

Stand up Straight

May 9,2021

Mother's Day

Opening Prayer: Father God, thank you for this time together. May we feel your presence and hear your word. We are her to worship You.

This message this morning is “New to you”, but is really one that God and I prepared for Mother's Day back pre-pandemic. Then along came covid and it had to be put on the shelf. Not once but twice, because I was asked to do it at Mt. Zion in Ridgetown this year and then along came covid. So thank you for letting me share it with you this morning.

Although we are here to worship our marvelous Father God, we all have to agree that mothers are pretty special too. We all have or have had a mother, so everyone should be able to relate to this message.

Let's think of our mothers- She was probably one of the greatest blessings God has given us Some can think of something from yesterday, but most of us have to go back many, many years to recapture a mental picture of Mom. . Thank goodness those are lasting memories. Lets be silent and take a couple of minutes to recall her love and even some of her words of wisdom.

PAUSE

Thank you God for our mothers!

I remember some of my mom's favourite sayings. My Mother never swore, but when she was upset she would exclaim “WELL HOLEY OLD TIN POT” (that holey was as in “perforated pan”, not as in our Holy God). In our family, with 6 kids, that exclamation was as common as “FOR CRYING OUT LOUD”. When we heard it we ducked our heads and looked around sheepishly to see if we were the offenders.

Even after we were all married, we remained close. Sometimes we would get together with our husbands and friends to play board games. The funniest was PASSWORD. Have you ever played it?

You give hints to your partner and they would have to guess the word on your card. My sisters and I would win “hands down” because of Mom's favourite sayings. For example one time, the word to be guessed was “A TIN POT” (and you guessed it) I said “HOLEY OLD” and Joyce had it just like that! Our husbands and friends shook their heads and wondered “how in the world did that work?

Great fun but you are probably shaking your head wondering “How is she going to make a sermon out of that! Well I'm not but it was a fond memory.

Actually I want to base my message on another one of my mother's favourite sayings:

STAND UP STRAIGHT!

She was always reminding us about our posture, which was good because you see how short I am? I need to stand up straight to see over things. But getting to the meat of my message, I had recently read a devotional on this morning's scripture **Luke13:10-17**.

And it was entitled “STAND UP STRAIGHT” and immediately I heard Mom's voice.

Luke 13:10-17 has a great message for us and it is not about posture. Look at Verse 13 it is so powerful; Jesus “*laid His hands on her and immediately she was made straight and glorified God!*”

Picture it: the miracle of instantaneous healing and the beauty of the grateful woman standing up straight after 18 years of looking at the floor, and she *bursts into praise for God!*

And I do believe in miracles. They don't often happen instantaneously for me and not exactly as I would have thought, but that is why they are called miracles. I am living with a miracle right now. My son Durick was diagnosed with malignant melanoma and given 2-3 years to live. Well God is working a miracle with him! Durick is entering year 5 and last October he celebrated his 50th birthday and we of little faith didn't think that he would make it. Praise God!!!! he had no sign of brain lesions at his last check up. So just like that lady in our scripture I want to “burst into praise” and thank God for our Elliott miracle.

Now back to the book, Let's look closer at what happened that day in Palestine. It was Sabbath and Jesus was teaching in the Synagogue. The synagogue was their local church. When the Babylonians conquered Judah in 586 BC, they spread the Jews all over their vast empire. (Rome to India) That was called the dispersia. Their strategy was to thin out the populace so that they would not be strong enough to rise up and revolt. During that time the people learned to build synagogues or local places of worship. They could no longer rely on the temple in Jerusalem. It had been destroyed and would not be rebuilt until Ezra and Nehemiah's time. Anyway, this Synagogue was in Palestine and as verse 14 says it was overseen by, :

“*the official of the synagogue*”, probably a Pharisee. He was like our minister or pastor and he was responsible for pulpit supply. He was wise enough to recognize Jesus as a Rabbi or teacher, so he asked Jesus to teach that Sabbath. Jesus taught a great lesson that day although it was more through his actions than his words and the official was not the least bit impressed. Because of his beautiful empathy for mankind, Jesus sensed this crippled old woman's pain and sought her out. (She was probably someone's mother). Remember the hierarchy of the Jewish places of worship? The men were seated in the inner section and the women were to stand around the periphery, often separated by a screen or lattice work. Jesus made a conscious effort to go and find her! And “*he called her forward.*” Most often people came to Jesus and asked to be healed like blind Bartimaeus in Mark 9 or the woman with the flow of blood in Mark 5, but this crippled woman did not ask. Jesus “called **her** out” and as v 12 says He announced “*woman you are free from your sickness*”. She had been twisted, bent over and in pain for 18 years. We would call it osteoporosis, osteoarthritis or disintegrating disc disease. We might have names for it but still no fix. Back then they didn't have a name, but they thought that they knew what caused it;

V 11 says an evil spirit had keep her bent over for 18 years and she could not straighten up at all .

