work to the synagogue ruler, so any of you who
 think that I work only one day a week now can say that I don’t even work on that day
 You see, Judaism had become a dead religion, and Jesus wasn’t trying to resurrect life on that
 barren fig tree, He was showing a new tree, verse 19, full of life where women like this
 one would nest in its branches
 For nearly 3 years He had been digging, and fertilizing by preaching and miracles, but no fruit
 was growing in the dead religion of Judaism, it suffocated life
 But this Sabbath, in this synagogue, the people got a glimpse of life in the tree of His kingdom
 So he confronts the religious authorities responsible for the lifeless religion

“Then the Lord answered him, ‘You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?’ ”

They cared more for their animals than this poor woman, so He calls them out, ‘*hypocrites*’
PP The word ‘*hypocrites*’ was a word for Greek actors who would put a mask on a stick to
 portray the character they were in, and would change masks to change characters
 These religious leaders looked godly wearing the mask of religion, but under it, they were dead
“As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame” 3:17a
 They were ‘*put to shame*’, meaning blushing, for they were unmasked and their true, loveless,
 fruitless, unrepentant selves were visible for all to see
“and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.” 3:17b
 The exaltation of Christ brings compassion, life, hope, joy and results in the glory of God

We learn from this woman, that if you are suffering, do not give up, continue to worship,
 continue in God’s Word, and wait on our Savior’s love and compassion
 We learn from our Savior that He often will initiate His healing, independent of our timetable, or
 expectations
 We learn from the religious leaders, dead religion has no true regard for centering on Jesus
 Christ
 Instead, we trust in the Son of God who has invited us into His kingdom, a new tree large enough
 for all Who are invited to the front to meet Jesus
 Friends, have you met this Jesus, who wants to give you His grace and mercy
 Who will heal your soul, and begin to restore your life?

Amen?
 Pray