

Sunday August 22, 2010

The Doctor is: IN

Daniel J. Krewson

Text: Luke 13:10-17

I had to re-read the text.

I didn't realize who the leader of the synagogue was rebuking. I thought it was Jesus.

It was his congregants. The people who had come to hear God's word, who are the target of his wrath...

Barbara Lundblad points this out in her Lenten devotional booklet of a few years ago, when she wonders what it would be like to hear from the woman who was cured by Jesus in today's gospel...

A BENT OVER WOMAN, she writes...

I didn't do anything wrong. Yes, I was there in the synagogue, but I came every week. I did not ask Jesus to heal me; he just saw me and called to me and healed me. I don't mean to minimize what he did. Jesus healed me even when I was afraid to ask. I will never stop praising God for that. But why did the ruler of the synagogue yell at us? clearly, he was angry at Jesus, yet he turned to the people - including me - and scolded us like naughty children for coming on the Sabbath to be healed. Was he afraid to confront Jesus? Perhaps. Was he trying to make it very clear to us that he was still in charge here? It was pathetic more than anything. He had grown so rigid in keeping the regulations that he could not rejoice in our healing. What happens when religion becomes more concerned about rules than about people? I guess a religion like that gets more and more angry like the rules of the synagogue. Religion that can not rejoice only gets in God's way. Dear God...give me a thankful heart, not because everything is going well, but because I know that your are still here. Amen.

A bent over woman...she started the day staring at the dirt floor of the synagogue,
but she ended it by staring toward the heavens and the horizon, standing straight and tall
Offering praise and thanksgiving for the healing God provided in the presence of Jesus

So many in our day are bent over...

Some with physical ailments

Be they scoliosis

Or osteoporosis

Or acute arthritis

Or other debilitating diagnosis

Some are physically longing for a better day...

Wanting to be filled with the wholeness of God's healing

Others are bent in despair after looking at their credit card statements or checking account balance

In this time of economic uncertainty

With so many still un-employed or under-employed

There are many who are weighed down with the difficult

Questions and decisions about what to do next

Longing for the peace and security of financial certainty

Others are bent over in despair as they realize the wreckage caused by human sin

Or the neglect of relationships
The wonder if there is a long-path-that-leads-back home
Which they can travel...

To those who are bent over today or weighed down

Today is a time to feel the fullness of that burden, pain, or of that need...

To acknowledge completely the brokenness which is before you

And then to turn to God

To the God of oneness and wholeness
The God of resurrection power and spiritual energy
The God of Sabbath breaking goodness

For Jesus reveals that God's desire is to break through the harshness of this day
And surround you with healing and comfort

God hears your cry and wishes to fill your empty places with hope...

The miracle in this text isn't just about healing.

It is about Jesus tenacity to bring about healing even in the face of a religious system
Which seemed too rigid and unaware of the intimate relationship
God offers each believer...

It is said that failure isn't in the falling down, it's in the staying down.
Jesus, keeps showing up - healing on the Sabbath, challenging the Pharisees and religious leaders
Helping them and us see past the rules of religion to get to the relationship of religion...

Many are familiar with the comic strip Peanuts in which Charlie Brown regularly goes to Lucy to pour out his
heartbreak...

You remember, she sits behind a lemonade-stand like booth with the words feet up on the desk - - Psychiatric
Help 5 cents - the Doctor is IN.

She listens, sometimes with her arms behind her head and other times elbows on the desk.

Then she dispenses her "Advice" usually leaving Charlie Brown feeling worse than before and she concludes in
a chipper voice says: THAT WILL BE FIVE CENTS PLEASE...

The Great Physician is IN
Regardless of the rules of the Sabbath - Jesus is ready to heal

Regardless of how bad the economy is - Jesus is ready to provide hope

Regardless of how awful you feel or how bad off a loved on is - Jesus is ready to Comfort

Not only present supernaturally

But also in and through the ministries of His church

For example

– call from parishioner weeks ago...called to tell me how much she appreciates the ministries of the church

she said she had started going to the CLENG - Calvary Lutheran's Employment Networking Group
and there she found great support and help in those going through job transitions

but more than that,

she made connections there,

and the connections led to a job application

the application to an interview

and eventually a job offer

Now, after 15 months, she said, I am working again thanks to that ministry...

And the text tells us:

When Jesus laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.

Or take for example the

Methodist church in Norwood PA.

Each week, several members of the church gather to make sack lunches...

With a note which reads:

We know that caring for a loved one who is in the ICU is difficult. So we have prepared for you this complimentary lunch in hopes of reminding you of God's presence and sustaining love.

My mom who had been down in the dumps

Felt a lift and love that was real

And unmerited

And unconditional

They didn't even ask for five cents!

Or take for example another conversation I had with a member of this congregation who said would have never been active in a Lutheran church except for the experience she had when her daughter became very ill

It was a local Lutheran church in her home town of NJ who began caring for the family just because...the meals, the cards, the prayers...and when her daughter's situation improved, the mark was made – and the mother became a faithful disciple, and continues to serve God teaching children in SS the faith and witnessing like the woman standing straight of years ago...

I think it is Dallas Willard who tells the story of a little boy who after losing his mother to a terrible disease, has trouble sleeping.

So, night after night, he makes his way down the hallway to his parents' room, and climbs into bed with dad.

There, still unable to sleep and needing comfort, he asks, Father, are you there?

Yes, son, he tries to reassure him, I am with you.

But father, is your face turned toward me?

The father rolls over, and says, yes, my son, now my face is turned toward you. And with that, the boy relaxes and drifts off to sleep...

YOU HAVE a God whose face is turned toward you

Whose face shines upon you and is gracious to you

Who in Jesus, showed his face for the world to know

And it is because of him that we rejoice
That we stand up tall

That we offer our praise...

For he is the One who came, and who comes -

Ready to serve
Ready to help
Ready to heal

And now to Him who is able to accomplish abundantly beyond all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory, now and forever. Amen.