

Three Reasons Why Everyone Should Choose for Jesus!

Lk 13:10-17 & Lk 14:1-6 (text: Lk 13:10-17)

10 March 2019, Reformed Church of Wainuiomata 10:30 am
(Sermon put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)

Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

The world thinks very little of Jesus Christ!

They abuse His Name – use it as a swear word! Some even curse Him; drag His Name through the mud!

The other day, when I Googled to see what rock stars have done with the Name of our Lord Jesus, I was shocked. The lyrics of their songs literally swear at Him – cursing Him in most vulgar terms!

That's what some unbelievers do!

By their actions & words they show that they have not (not yet) chosen for Jesus!

You & I?

Have you yet chosen for Jesus!? Have you yet received Him with all your heart? Is He your Saviour – your Lord? Or are you ashamed of Jesus? You know, even the churchgoer (professing Christian) can have sophisticated ways of pretending (fooling himself) that he/she loves Jesus!

Well, our text shows us an incident which happened just a few months before Jesus' crucifixion!¹

It was during this incident that the Jewish leaders (Pharisees & Scribes & Synagogue rulers) received from Jesus a final chance to choose for Him!

But, they “dropped the ball!” – they lost the opportunity (also cf. 14:1-6), and this even after Jesus had just told them that the tree that doesn't bear fruit will be cut down!²

How could they not believe in Him when the evidence is so clear?

You see, in the incident described by our text, Jesus gives them/us at least three absolutely good reasons why we should choose Him, i.e. because Jesus is...

- Most Compassionate
- Most Powerful
- Highest in Authority

Most Compassionate

Just picture this...

Jesus is busy teaching.

Then, suddenly... look, a woman!

Yes, the Greek text literally says, “Look, a woman!” which seems to indicate that, at the very stage that Jesus was teaching, she entered the synagogue! Her late arrival could be due to her illness!³

So, while Jesus is teaching, “Look, a woman...!”

Jesus sees her!

¹ Cf. Hendriksen, W. 2004. Exposition of the Gospel according to Luke (In: Hendriksen, W. ed. New testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Book House. p.699).

² Cf. Lk 13:9

³ Cf. Hendriksen, W. 2004. Exposition of the Gospel according to Luke (In: Hendriksen, W. ed. New testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Book House. p.699).

She's doubly disadvantaged: 1) she's a woman in a male-favoured culture, & 2) she's sick/impaired.

She is double bent – cannot straighten up at all! She shuffles – walks slowly!

Most likely, all the bones in her spine have fused stiffly together.⁴

What's more, such deformity comes not without pain!

Then, when she walks, she cannot see far in front of her! So, she's not what the crown of God's creation should be! No, with her head bowed down, her status is reduced to almost that of an animal with head hanging low! After all, is it not man's honour above the beasts *that God made him to walk erect!*?⁵

But there's more: she's been like this already for eighteen years, which means, in the eyes of her doctors, there's no chance of her ever being healed!⁶

Well, Jesus feels great compassion for her! And, look, in this, is He not the same as His Father who is *compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness...!*?⁷

Now, don't be mistaken, Jesus is fully aware of the risks! He knew what the religious leaders are thinking! He knew their man-made rules & traditions. They would not at all like it if He interrupted His preaching to help this woman! He knows they will hate Him for what He is about to do. He also knows they will eventually kill Him for that!

But *so great* is His compassion for this woman in rejection & pain – yes, so much is His heart going out to her – that He instantly stops His teaching; boldly calls her forward, touches her, and heals her!

Yes, *she* came to Him to be *taught*, and to get food for her soul, but, without her prompting, most-compassionate Jesus gives her more – He heals also her body!

He uses the opportunity to make happy, restore, heal, and save!⁸

And the people in that synagogue?

Well, they rejoice! (v.17)! After all, is what they have just seen not a foretaste of heaven!?

So, what do we see?

Jesus is most compassionate!

Question: Jesus' *compassion*, when did it start – the minute this “poor” woman shuffled into the synagogue?

No!

You know when it started?

There in heaven, before the world began, when God Triune held His eternal council!

⁴ Cf. Hendriksen, W. 2004. Exposition of the Gospel according to Luke (In: Hendriksen, W. ed. New testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Book House. p.700).

