



## “Wonder and Shame”

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost  
Saturday & Sunday, August 24-25, 2019

All Services

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Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Isaiah 58:9b-14; Hebrews 12:18-29;  
Luke 13:10-17

Grace and peace be to you from our Father  
and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Well the last two weeks I have thoroughly been enjoying watching one of our members, Matt Bingaman, umpire at the Little League World Series. Matter of fact, he is umpiring right now as we speak, and he will also be umpiring at 3:00 at the championship. So, when you go home, turn it on and you can watch him. He is going to be at first base. He'll be the first base umpire. This past week he was umpiring at the Virginia – Hawaii game, he was behind the plate for that one, and it was a really great game, a lot of fun, back and forth, back and forth, and the Virginia kids fell behind and then they caught up. A little later in the game there were three runs that were scored on one of the pitchers, I think he was like the third or fourth pitcher that Virginia had. When they went to the other pitcher, this kid was so upset, you know you can imagine that he had the weight of the world, or at least the weight of his teammates and the state of Virginia on his shoulders. You could see that his mental or his emotional state reflected his physical state. His shoulders were in, his head was down, he had his hat over his eyes, he was just kind of moping, he was just so upset about the turn of events and how the game had been going.

It reminded me of when my parents when I was a younger kid and my parents would remind me about my posture. Did you have parents like that? Sit up straight! Don't slouch! Put your chest out, look up!

It reminded me of this gospel reading that we had today. A woman with a spirit crippled for eighteen years, eighteen years. Now back in my thirties I had some lower back problems, so I would have to go to the chiropractor every now and again and I was taking Aleve by the handful. But then I experienced a miraculous healing. My two sons went to college! It's amazing how your back can be healed when you no longer have 185 pounds and a 200-pound kid jumping on your back. I have been back-issue free for years now. It is wonderful.

But this woman in our story, eighteen years looking at the dirt for eighteen long years. Not seeing the sky or the birds in the air, not being able to look up at the

clouds or a beautiful sunset. Just dirt, and dust, and mud, and this is the first century, animal droppings. That's her world view.

We don't know too much about this woman, Luke doesn't give us that much information. We don't know if she was rich or if she was poor, or whether or not she was honored in her community or ostracized because of her condition. Luke doesn't really tell us what caused her bending other than she has a spirit, whatever that means. Maybe it was a spirit of abuse or a spirit of loss, a spirit of physical pain or maybe she was just tired of life. All we know is that she spent time in worship in spite of her condition. We can imagine that she longed to hear some good news and to experience healing. But notice in our gospel it's Jesus who notices her and calls her over. She doesn't come into the synagogue and seek Jesus out. After eighteen years, maybe she had just given up. But she does experience it and is given healing by Jesus.

The woman experiences wonder and grace and healing mercy. And her response to what has been given to her by Jesus is praise and gratitude to the God who set her free. You would think that everyone in the synagogue would be thrilled with this, this sister of theirs, their neighbor, for eighteen years bent over, but now free to enjoy looking into their eyes and seeing the sunrise, free to lift up her face in worship.

And while she is experiencing this new sense of wonder the religious leaders experiencing indignation, that's what the word is translated in our Bible. Synonyms for indignation are outrage, furious, resentment. The synagogue leader is insensitive to this woman's plight of eighteen years. He's probably thinking the rules are the rules after all and Jesus has broken them. And for that he's right. Jesus healed on the Sabbath. Healing is considered work and work is not done on the Sabbath. I imagine that the synagogue leader is thinking what's another day for someone who's waited for eighteen years. Ask that to someone who experiences pain daily or suffering from a series of cancer treatments, or emotional distress. What's another day, after all?

Jesus brings good news to this woman. He offers compassion and compassion always trumps the rules, even the Sabbath commandment. The Synagogue leader can't hear the good news, even more importantly, he can't even experience it. And so, Jesus decides to be a little firm, he slams him. You hypocrite, he says, he shames him as the hypocrite he is. The religious leader's sin is not that he's a jerk, he is a jerk. But it is that he a religious leader of a religious person refuses to see God at work in this moment. And we experience shame when we know that we have done something wrong, when we don't see God at work and are just dead wrong about a situation. And we experience wonder when we open ourselves up to the Divine in our life.

What weighs you down today? Is it physical pain? Financial debt? Loss of a loved one? What bends you? Chronic condition that makes everyday a burden

or maybe it's your family in some form of crisis. Or maybe it's challenging school demands, or you're worried about one of your children or grandchildren.

We are all bent over people in one way or another whether it's our backs or our spirits. And because of that we need a deliverer, one that knows our needs and brings healing and hope to us. We are children of God. We're sons and daughters of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. We are servants and disciples of this Jesus who heals the broken and those who are bent over. Jesus who defeats the power of sin and death and calls us into a new and bright future. Brothers and sisters look to the heavens and rejoice. Look to Jesus and celebrate the mighty wonderful act of our God. Amen.

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