

Teaching in the Synagogue on the Sabbath

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Date: 12 April 2026

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[0 : 00] You can be turning to Luke chapter 13. Luke chapter 13. We've been working our way through the gospel of Luke. Christ has been doing many miracles. He's been doing miracles for a couple of years now.

Now, crowds have grown. The crowds to this point have loved him. Soon that will change. But as they've grown, the crowds, and as the crowds have loved him, the religious leaders have not.

In fact, they become more and more angry, hateful towards him as time goes on. They're angry because they've been looking for a Messiah. And they've been looking for this one who would deliver Israel. And in their thinking, it was deliver Israel from the Romans.

[1 : 14] They've been looking for a king who would come, throw off the Romans, reestablish the throne of David, sit upon that throne, rule with a rod of iron over the nations.

Israel would be chief amongst the countries, the most honored, God's holy people. And they would sit in a beautiful position as God ruled the earth. Israel was looking for their Messiah.

And even though the crowds loved Jesus, were hanging on his words, the Jews were not. The crowds were thinking, is this our Messiah?

It looks like our Messiah. And the religious leaders said, in our eyes, he's not. And the biggest thing was, he didn't play by their rules.

They were infuriated that Jesus wouldn't do what they said. Because they were the authority there.

[2 : 21] They were the one who felt that they had studied the law so that they could teach and tell people exactly what they should be doing. And instead, the religious leaders, as they heard Jesus, watched him do miracles, watched him serve.

They grew to hate him. Was he their Messiah? Would he bring the kingdom of God? The answer is, he is their Messiah.

And he will bring the kingdom of God. His kingdom is unstoppable. Today, we will see not only that he is the Messiah and his kingdom is unstoppable.

We will also see encouraging news that his kingdom will reach effectively to the end of the earth.

Let me read from Luke chapter 13, starting in verse 10, down to verse 21.

Now, he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for 18 years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself.

[3 : 40] When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, Woman, you are freed from your disability. And he laid his hands on her and immediately she was made straight.

And she glorified God. 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. 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?

And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for 18 years, be loosed from this bondage on the Sabbath day?

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. He said, He said, Therefore, What is the kingdom of God like?

[4 : 54] And to what shall I compare it? 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.

And again he said, To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until it was all leavened.

Let's pray together. Father, I thank you for your word. And I thank you for what you're doing here. I thank you for the message that Jesus preached.

I thank you for the way Luke arranged it, and what he's trying to show us. And I pray that you would make your word clear to us today. And Father, that you would bless that we would be encouraged by your word today.

That we'd be emboldened today. And I pray that your spirit would attend and help us to hear and be to preach in Jesus' name. Amen. Luke wrote this gospel.

[6 : 04] That's pretty obvious. We talk about the gospel of Luke. Luke wrote this gospel, and he, having heard from others what Jesus said, arranged this gospel for a purpose.

The reason Luke wrote this gospel was to show the gospel was to the nations. Now, he's showing the good news of Christ through all of it.

But he's trying to get across this idea that the gospel is for all people. And that's particularly important because Luke was a Gentile. And Luke was writing to a Greek named Theophilus, who was in a Gentile area.

And so, as Luke arranged this account, he's writing for a specific purpose. He takes the real events of Jesus. He treats them properly.

And yet, he's trying to get across a point to help us to be standing strong on the word of God. In the first seven verses, eight verses, verses 10 through 17, we find here a situation of a woman unbound.

[7 : 18] Now, Jesus is traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem. We'll talk more about that later in the message. In the course of this traveling, at some point, he teaches this.

And he's in the synagogue. And he here unbinds a woman. A little bit of background.

Jesus had set his face to Jerusalem. We saw that back in Luke 9.51. He says, When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to Jerusalem.

So, as it got close to when he would go through what he would go through in Jerusalem and be ascended, when it got close, he says, I'm going.

And we don't know how long it took for him to get from Galilee, Jerusalem. Now, it's only a several days walk. But it took him more than several days because he went to many towns.

[8 : 27] As we think about that walk, and as he's heading to Jerusalem, at this point, all that remains until the triumphal entry.

That's when he walks into Jerusalem, declaring himself as king. All that remains until the triumphal entry are many units of teaching, an encounter with a young, rich ruler, a brief encounter with Zacchaeus.