⁵ Lovely point made by Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (pp. 1871–1872). Peabody: Hendrickson

⁶ “She had an infirmity, which an evil spirit, by divine permission, had brought upon her, which was such that she was *bowed together* by strong convulsions, and could *in no wise lift up herself*; and, having been so long thus, the disease was incurable; she could not stand erect, which is reckoned man's honour above the beasts.” Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (pp. 1871–1872). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁷ Cf. Ex 34:6 ***And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness...”*** (NIV84)

⁸ Well-said words of Hendriksen (ibid:700)

Yes, it was then – then in great *compassion* – that the Son said to His Father, “Father, I will go!” “I will go down to earth – yes, to that sin-drenched place, where My sin-marred loved-ones live!” “I will go into their world – yes, from the glory of heaven, I will humble Myself down to the point of being conceived by an ordinary woman; yes, My compassion for My loved-ones is driving Me to clothing Myself with a human body & soul, just like theirs, so that I can serve & save them!”⁹ “So, Father, *prepare for Me a body!*”¹⁰

Before the world began – that’s when Jesus already had compassion! That’s when it *started!*

But do you know when Jesus’ compassion *reached a climax?*

There where, on the cross *taking God’s wrath for your & my sins*, His compassion & love for you & me kept Him on that cross of shame, pain and God-forsakenness! He could easily have come off the cross, but His compassion kept Him there!

See when His compassion *started?* See when it *climaxed?*

See that His compassion for the woman of our text is but an illustration of His compassion for *all* His loved-ones – also you & me!!?

See the first reason why you/I and everyone should choose for Jesus!?

Compassion!

Here’s the second reason...

Most Powerful

This woman had a *physical* illness! Everyone could see it was physical, for she walked bent! She was *crooked!* Bible scholars even gave her illness a name – *spondylitis* (better still, *spondylosis*)¹¹ *deformans!*¹²

So, her illness was physical!

But you know what?

⁹ Remember Phil 2:5-8 *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

¹⁰ Cf. Heb 10:5-7 (especially v.5) *Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; ⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book’”* (referring to Ps 40:6-8).

¹¹ For Spondylosis deformans cf.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spondylosis_deformans “Spondylosis deformans is a disease of spine in humans and other vertebrates. It occurs when intervertebral discs begin to degenerate, leading to the formation of bony spurs or bridges around the disc and nearby spinal joints. Severe cases can result in pressure on the spinal nerves, causing neurological signs and symptoms. Other terms for the disease have included spondylitis, but this is incorrect because it implies that the condition is inflammatory in nature, like ankylosing spondylitis.

The condition is likely triggered by changes in the annulus fibrosus, the tough outer ring of the intervertebral disc. This disc degeneration causes osteophytes to grow in the area. The osteophytes develop bridges of connective tissue which become ossified, forming bone spurs. The pattern of osteophyte formation varies. The exact pathophysiology of the process is unclear.”

¹² Cf. Hendriksen, W. 2004. Exposition of the Gospel according to Luke (In: Hendriksen, W. ed. New testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Book House. p.699f.)

In our modern Western world, there's something you & I (and us Westerners) easily forget – which we don't realise (don't see), i.e. the reality that, ultimately, all physical deformities and illnesses originated with the author of evil – satan!

Look, is that not why v.11 says that this woman's illness – *physical* as it was – was *a sickness caused by a spirit* (NASB). The ESV says she “*had a disabling spirit*.”¹³

Of course, my brother & sister, it is hard to pinpoint the possibility of spiritual dimensions in certain situations, but that should not stop you & me from, alongside medicine, also using prayer; yes, the *physicality* of some illnesses shouldn't stop you & me from putting *spiritual* resources to good use!¹⁴

The other day, I read about the demonic powers once displayed in one of the high-security prisons in the USA: Inmates in this prison were fighting. But they were also involved in demonic activities. Some had tattoos which expressed their allegiance to the devil! Well, it is said that one of them – a man nicknamed “The meanest man in Texas” – was able to bounce back from the harshest blows with a night stick! *So unreal* was that spectacle that even unbelievers who witnessed these demonic activities confessed that what was happening was beyond normal explanation.¹⁵

Granted, these demonic activities are very different from a physical illness – like this woman's spondylosis deformans – but they nevertheless show how real spiritual forces can be active in the lives of people!

