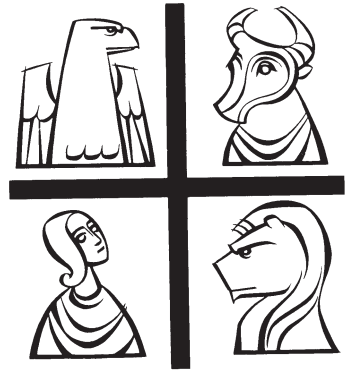


Reading Luke in Lent

Gospel of Luke 13:10–35



A Woman with a Disabling Spirit

¹⁰ Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.
¹¹ And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years.
She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself.
¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her,
‘Woman, you are freed from your disability.’
¹³ And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.
¹⁴ But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people,
‘There are six days in which work ought to be done.
Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.’
¹⁵ Then the Lord answered him, ‘You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?
¹⁶ And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?’
¹⁷ As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

¹⁸ He said therefore, ‘What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it?
¹⁹ It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.’
²⁰ And again he said, ‘To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?
²¹ It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.’

The Narrow Door

²² He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.
²³ And someone said to him, ‘Lord, will those who are saved be few?’
And he said to them,
²⁴ ‘Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.
²⁵ When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, “Lord, open to us,” then he will answer you, “I do not know where you come from.”
²⁶ Then you will begin to say, “We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.”
²⁷ But he will say, “I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!”
²⁸ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out.

29 And people will come from east and west, and from north and south,
and recline at table in the kingdom of God.
30 And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.’

Lament over Jerusalem

31 At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him,
‘Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.’
32 And he said to them,
‘Go and tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow,
and the third day I finish my course.
33 Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following,
for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.”
34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!
How often would I have gathered your children together
as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!
35 Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say,
“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!””

Reflection

The Sabbath is still principally thought about as refraining from work. Jesus reminds us it is about the appreciation of God’s creation; Jesus will usher in, on the Lord’s Day, the new creation. The Sabbath is also the day of Exodus from slavery and once again Jesus sees his mission as bringing liberty to captives.

In the two short parables about the extraordinary growth of the kingdom — three measures of flour would feed about a hundred people — Luke, once again, pairs a man and a woman.

Jesus continues on his journey to Jerusalem, teaching on the way. The parable Jesus tells reflects some of the episodes we have heard previously. He has eaten and drank with sinners, people have heard his teaching. It is not enough just to be present; it is to hear and understand God’s word and act upon it. As Mary sang in the Magnificat the reality of the kingdom may turn things upside down where the first shall be last and the last first.

- Though the Gospel can seem harsh to us Jesus’ message is one of compassion and forgiveness. He wants to gather us, like a mother hen, under his wings.
 - What challenges you in this passage.
 - What comforts you?

Prayer

To the banquet of your kingdom,
O God of the nations,
you have invited people of every race and tongue.

May all who are called to a place at your table
come by the narrow way
to the unending feast of life.

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.
Amen.

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