

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Eighth Sunday After Trinity, July 17, 2016

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 42, 237:1, 345, 330, 377:10.

Lessons: Jeremiah 33:1-8, Acts 3:1-16, Matthew 4:23-24.

Sermon Text: Luke 13:10-17.

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

Dear friends in Christ Jesus:

We have a problem in the church. In general terms it could be expressed in this way: we do not appreciate what we have, because we do not realize now how much we need it. What we have that is not appreciated is that Christ is our Savior. That we have a Savior is not appreciated as it should be, because we lack sin-consciousness.

This can be illustrated by using the words of Charles Wesley's hymn: "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." We cannot sing these words as we ought, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want; More than all in Thee I find" because we do not fully realize what these words express: "I am all unrighteousness, False and full of sin I am." (The Lutheran Hymnal 345:4)

As in all spiritual needs we have, also the lack of sin-consciousness can be overcome by hearing what the Bible says. In other words, we need to hear the Law of God in all its damning enormity before we will appreciate the fact that Jesus is our Savior. Here it is not enough to hear the well-known passage: "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" Romans 3:23 (NIV) What this passage says, of course, is true. We, however, should not simply talk in general terms about all people, but get down to the uncomplimentary facts of what we as individuals are like. Each one of us has to say with David: "*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*" Psalm 51:5 (NIV) Then we have to realize what the holy God demands in his law: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ... Love your neighbor as yourself.*" Matthew 22:37,39 (NIV) God is not satisfied with any halfway efforts on our part. He demands absolute perfection. Do we not, then, have to confess with Paul: "*what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.*" Romans 7:15 (NIV) Isn't that the case every single day of our lives? When we realize how sinful we are, we have to say with David: "*My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.*" Psalm 38:4 (NIV) We are also forced to say with Paul: "*What a wretched man I am!*" Romans 7:24 (NIV) When we have come to that realization that we are damnable sinners who fully deserve eternal torment in hell, then we will truly appreciate having a Savior from sin.

It is of Jesus our Savior we want to learn from our text today. We are told how he healed a woman, and we want to make this application that Jesus is our spiritual Healer from sin and all its terrible results. So, let us meditate on:

JESUS THE DIVINE HEALER.

- 1. Jesus healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath;**
- 2. Jesus rebuked the hypocrites who objected to it; and,**
- 3. Jesus is revealed in the Scriptures as our divine Spiritual Healer.**

Our text tells about the healing of a woman on the Sabbath: "*On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years.*" Jesus, at this point in his ministry, was still trying to teach the Jewish people that he was their Messiah and that he had come to deliver them from their sins. While he was teaching, a woman came into the synagogue. She was afflicted by an evil spirit which caused her to be crippled. She was in bad shape! "*She was bent over and could*

not straighten up at all.” Jesus in his great love pitied this woman in her miserable condition. ***“When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, ‘Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.’ Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.”***

Like all of Jesus’ miracles, this was something very wonderful. No doubt the woman had tried every remedy, but as the years went on, she resigned herself to her hopeless condition. Then Jesus by his divine power as the Son of God healed her. The evil spirit was driven out of her and her physical ailments ceased to exist. Surely this proves that Jesus is what Isaiah called him: the ***“Mighty God”*** Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) and what Thomas confessed him to be: ***“My Lord and my God!”*** John 20:28 (NIV)

But this precious fact, and the wonder of the miracle was obscured by the synagogue ruler. All he could think of was that Jesus had performed this miracle on the Sabbath. Our text tells us how Jesus rebuked the hypocrites who objected to the healing on the Sabbath.

2.

“Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, ‘There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.’” It was because of what Jesus had done, that the synagogue ruler was indignant. But he was afraid to attack Jesus on this matter. So he spoke to the people, telling them they should not come on the Sabbath to be healed.

It was wrong for the synagogue ruler to tell people this. It does not say in our text that the woman came to be healed. It was Jesus who decided on the healing without any plea from the crippled woman. The synagogue ruler thought that it was a terrible transgression to do this healing on the Sabbath.