So, let no one underestimate prayer as a spiritual weapon against even physical illnesses! It was CS Lewis who once reminded that there are two errors which the devils love to the same measure: 1) that some people have great faith in them; and 2) that some other people don't believe in their existence.¹⁶

Well, You & I may find it hard to see the devil behind physical illnesses, but Jesus clearly saw him!

Was that not why Jesus came in the first place? To save us from satan's clutches!?

This woman was shackled by her *physical* illness! But satan's presence in her condition was not to be denied!

Jesus knew this. That's why He now calls her, touches her, and deliberately uses the following words (v. 12) “*Woman, you are set free from your infirmity!*” (Not just, “*Woman you are healed...*” No, “*Woman, you are set free...*”¹⁷ – no command; no just a fact: “*you are set free,*” set free from bondage to the one who ultimately is the cause of all illness & evil)!

¹³ Emphasis by underscoring mine.

Here's the Greek text: καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ πνεῦμα ἔχουσα ἀσθενείας... (Literally, “And look, a woman having a spirit of weakness/incapacity/limitation...”)

¹⁴ Cf. e.g. J s 5:14-18 *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.*

¹⁵ Bock (ibid)

¹⁶ For more on this cf. CS Lewis' The Screwtape Letters (apud Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke](#) (pp. 372–377). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House).

¹⁷ ἀπολέλυσαι a Perfect Passive Indicative 2nd Person Singular of ἀπολύω: to release from control, to set free (highly generic meaning applicable to a wide variety of circumstances, including confinement, political domination, sin, sickness)—‘to release, to set free’ (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 486). New York: United Bible Societies).

My brother & sister, what's the significance of what Jesus has done here?

Well, firstly, the significance of what Jesus has done here is great, because it shows the enormous measure of power of Jesus Christ, i.e. to heal someone so severely disabled; and to heal her instantly! See? His power is not so weak and doubtful that it takes days or months for this woman to be healed! No, *instantly* His power is effective!

So, what do we see?

Well, we see that Someone with such power really must come from God!

Yes, on the one hand, the purpose of this miracle is to authenticate/prove Jesus spoken message as a message which comes from God! It's really saying, "People, believe this Man's message, for see, He is from God!"¹⁸

But look, here's the second significance of what Jesus has done – i.e. that He has clearly & openly proved that He is successful over the author of evil; yes, over the devil; that Jesus is successfully doing what He came to do; that He *has* the power over the devil to heal and set free from the devil's bondage!

So, on this Sabbath, Jesus has clearly demonstrated His power over satan!

But look, a few months later, He was going to demonstrate it even more powerfully; yes, when He would show that death cannot keep Him dead; that He would rise from the dead! How comforting! How encouraging!

My brother & sister, whether the challenge is that of being bent over and brought low (like this woman), or whether it is that you/I are *brought low* by alcohol, drugs, sex, he/she who receives Jesus with all his/her heart and lives on God's terms and for His glory, such person *will* find deliverance!

After all, does not Ps 146:8 say, "...*The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous*"?¹⁹

Well, that was the second reason why one should choose for Jesus.

Here's the third reason...

Highest Authority

The synagogue ruler²⁰ is not happy! In fact, he's indignant – exceedingly angry!²¹ Jesus did not stick to their "good" custom of just preaching! Besides, He even *worked* on the Sabbath. (You see, in this ruler's mind, healing someone means that you're providing some *service*, and service is *work* – i.e. according to their man-made traditions).

¹⁸ Remember Jn 20:30-31 (especially v.31), **Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.** (Emphasis mine).

¹⁹ Emphasis mine

²⁰ **ἀρχισυνάγωγος, ου m:** one who is the head of and who directs the affairs of a synagogue—'president of a synagogue, leader of a synagogue' (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, pp. 543–544). New York: United Bible Societies).

²¹ **ἀγανακτῶν,** Present Active Participle Masculine Singular Nominative of **ἀγανακτέω:** (derivative of ἀγανάκτησις 'indignation,' 88.186) to be indignant against what is judged to be wrong—'to be indignant, to be angry with.' καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ δέκα ἤρξαντο ἀγανακτεῖν περὶ Ἰακώβου καὶ Ἰωάννου 'and when the ten heard this, they began to be indignant with James and John' Mk 10:41 (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 761). New York: United Bible Societies).