So, now, if you've taken your book of Luke, it's 24 chapters, and we're in 13.

And that seems like we should be halfway through his life. But that's not the case. We're getting pretty close to when he would go to Jerusalem to die. He is getting very close.

And during that time, he spends time teaching, and there's just a bulk of teaching coming in the next several chapters, things that he taught his disciples just before he entered Jerusalem.

[9 : 37] And it seems that he's nearing this last week of his ministry. He's not at the last week. He's getting close.

And on this trek, we find that this passage says he was teaching in one of the synagogues. And he does a miracle while he's there.

Now, it's interesting. Luke doesn't say this, but you can search the book of Luke, and you can find out that this is the last time that any of the Gospels speak of Jesus entering a synagogue.

I think that's important, and the connection that we'll make in a few minutes. But he makes this mention. Now, you say, that's not unusual. Jesus has taught in synagogues many times before.

Yes, but the crowds have become so large that Jesus was not teaching in the synagogues very often. He had to begin to do most of his teaching out in public.

[10 : 44] But this is the last time that Jesus ministers in a synagogue. And as he's there teaching in the synagogue, the impression is that he's already begun teaching.

And then in verse 10, it says, Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for 18 years.

She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. So Luke points out that there are many interesting things here. It was a woman who was in the synagogue, not as common, not as popular. The women could come to the synagogue and learn, but oftentimes it was mainly men. But here was a woman who was in the synagogue. And it says that she had a disabling spirit. And what Luke is getting at, what Jesus mentions, is that this affliction that she had was actually caused by some work of Satan. Now, not all disabling aspects of a person's life are caused by Satan.

[11 : 54] In fact, most of them probably are not. I do not think she thought it was caused by Satan. I think Jesus, because of a statement he says a little later, gives us a view into what's actually going on.

I don't think she thought of it as being something that Satan did. So I think she was unknowing. I think she was like Job. You remember when we looked at the book of Job?

We started there. Job had no clue that as God was in heaven and Satan come before him, God says, have you considered my servant Job, a perfect and an upright man who eschews evil? And Satan says, you let me touch him and we'll show how he will curse you to his face. And God allowed him to introduce affliction into Job's life.

I think that's the situation that's here. I think we find a woman who's a godly woman here who's been afflicted. And it's been the work of Satan, though she doesn't know it.

[13 : 01] And Satan's work has caused her to have to walk bent over. Now you and I have been out and about. We know people who have conditions, diseases.

We know of one that is dear to us that causes a person to walk bent over. And you and I have seen people like this and felt such pity for them.

If they talk to you, they have to turn to the side because they cannot stand erect enough to be able to look you in the eye. They have to turn their body because of their affliction.

This is what this woman had gone through for 18 years. I can't imagine the backaches that she lived with regularly.

I can't imagine the mockery that she lived with regularly. But she endured it. And she was in the synagogue in that day.

[13 : 58] And I want you to note that she didn't stay home because of her affliction. No, I'm not here.

Well, let me just say it this way. We don't know if she regularly attended or came because she heard that Jesus was going to be there. But whatever the case, her affliction didn't keep her away. And I'll just challenge you. I want to be careful how I do this. Do you let affliction keep you from assembling for worship?

Now, there are absolutely valid reasons for not being gathered with the assembly. Contagious sickness for love of others and care of self.

Stay home. And bed-bound afflictions. And there are all kinds of reasons where it would be right and proper for a person who is afflicted to stay home.

[14 : 59] But this woman was not allowing an affliction that she had to live with to keep her from the synagogue. I would encourage you to be very careful should God allow afflictions in your life to go to the Lord and ask the Lord to help you to go when you can.

We need to be with other people. We need to hear the word of God. We need to hear people pray. We need to pray with others. We need to fellowship. And I'm not here if you're under affliction. I'm not here to cast guilt on you or to badger you. Honestly before God encourage you to not let affliction keep you from being with God's people.

But that woman was there. And Luke says behold there was a woman. woman. When Jesus saw her he called her over to her called her over and said to her woman you are freed from your disability.

And he laid his hands on her and she was healed. I want you to see Jesus here. I want you to see how he is in that synagogue teaching.