This is why Jesus had to rebuke him and show up the hypocrisy of the Pharisees with their ideas about the Sabbath. Our text says ***“The Lord answered him, ‘You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?’”*** Jesus addressed the synagogue ruler and all who taught as he did, as hypocrites. He wanted to show them by their own actions that they were hypocrites. Each one of them went out on the Sabbath to untie their oxen and donkeys so they could have water to drink. Was it more important to have an animal taken care of, than to have a woman healed? If the animals had no water on the Sabbath, that was only one day of suffering. The woman had suffered eighteen years, and she was ***“a daughter of Abraham,”*** that is, a Jewish woman. Was water for animals more important than to be free from the power of an evil spirit? Having said all this to the hypocrites, we can understand that our text says ***“All his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.”*** The synagogue ruler and all the Pharisees with their interpretation of the Sabbath law were publicly put to shame, whereas the common people delighted in Jesus’ words and miracle.

Here we should learn briefly about the Sabbath. Colossians tells us that the Sabbath regulations of the ceremonial law in the Old Testament ***“are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*** Colossians 2:17 (NIV) In other words, this Old Testament regulation about the Sabbath pointed ahead to Christ and the true rest for souls of sinners that he would come to bring. (The Hebrew word Sabbath means rest.) Now that Christ has come, and has given us the true Sabbath rest in that all our iniquities are forgiven for his sake, there is no longer any need to observe the Old Testament Sabbath law. What is important is not what we do on a certain day, for the Lord has set aside no day at all to be specially observed. The Christians in the early church set aside Sunday as the day for worship. What the Lord has commanded is summed up in Luther’s explanation of the Third Commandment: “We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.” If we do that, we will receive rest for our souls in hearing from the Gospel Jesus’ message: ***“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*** Matthew 11:28 (NIV) When weary and burdened sinners penitently come to the Lord to receive the Sacrament of the Altar, his Holy Supper prepared for us to reassure us that Jesus’ sacrifice, made once for all on the cross, they also receive full and complete forgiveness of all their sins. This is the same assurance of the word of forgiveness we hear in the Gospel, but the sacrament is a visible sign and seal that Jesus really, truly shed his blood and gave his body for the forgiveness of sins. When we accept the means of grace by faith, we have the rest for our souls that we so much need.

This leads us to make this further application of our text, that Jesus is revealed in the Scriptures as our divine Spiritual Healer.

3.

The Scripture teaches that Jesus is divine, that he is the only-begotten of the Father, very God of very God. Paul explains Jesus' deity in these words: ***"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."*** Colossians 1:15-17 (NIV) Jesus' many miracles of casting out demons and healing physical ailments of people prove that he is the Son of God. He is divine.

Jesus, the Scriptures teach, is our divine Spiritual Healer. He came to this earth specifically to become a true man with flesh and blood to suffer and die for our sins, and deliver us from Satan's power. The Bible says: ***"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."*** Hebrews 2:14-15 (NIV) Jesus our Spiritual Healer delivered us from all our sins and Satan's dominion over us: ***"he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."*** Colossians 1:13-14 (NIV) Jesus accomplished this by the shedding of his blood. Peter says it was accomplished ***"with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*** 1 Peter 1:19 (NIV) John says: ***"the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."*** 1 John 1:7 (NIV) By his suffering and dying and shedding his precious blood, ***"Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."*** Ephesians 5:2 (NIV)

That's how we were reconciled to God. Paul says: ***"For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"*** Romans 5:10 (NIV). This is how it is possible for the holy Lord in the Scriptures to declare sinners righteous. Paul says: ***"For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."*** Romans 5:19 (NIV) Through Jesus' death and resurrection, all our sins have been paid for and the holy God is now no longer angry with us because of our sins, but has declared us free from all sin and guilt.

God grant that we believe this. Then our sins no longer need trouble us, our conscience will be clear, and our hearts will be filled with peace and joy in Christ our Savior. Amen.

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