

***BIBLICAL BACKGROUND (and sermon ideas)  
FOR MISSIONS STUDY (Luke 13: 10-17)***

**I. Introduction**

Jesus always lived what he taught, relating to people in ways that matched his fundamental beliefs. He taught and lived the truth that God has unending compassion for those who suffer. Reaching out to the sick, the poor, the lost and the lonely, sharing the good news of God's love at the point of people's needs, was central to Jesus' mission.

When Jesus began his public ministry, he went to the synagogue in Nazareth. He read from Isaiah and announced his mission from the Father. He read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4: 18-19; see Isaiah 6: 1-2)

Luke recorded many examples of Jesus' life to demonstrate the wide-reaching, transforming power of his God-given mission. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-37) highlighted the Father's heart of mercy for those wounded by the roadside of life. In response to the lawyer's question about how far are we to extend God's compassion ("Who is my neighbor?"), Jesus' answer was profound. In essence he said, "The one who needs you is your neighbor."

**II. A Suffering Woman's Need (Luke 13: 10-11)**

In the latter part of his ministry, Jesus was again teaching in a synagogue. He saw a woman who was literally doubled over by an illness. She likely had severe spondylitis, leaving the bones in her spine fused in a rigid mass. All she could see was the ground in front of her. She had been bound in her suffering for 18 years. She had one of the most severe cases of illness that Jesus dealt with in his earthly ministry.

In the first century, it was commonly thought that sickness was a sign of sinfulness and the absence of God's blessings. However, Jesus' heart immediately went out to the woman. In his eyes, she was a "daughter of Abraham," a precious child of God. In her illness, she had not turned away from God. She was in the synagogue attending worship. She was not a wicked person – rather, she was a victim of disease and pain. She was bound by an illness that was "evil," that caused immense suffering.

**III. A Response of Christ's Compassion (Luke 13: 12-13)**

Springing from his compassion, Jesus took the initiative. He spoke to the woman and called her to where he was. He healed her by the power of his words: "Woman, you are set free from your sickness." Laying on his hands was not essential but added to his personal touch.

She immediately stood up straight and began praising God. She was liberated, set free by the love and power of God. Eighteen years of suffering was over. The one who had been bent over by the burden of sickness could now stand tall.

#### **IV. The Priority of Care (Luke 13: 14-17)**

Because Jesus healed the bent over woman on the Sabbath, he was subjected to criticism from the religious rulers. Much like the priest and Levite in the Good Samaritan, their priority was on rigid obedience to tightly held religious rules. They had become so religious that they were callous. A heart of compassion for meeting the needs of hurting people was far less important.

In their eyes, the “work” of healing was forbidden on the Sabbath. “If you want to heal her, don’t end her suffering on the Sabbath. Wait until the next day.”

*Jesus made the priority of compassion abundantly clear. His Father does not want any person to suffer a moment longer than is necessary. When you are suffering, you can bring your burden to Jesus anytime. When you see someone in need, anytime is the right time to extend God’s mercy.*

Jesus could have avoided criticism and postponed healing the woman until the next day. But he made compassion the priority. He demonstrated that “suffering must not be allowed to continue until tomorrow if it could be helped today (William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 178). Barclay noted, “He gives twice who gives quickly, as the Latin proverb has it. No helpful deed that we can do today should be postponed until tomorrow.”

#### **V. The Mother’s Day Offering Extends the Compassion of Christ**

Our gifts to the Mother’s Day Offering bring the heart of Jesus to patients and families in serious financial need at Baptist Hospital. These individuals are “doubled over” by burdens of suffering and need. The weight of serious illness is hard enough, given the physical, mental and emotional pain it can bring. When deep fears caused by serious financial need are added, the pressure is nearly overwhelming.

The patients and families who are helped by the Mother’s Day Offering have no other resources to pay the hospital bills they are responsible for. They are hard working people, doing their best to make ends meet, when financial crisis hits. Many have lost their jobs, like George Guy. Others have seen their hours at work cut sharply with the slow economy, like Daniel and Nichol Lancaster. Many cannot afford health insurance. Each of them have been frightened by unexpected hospital bills piling on top of every day bills, with no where to turn for help. The Guys and Lancasters clearly describe the emotional and mental turmoil.

When patients and families learn that North Carolina Baptists have paid their hospital bills in the name of Jesus Christ and His love, their gratitude is nearly indescribable. The impact of your gifts to the Mother’s Day Offering reaches deep into

their souls. The very compassion of Jesus is made real, right at the point of their needs. Seeds of faith are planted for many, and those who are Christians find their faith greatly strengthened in their gratitude.

Thank you for being a part of what God is doing through the Mother's Day Offering, touching lives with hope in the name of Jesus Christ. Thank you for making life-changing differences through your gifts.

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