[16 : 13] teaching. And a woman had a need and whether it was the end of some point that he had made or whatever point in his teaching Jesus didn't wait for her to ask.

He in his compassion in his love for this woman commanded her to come to him. He was on a mission. He was on a mission to minister to those in need.

And he tells her you are freed from your disability. Jesus could say that because he is God.

And he had the authority. He was freed. This woman was freed because she had had a disabling spirit. And Jesus freed her from that disabling spirit. She was freed because Satan had bound her. And in verse 16 both of these point to the same thing. She had been troubled by Satan and Jesus came and released this woman who had been held captive. So now Satan could no longer afflict her with this affliction.

[17 : 26] She's freed from that. And then it says he laid his hands on her and immediately she was made straight. No longer bound by that disabled spirit.

No longer bent over and unable to straighten herself. God healed her. And the reaction was that she glorified God and at the end of verse 17 you find that the people were rejoicing. Now what we've just read is pointing to the fact of what Jesus did. He saw this woman in great need and he ministered to her.

to her. He was on a mission. But notice the ruler of the synagogue was indignant. This man. I've had enough of him. He doesn't know the rules. Doesn't he know that it's work to heal on the Sabbath? This man is indignant.

[18 : 35] He's angry. He interpreted what Jesus did as work and felt as though Jesus had broken the law. And so he didn't have the guts to speak to Jesus.

He stands there and addresses the crowd. He reprimands the crowd for coming on the Sabbath to be healed by this Sabbath breaker.

In saying what he said, he's accusing Jesus of being a Sabbath breaker and he's warning the crowds, stay away from this man. He's a Sabbath breaker.

Jesus rebukes this religious leader. He does it with some scriptural wordplay. he doesn't speak against the Sabbath.

It's interesting sometimes people say well the Sabbath is not in the new testament. Jesus deals with the Sabbath often and he never ever speaks against it.

[19 : 44] He doesn't speak against the Sabbath here but he shows that scripture allows for the unbinding of it. He talks about work and how people should not work and that includes the animals but the animals need to be ministered to.

He refers to Deuteronomy chapter 5 verses 12 through 14 talking about how we're to observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Work on the six days, the seventh day we keep to the Lord.

And he says not only you are not to work, your family's not to work, your servants aren't to work, your livestock aren't to work. But everyone knew that in saying that the animals were not to work and that you were not to work, there was also the understanding because God was very careful in scripture to always point this out, that the animals should be taken care of.

If the animals were to rest on the Sabbath, they must be given water and food and therefore must be untied and led to water for this to happen.

I mentioned there's some scriptural wordplay going on here and this is where that wordplay begins. He uses the word for untied or unbound.

[21 : 07] Now, what Jesus is propounding to this religious leader is something that the religious leader already knew and understood, understood, not only by the word of God, but their mishnah was their interpretation of the word of God.

And that would give out rules for making sure you observe the word of God correctly. And one of the things that the rules said was that a person with an ox or an ass could go into that manger, untie that ox or ass and lead it to water so that it could drink because the animal can't rest if it doesn't drink.

And so the mishnah, that which this religious leader is all concerned about right now, obeying the law, gives great provision for the animals.

And the religious leader could not argue this point. It is unarguable that animals need to be watered. And so Jesus argues from the lesser to the greater here.

He says if an animal can be unbound for necessity, certainly a woman can be unbound for necessity.

[22 : 32] Therefore, when Jesus speaks to this woman, he uses the same terms before he's even made this point. he's using the same terms.

He says, woman, you are freed, unbound. He uses a form of the same Greek word. Yes. You're unbound from your disability.

And then he says, does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie or loose or unbound his ox or his donkey? And then he makes the argument, ought not this woman being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these 18 years be loosed or unbound on the Sabbath day.

Jesus argues that it was right and necessary for this woman to be healed on the Sabbath day. So he's made his argument. And their reaction, well, the religious leaders were angry because they were put to shame.

But the people were fulfilled. I'm sorry, the people rejoiced. I read my next line. The people rejoiced. Now, we have what we've looked at here as a miracle.

[23 : 54] He's healed this woman. And we've learned some truths from it. We've learned that Satan bound this woman.

We've learned that Jesus has the authority to unbind this woman. We've learned some regulation for the Sabbath, that it was fine to heal on the Sabbath. We've learned these things.

And Jesus' popularity grew with the crowds, and his unpopularity grew with the religious leaders. But as we get into these next verses, we'll read them in a minute.

he says in verse 18, I'll just read the couple words. He says, he said therefore.

He's going to talk about mustard seed and leaven to apply what he's been talking about with this man. So remember our question is, or has been, is this really Messiah?

[25 : 06] And Jesus has been doing something here that I think Luke arranged in a specific way so that we see a proof that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.

You could ask yourself as you're going through the book of Luke, why another synagogue situation? Why another Sabbath situation? Why another deliverance account? Luke's first synagogue account and this last synagogue account, this is Jesus ministering in a synagogue, complement each other.

Remember that in Jesus' first synagogue account, now you'll have to think back, this was a long ways back in the book of Roof, this was in Luke chapter 4 and verses 16 to 19, we find that Jesus begins his ministry there in the synagogue of Nazareth.

Verses 16 to 19, Luke 4, chapter 4, and he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read, and the roll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

He unrolled the roll and found the place where it was written. This is from Isaiah 61, 1, and the first part of verse 2. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

[26 : 49] He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

So back in the first synagogue setting, Jesus is telling them who he is and why he's here. He's quoting messianic prophecy and says this day this is fulfilled in your ears.

And Jesus begins his ministry as the ministry of the Messiah. The things that he's listed here are some of the things that he's doing to show that he is indeed the Messiah.

And between Luke 4 and Luke 13 we have words that connect those two Psalms. We have the idea of being bound. We have the idea of captivity.

We have the idea of oppression. In Luke 4 Jesus is to free the captive. He's to free the oppressed.

In Luke 13 the woman had a disabling spirit and he freed her from her disability.

[28 : 05] The woman had been bound by Satan for 18 years and she was loosed from the bonds of her bondage on that Sabbath day. This is I think what Luke is getting at.

Jesus is doing here in Luke 13 exactly what he stated as his mission in Luke 4 which was quoted from Isaiah 61.

in Luke 4 Jesus claimed to come to do the work that the Messiah would come to do. In Luke 13 Luke is showing how Jesus was doing the very work he declared at the very beginning that he would be doing.

Therefore Jesus is proving that he indeed is the Messiah who's come to bring the kingdom of God. He is indeed who he said he was.

He's just proved it. I said I would come and I would prove my messianic office by accomplishing these works.

[29 : 17] And of course we've seen him do these things over the years. We've seen him heal many people. He has released other people who were oppressed by demons. He's done this through the

years. But here we have a situation where people are thinking maybe he's not the Messiah. And the religious leaders were definitely saying he's not the Messiah. And Jesus now holds it right in front of their face and says I'm doing the works I said I would do. I'm doing the works Isaiah prophesied that I would do. Pointing out that he indeed was the Messiah. God. And so then we get to verses 18 to 21. And I said he said therefore and he's pointing to how he is completing that mission and where that mission is going. He's illustrating that his mission will be completed. In Luke 13 18 to 21 he said therefore what is the kingdom of God like and to what shall I compare it? It's 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 and again he said to what shall I like shall I compare the kingdom of God? [30 : 37] It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in a meal in three measures of flour. Sorry the King James just keeps coming out. I can't stop it. And again he said to what shall I compare the kingdom of God is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until it was all leavened. So here he throws these illustrations out. Notice that the parables of the mustard seed and leaven are connected with the woman who is bound by the words Jesus said he said therefore. He healed this woman in this manner in this place for a reason. And as we have already said it shows that he is accomplishing his mission. And now he will tell us the future of the kingdom of God. We read of the mustard seed. At that time the mustard seed was the smallest seed that they would plant. A millimeter or two. If you've seen a mustard seed or a carrot seed they're all about the same size. Very very small. And it's not unusual that seeds were small. [31 : 47] And I think one of the things you need to get out of your mind is what you think of as a mustard plant in the United States. We had mustard plant that grow in our fields tremendously and it would get sometimes six, seven, eight feet high. But it would just be weed. It was unsubstantial. You'd watch the red-winged blackbirds fly around and they'd land on the mustard plant and it would bend halfway over. That's not the mustard plant that Jesus is speaking of here. At that time the mustard plant that's in that area, the seed would be very very small but you put it in the garden and it would grow quickly and it would grow from that small seed into a large bush or small tree. The mustard seed, the mustard plants I grew up around, barely could a bird sit on the plant. But the mustard plants that Jesus is talking about were bushes or trees. Think of your lilac bush or something substantial like that. A solid, firm bush. Birds not only could land on it, they could build nests in it. [33 : 02] And that idea of Jesus mentioning that birds build a nest points back to Ezekiel 17, 23, On the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bear branches and produce fruit and become a noble cedar and under it will dwell every kind of bird in the shade of its branches. Birds of every sort will nest. Not only there but in two other places in the Old Testament. It speaks of birds and trees and each of these places pointing to the fact that this great bush that God will build, the birds of the air will come and nest in it. And in those situations it's always pointing to the idea of those outside of Israel coming in to nest in this tree. And Jesus is saying not only I am Messiah, he's saying that the kingdom of God has come. And it is large enough to welcome people from all other nations. Christians. And since Luke was a Gentile and he was writing to a Greek man, this is good news. As Luke writes this, he's pointing out, and this is the only gospel that this account is in. As he's pointing this out, he's encouraging the Gentiles that, yes, Jesus is the Messiah. [34 : 27] Yes, he's come to bring his kingdom. And he's building his kingdom and his kingdom will become large enough. Though it starts so small and insignificant, in Nazareth, as Jesus proclaimed he was the Messiah, they tried to push him off a cliff. No one would believe. By this point, there are many believing. When he dies, probably a hundred or so are true followers of Christ. That's just a number out of the air. But over time, the number would grow. More and more would come to know the Lord.