You see, according to these traditions, the rule was that you were not allowed to walk more than 1km on the Sabbath.²² If you walk further, well, then you've transgressed the Sabbath commandment!

Yet, if you had an ox in your stable, then their man-made laws allowed for you to untie your ox from the stable and walk him to the water²³ – even if the distance was more than 1km!

Of course, these were petty, legalistic *man-made* rules/laws, which the ancient Jews made in an effort to prevent people from transgressing the *God-made* laws.

But *Jesus* is the Law-Giver! His wrath is against heartless man-imposed legalism!

So, He heals this woman – even in the middle of the worship service, and right on the Sabbath!

So, the synagogue ruler is angry! But he's too scared to correct Jesus directly, so, he rebuked the congregation. “You can come on any other day with your illnesses, but not on the Sabbath!” (v.14).

What was Jesus' reaction? Did He say, “I'm so sorry, I didn't know – next time I'll remember not to overstep your Sabbath rules”?

No! He straightaway corrects this serious wrong!

So, says He, “Hypocrites!” Yes, Jesus uses the plural, for He's addressing *all* hypocritical religious leaders present – not just that Synagogue ruler!

“Hypocrites, you're inconsistent! By your own laws, you allow for your ox to be untied from its stable on the Sabbath and even be walked to the water! But here is a human being – in fact, a daughter of Abraham – one like you! She's worth way more than a beast! And she's not just tied to a *stable* like an ox; no, she's been bound by satan for as long as 18 years! If you give such grace to an animal, why don't you give it to a daughter of Abraham – to the people of God? You Hypocrites!”

Wow!

All Jesus' critics were now put to shame!²⁴ Their heads are hanging low – their faces white as sheets (or was it red?! Their heads hang low! Not unto repentance, though! They're so angry & humiliated that they could kill Jesus, which they already wanted to do at the beginning of His ministry!²⁵

Is Jesus scared?

No, He already knew they're going to kill Him! Is that not what He came for – to be the “Lamb” slaughtered for His people's sins?

Amazing that their eyes were so blind that they could not grasp.

Could they not see that, if Jesus had the authority to heal (which He has just so powerfully proved), and that if God granted Him that authority *on the Sabbath* by giving Him power to perform this healing, then, could they not see what *that* says about Jesus?

Could they not see that the source of Jesus' miraculous power cannot be satan, because satan was responsible for the woman's illness?²⁶ Could they not see that this healing must therefore be from God!?

²² Cf. Bock (ibid) who quotes the limit described by the Qumran texts, which was a distance no longer than 2,000 cubits, i.e. 3,000 feet, which is roughly 1 kilometre.

²³ Cf. e.g. in the Mishnah under Shabbat 5:1-4; 15:1-2

²⁴ **κατασχύνοντο** Imperfect Indicative Passive 3rd Person Plural of **κατασχύνω**: to cause someone to be much ashamed—'to humiliate, to disgrace, to put to shame.' τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς ἵνα κατασχύνῃ τοὺς σοφοὺς 'God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense in order to put wise men to shame' 1 Cor 1:27 (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 309). New York: United Bible Societies).

²⁵ Cf. Lk 4:16-30 “Jesus' Rejection at Nazareth”

²⁶ Cf. Lk 11:14-23 for how they once blamed Him that He did His healings through the power of the devil.

Yet, it's so clear! God was at work through Jesus!

And what does that say about Jesus?

Well, does it not say that Jesus holds the highest authority – that He is indeed Lord of the Sabbath, as He once told them!? ²⁷

The religious leaders missed it!

And the sad reality is: this might well have been their last chance to choose for Jesus (for, according to Luke's Gospel, this was the last miracle He performed before their eyes).

Scary thought: is there anyone here, in this auditorium, who has not yet, with all his/her heart, chosen for Jesus? Anyone who has not yet received Jesus as his/her Saviour and Lord?

Is there anyone here who is ashamed of Jesus; who thinks little of Jesus?

Look, our passage has just shown us at least three reasons why every human being – also you & I – should choose for Jesus (should receive Him as our Saviour and Lord). Here they are...

- Most Compassionate
- Most Powerful
- Highest Authority

How do you answer?

AMEN (2,427 words excluding footnotes)

²⁷ Cf. Lk 6:1-5 (especially v.5), *On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.* ² *But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"* ³ *And Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?"* ⁵ *And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."* (Emphasis mine).