So when Jesus said woman you are free from your illness, He was healing her both physically and spiritually. Evidence of both healings were immediate.

V13 says: *He placed his hands on her and at once*

-she stood up straight (physical)

-and she praised God (spiritual)

Well as the cynic says “**no good deed goes unpunished**” it was true for Jesus, In verse 14 the official of the synagogue, who was responsible for Law & order, jumped up angry and irate. WHY?

Because someone was healed on the sabbath! Notice he did not turn around and charge Jesus with a sin, He must have respected or feared Jesus, instead the official said to the people:

“there are 6 days in which we should work, so come during those days to be healed, but not on the sabbath.” V 14

And we could say that he had a point. She was bent over for 18 years, what could waiting 1 more day have hurt?

BUT, Jesus had a lesson to teach, that was not in His notes. He wanted the official and the people to stop “trying to put new wine in old wine skins” as we read in Matt.9:17. The new wine expands as it ferments and a new wineskin will stretch and make room. An old wineskin has already been stretched and therefore it will burst at the seams. He wasn't really giving them a wine making lesson, He wanted them to know that God's love was greater than the old testament rules. The official was trying to put the love of Jesus into the stone laws of Moses. It was *time* to move on with God's plan. When God sent his perfect Lamb – Jesus-it was time to replace the old sacrifices and traditions with the new covenant of grace.

Jesus chastised the official in v.15 calling him a hypocrite because he had more “*zeal for the Law than for God's people*”. By the time Jesus came, the pharisees and sadducees had built 100's of man-made laws around God's Law and the average person was oppressed almost to the point of hopelessness. Like this example, the law about honouring the sabbath became a burden not the blessing it was intended to be. Jesus had said “*The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath*” (Mark 2:27). At a time when men and animals worked 6 days a week, sunup til sundown, the day of rest was a gift. People could recoup on the 7th day and have time to enjoy God in worship.

In verse 15 Jesus was giving a very real example of the distortion of God's Laws, in particular this 4th commandment. “*Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy as a day unto the Lord*”.

Jesus pointed out that:

*“anyone of you would **release** his ox or donkey from the stall and take it out to give it water on the Sabbath”*

Which was considered good and responsible. However the man-made law around the 4th commandment only allowed the owner to draw up water from the well, but he could not

carry it to the animal so he had to **release** the animal and bring it to the water, and that was acceptable practice. On the Sabbath they made allowances for animals but not for this poor bent women. Jesus drew a verbal parallel between the two actions. He pointed out that they **released** their animals to care for them and then in verse 16 He said:

*“this women whom Satan has kept in bonds for 18 years, should she not be **released** on the Sabbath?”*

And the lesson was learned in that synagogue on that sabbath!

V17 says: *the officials were ashamed of themselves* (bless their hearts, they were teachable). *And the people rejoiced over all the wonderful things that Jesus did.*

What wonderful things???

A woman, probably someone's mother, who was bent over for 18 years met Jesus. He gave her the ability to **stand up straight, and to look face to face, and praise her God.**

But more Jesus was all about setting a person free from a burdensome disease and giving her the dignity of a child of God.

But still more Jesus lesson was about giving glory to God and healing rest, to His people, on the sabbath. The day of rest and worship that God desires for all of his people.

Today is Sunday, we think of it as our “Christian sabbath”, so even though you are sitting, I challenge you to “STAND UP STRAIGHT”, like the mother in our scripture, and worship our Lord as we pray together.

Most Holy God, we do worship You. You who created the vast universe, yet still find a way into each one of our hearts. You love and care for every one of your children in a special way. We can never thank you sufficiently for this great blessing, so we just stand here in **awe** of You. We ask for miracles of healing for body and spirit, not so much that we feel better but rather so that your people can stand straight and point to you as the one true God, the creator and healer.

Jesus you are the **only answer** for the salvation of mankind. You alone are Lord! We pray through you holy name and lift our hearts in worship to You.....Amen

So now, as we part:

*May the eye of God watch over you,
May the ear of God hear you
May the word of God speak to you
and May the hand of God heal you,
Now and forever.....Amen*