And eventually, it wouldn't be just Israel, but Jesus welcomes people from all areas of the earth. And then he goes on to the parable of the leaven.

And again, speaks about this little thing, yeast. It has a leavening effect on all that touches, makes bread rise.

[35 : 30] Jesus, using a very large amount of flour in this illustration, 50 to 60 pounds of flour, says you take just a little bit of leaven and put it in that 50 to 60 pounds of flour and you'll have enough to feed 150 to 200 people.

When Jesus started his ministry and declared his mission, the kingdom of God, as I mentioned, was very small. But Jesus has continued his ministry. He's delivered many.

Some have followed. We've seen Jesus continue his ministry with the freeing of this woman bound by Satan. And this parable of the leaven points to the fact that Jesus will complete his ministry to its fullest extent.

A great amount of people will be made part of the kingdom of God. Now, I don't believe he's saying here that everyone will be saved. There are a lot of people who won't be saved, says at the end times, the love of many will grow cold and there will be a time of apostasy before the Lord comes back.

But the kingdom of God will grow and it will go into every corner. The kingdom of God is large enough to welcome others from other nations.

[36 : 47] And the gospel will have its effects to the ends of the earth. Revelation 5, 9, and they sang a new song saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

So why should all this matter to us? It's always been God's plan that the whole world would be able to be part of his kingdom.

kingdom. And that's good news for us. It's good news for any that don't know Christ. You share the gospel in hope. If you're here today without Christ, there is hope.

Christ has provided salvation for all who will come to him. Come to him. Why should it matter to us? Well, regardless of the opposition, God will build his kingdom. kingdom. This past week or a couple weeks, 26 Christians have died in Nigeria for their faith.

[37 : 57] The church of God grows in Nigeria and all over the world. And so if Jesus is building his kingdom, if he is who he says he is, and the gospel is large enough for the whole world, and it will make its way through hearts into every part of the world, we should also remember that we've been commissioned to make disciples for the kingdom.

Matthew 28, 18 to 20, and Jesus came and said to them, all authority in heaven on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. It didn't look like Jesus' ministry would amount to much.

When it's done, it will cover the world. Let's go. We go with the gospel, with the assurance that he's going to build his kingdom.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you for this situation. Thank you, Father, for the work that you've done in this woman. Encouraging because it shows us your faithfulness to your mission.

[39 : 27] Thank you that you carry out your work in our hearts and lives, even as we've sung today of your faithfulness. Lord, help us to be people who rejoice. But Lord, at the same time, there's a whole world out there that needs to hear.

And I pray that you would be with us, that we would be faithful to go, faithful to pray. And I pray that you would grow your kingdom and be glorified in it, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.