

El Roi – the God who sees me

2020-10-07 Bible study

By Major Deborah

Read Luke 13: 10-17 “Jesus heals the bent-over woman”

The main point of this story is that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

In their eagerness to prepare for a coming Messiah, Jewish religious leaders had overstepped their boundaries. God had said to keep the Sabbath day holy. Why?

1. In Exodus, because _____ (20:8)
2. In Deuteronomy, because _____ (5:15)

God had given the parameters.

1. Do not work

God adds very few other details.

But the religious leaders had tightened things up. They were so zealous of God’s actual laws that they added very detailed explanations, by-laws, and sub-sections. But by adding these ‘fences’ to ‘protect’ God’s laws, they were adding ‘fences’ that kept anyone from being able to obey them. For example, if Jeremiah (Jeremiah 17:21) warns the people not to carry a load on the Sabbath, the religious leaders refined this to not carrying or wearing anything beyond your basic clothing; in other words, you must not even wear a brooch.

The leaders DID want to have a holy people, prepared to meet God’s Chosen One. But they went about it all wrong. Sabbath was no longer a day of rest and recreation, worship and family and feasting. It was a pain!

Jesus ‘worked’ on the Sabbath day by healing this woman.

But rather than rejoice at her new freedom, the synagogue ruler is furious at being upstaged by this nobody-rabbi.

As a second way to look at this story, let's continue our "El Roi - the God who sees me" studies.

God saw Hagar, who was 'only' a runaway slave, and He cared for her and gave her hope. God saw David, the youngest and 'least important' in his family; God saw what He was looking for in the heart of David. Jesus SAW the woman who anointed him with oil and tears, and then dried His feet with her hair. He saw not 'a sinful woman' who did not belong in a righteous man's home, but a woman, forgiven of her sins, who made an offering of thanksgiving by her actions. And today, we look at a story told only in Luke's gospel, of Jesus' compassion toward the woman nobody else 'saw'.

"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. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. 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." ((13:10 - 13) (my emphasis)

The unnamed woman moves from bondage to freedom - what bound her? Jesus says that the spirit which had kept her so crippled is Satan.

Who else is "bound" in this story? See v 14.

What They Saw

What the woman saw, for years and years, was the ground and feet - not the stars in the evening or a rainbow or a fluttering butterfly. She was forced to look down - and because she was bent over, others were forced to "look down" on her, too. I like to think that when she was healed, the first sight she saw was Jesus' smile.

What Jesus saw was 'a daughter of Abraham, bound by Satan'. Being a daughter of Abraham meant she BELONGED. She was part of the

family, even though she may not have felt like it. Jesus SAW a woman doubled over in pain, and He reached out to her.

What the synagogue ruler saw was a man 'working' on the Sabbath, breaking the RULES. (professional jealousy - this rabbi steals all his thunder!) He didn't even notice the woman who had suffered for so long.

What do YOU see?

Do we notice the PERSON? That homeless man, that oddly-dressed shouting woman, that person with a visible handicap, someone from a visible minority, someone 'not like you'? Or do you just see someone who doesn't belong anywhere, someone who makes you feel uncomfortable?

We need to have eyes like Jesus, like "El Roi, the God who sees me".

It's such a comfort to be seen, and to be known. We know that God SEES us. We can pass on that kind of comfort to someone this week.



Surely You meant
when You lifted her up

Long ago
To your praise,
Compassionate One,
not one woman only
but all women bent
by unbending ways.
(By Miriam Therese Winter)

In a world where so many, men as well as women, are constrained by all kinds of rules, and all kinds of rulers, and even worse, by evil spirits and Satan, let us have eyes to see the value of each human being, made in the image of God.