

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Luke 13: 10-17**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Luke chapter 13, verses 10 to 17.

In this chapter, Luke seems to deliberately deal with a common religious concept we often have: good is rewarded with good, and evil is rewarded with evil. If we follow these deeply rooted religious concepts, we will, like these scribes and Pharisees, arrive at wrong conclusions. For example, at the beginning, when the Galileans were killed while offering sacrifices, they mistakenly thought that they must be extremely wicked sinners. Jesus also pointed out that the eighteen people who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell were not more sinful than the other people in Jerusalem; therefore, it cannot be explained by the law of cause and effect of good and evil.

Then Jesus raised an even more serious question: whether you are good or evil, the outcome is the same; if you do not repent, you will all perish forever. The so-called law of cause and effect of good and evil in time has no help whatsoever for your eternal destiny; what is important is that you must first repent. Once you repent, under God's sovereign authority, you will still encounter many sufferings; and these sufferings often have nothing to do with your morality. It is not because you have moral defects that suffering comes upon you, but God uses suffering to enable you to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

This is the true meaning behind the words Jesus spoke to the scribes and Pharisees in verses 1 to 9 of the previous section. Then, starting from verse 10, Luke continues to record an incident about a person suffering, not because she had done anything immoral or bad.

**Verse 10: “Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.”**

Jesus came to His own people, the lost ones of Israel; every Sabbath, He would go to the synagogues of Israel and teach the people there.

**Verse 11: “And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up.”**

The Chinese Union Version translates “had a spirit of infirmity” too strongly; the New Translation translates it as “had an evil spirit.” If we follow the original meaning, it says this woman had a spirit of sickness, and therefore had been sick for eighteen years. What kind of sickness? It made her back so bent that she could in no way straighten herself up. It was a very severe hunchback, so severe that her chest almost overlapped with her legs, and she was completely unable to lift her head to look up to heaven. And this sickness had lasted for eighteen years; in the diagnosis record, there is no mention that this woman had done anything immoral, and Jesus later specially said that she was a daughter of Abraham. Abraham typifies faith; although this woman was in such extreme suffering, she was still full of faith; she still came to the synagogue every Sabbath to praise God, to worship God, and to listen to God’s word.

We can imagine that according to the logic of the scribes and Pharisees, if a person had such a serious illness, it must be because she had moral defects; she must have done something she should not have done, and therefore received God’s punishment. Therefore, every time she came to the synagogue on the Sabbath to worship, she had to endure many people pointing fingers at her and criticizing her behind her back. But she still came to the synagogue, and she did this for eighteen years.

**Verse 12: “But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, ‘Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.’”**

When Jesus saw her, He was moved with compassion; not only was He moved with compassion, but He immediately took action and called her to come. And He said, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity."

**Verse 13: "And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."**

This woman is truly our example. She had been tormented by illness for eighteen years; for eighteen years, day after day, every Sabbath she still came to God's synagogue to worship God and to listen to God's word. One day, she met Jesus in the synagogue. Jesus saw her, Jesus spoke to her, and Jesus even laid His hands on her: Jesus was united with her, and she immediately received healing. She stood straight, and the first thing she did after standing straight was to open her mouth and glorify God.

This is a very beautiful story, and this story is still continuing and frequently happening in God's house today. Among God's children, there are often some who suffer for a long time; perhaps others look at them with colored glasses, but they know it is not because of their faults; they are still willing to come before God and receive God's grace. Until one day, the Christ they know objectively becomes their subjective healing: face to face with the Lord Jesus, directly hearing the Lord Jesus speak, having intimate union with the Lord Jesus in the spirit, and receiving complete healing directly from the Lord Jesus, and immediately glorifying God.

Sometimes God also allows His children to suffer some afflictions; these afflictions are for a positive purpose. When one day we receive healing, we will give glory and praise to God.

**Verse 14: "But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, 'There are six days on**

**which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.”**

The ruler of the synagogue can be said to be the religious leaders at that time. They were very concerned about all kinds of procedures, but they did not care about people’s real needs. When he saw that Jesus healed on the Sabbath, and Jesus had indeed performed a miracle, he said to the crowd with indignation—actually speaking to Jesus. What did he say? “There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.” He was not against Jesus healing, but against Jesus healing on the Sabbath. Jesus was very interesting; during the three years of His earthly ministry, He frequently chose the Sabbath to perform miracles. He strongly wanted to prove that He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath was made for man, to allow man to obtain rest. When a person has been tormented by illness for eighteen years, how can she have rest? God established the Sabbath so that people could obtain rest; but this group of religious people held to the regulations of the law, completely disregarding people’s needs and disregarding people’s life and death. When a person was healed on the Sabbath and rose up to praise the Lord and glorify the Lord, they were saying that one should not heal on the Sabbath. Toward such people who only keep religious regulations, Jesus was not polite at all.

**Verse 15: “The Lord then answered him and said, ‘Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?’”**

Jesus immediately pointed out their real condition and called them hypocrites. Being a hypocrite means wearing a mask and acting; it is as if Jesus said to them, “Who are you acting for? You say that no work should be done on the Sabbath, yet on the Sabbath you loose your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it away to water it, for fear that they might die of thirst if they have no water.” Toward animals, you still have such a merciful heart.

**Verse 16: “So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?”**

This woman is the same as you; you are all descendants of Abraham, all chosen people. And she has been bound by Satan for eighteen years. For these eighteen years, she came here every Sabbath; you could not help her. Today, should I not loose her from this bond?

**Verse 17: “And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.”**

On the Sabbath, in the synagogue, there were two groups of people inside. One group, Jesus called His adversaries—these people who used religious law to oppose Jesus; Jesus directly called them hypocrites. They did not truly understand the original intention of the law, but took some regulations of the law to bind people and to show that they were nobler than others; yet they did not know that God’s original intention in establishing the Sabbath was to let people obtain rest. Because God loves people, these religious people only held to the regulations of the law and some procedural practices in the law, but forgot the original intention of the law.

Today it is the same in church life. The fewer laws, regulations, and procedures the better; what we truly hope is that every child of God will come to God’s house. In everyone’s process of spiritual growth, there will be some sufferings; many times these sufferings have nothing to do with our morality, but are God’s way of letting us grow in life. A truly healthy church life is how every person in need can receive supply in church life, receive God’s word, and receive healing from God.

The church is not a place to reward good and punish evil; every person who comes to the church is a sinner, yet freely receives forgiveness through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. All are forgiven sinners, standing in the position of grace, supporting one another and encouraging one another. For those who do not know God, we lead them to know God; for those who know God, we help them grow in life, many

times through experiencing suffering. In the process of their suffering, we do not condemn; we support, we bring every person before the Lord Jesus Christ; we know that the One who can truly perform healing is the Lord Jesus Himself.

Let us pray together: Lord, we recognize that in our lives, sometimes You allow us to experience all kinds of suffering. Through these sufferings, You bring us before You, have direct contact with You, have subjective experiences of You, hear Your speaking, have real union with You in the spirit, and receive help and healing directly from You. Lord, You know my condition, and You also know my real needs. Right now, as I read this passage of Scripture, I ask You to personally be with me; personally unite with me again, so that I can receive supply and help directly from You. And also that in these sufferings I may praise Your name and praise Your ways. Thank You. I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ.