

Weaving the Word

Straighten Up

Part 62 – January 15, 2017

Welcome to where we realign our faith according to Christ.

Does your faith pull people in, or push ‘em away?



If you were at Arktoberfest, you might have seen the bull-horn protestors. They stood on the sidewalk and proclaimed condemnation.

I tried to reason with them regarding our purpose for reaching out to our community and inviting ‘em in. But, they just bull-horned judgements against my lukewarm faith.

I did point out that Jesus received similar treatment, when He ate at the banquet with tax collectors and harlots. *No sale.* **Faith that attracts like Jesus, will reach out and pull.**

So, are those around you being pulled *toward* your faith, or *pushed away*?



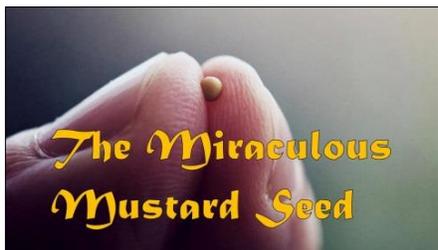
We’ve been weaving together Jesus’ very big day, in Capernaum; He’s just wrapped up His parables, and it’s sunset; and, He suddenly moves on from there. (Mt 13:53; Mk 4:35)

But, *why wait till sunset to leave?*

In order to find it, we need to piece in a missing story that I only recently found floating around, and connected.

The Gospels contain two types of stories: “anchors” that give specific timeline information, and “floaters” that must be anchored with clues in the story.

Today’s story is a classic floater:



On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled ... **[spoiler alert: Jesus heals her]** – Luke 13:10-11a NIV



Which Sabbath? Which synagogue? Luke doesn’t say.

But, he does go on to say how this triggers a religious attack that prompts Jesus to tell the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Hidden Yeast.



Thanks to Matthew, we know Jesus told ‘em from a boat, off the shore of Capernaum, before sunset on this very big day. (Mt 13:1-2, 31-36) And, once anchored, Luke’s story reveals previously unseen insights into why the religious rulers instantly declare Jesus to be in cahoots with the devil (when He heals the blind, deaf, mute, man). (Mk 3:22) And, why *He* says they load people down, and won’t lift a finger to help. (Lk 11:46)

And since Luke records this is a Sabbath, we know why Jesus had to wait until sunset to leave town. But, why didn’t He spend the night and go in the morning? You know He’s up to something.

On a **Sabbath** Jesus was **teaching** in one of the **synagogues**, [the one in *Capernaum*; that morning; and, having finished teaching, He’s ready to start healing ... but, He needs just the right person] and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was **bent over** [*sygkyptō*: doubled over; bowed together; two words: beside and bent; she was beside herself] **and could not straighten up at all**. [How does a doubled-over woman stand out in a mob? Jesus is looking very carefully] When Jesus saw her, **he called her forward** [Imagine her effort; doubled over. Shuffle, shuffle. “Excuse me.” “Pardon me.” Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle. Doesn’t it seem a bit *insensitive* that Jesus doesn’t go to her? You just know He’s up to something!] and said to her, “Woman, you are **set free** [*apolyō*: loosed; released] from your infirmity.” Then **he put his hands on her**, [uh-oh, the legalistic religious rulers will classify *that* as a Sabbath violation; *no working with your hands!*] and immediately she **straightened up** and **praised God**. Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, **the synagogue ruler said to the people**, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.” [Why didn’t he address *Jesus*? Once woven in, we can see that this comes *after* that Sabbath showdown between Jesus and the rulers – which Jesus won; (Mk 3:1-6) so, the demand is now leveled directly at the people, who would’ve been *very intimidated ... until*] The Lord answered him, “**You hypocrites!** [This ruler is speaking on behalf of all the leaders Jesus will be having brunch with] Doesn’t each of you on the **Sabbath** untie his **ox or donkey** from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then **should not** this woman, [no offense, *Ma’am* (but, the Messiah *does* come to unbind us and lead us to *Living Water*)] a **daughter of Abraham**, [i.e. a daughter of the “*Father of a multitude*” ... *this multitude*] whom **Satan** [*satanas*: adversary; one who opposes] has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free **on the Sabbath day** from what bound her?” [And, the crowd went wild! *Brilliant!* By calling *her* forward, everyone can see that this infirmity causes never-ceasing physical effort. This worn-down Jewish woman hasn’t had a Sabbath for 18 years! Jesus isn’t *violating* the Day of Rest; He’s *enforcing* it! *And*, by proving Himself as the Messiah, she can also rest from the affliction of not knowing Jesus as Savior and Lord, whose yoke is easy and burden is light! (Mt 6:30) It’s not only *okay* on this day, it’s *the most wholly appropriate!* And, any adversary to oppose it, is either blind, naïve, or in league with Satan. (And, *that’s why the crowd went wild!*)] When he said this, all his **opponents** [*antikeimai*: adversaries; those who oppose] were **humiliated**, [*kataischynō*: dishonored; disgraced; put to shame] but the people were **delighted** with **all the wonderful things he was doing**. – Luke 13:10-17 NIV



Jesus agenda is to present God's mercy and power in the face of those whose supposed superior faith suppresses God's goodness and plays right into the enemy's hands.

And, it's the most anger-making sin you can sin against Jesus.

Does *your* faith imply the hope of rest, or further burden?

Jesus helps the bowed-down woman straighten up; the synagogue ruler orders the *crowd* to bow down and straighten up, and that's when the Lamb bares His Lion's fangs, and commands the *callous religious* to straighten up!

[Jesus later says] "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces." – Matthew 23:12-13a NIV

There's a hands-on way to help others straighten up, that **looks out with compassion, calls out with hope of freedom**, and **speaks out and touches with loving and caring correction and healing**.

Jesus next heals the demon-possessed, blind, deaf, mute, man.

All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." ["He's the devil-one; not us!"] – Matthew 12:23-24 NIV

And, now we know who their spokesman is. The synagogue ruler. And, he's quite likely the Pharisee who invites Jesus, and the other religious rulers, to his house for brunch (Lk 11:37) wherein, Jesus calls up the imagery of the bent-over daughter, and says:

... woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift **one finger** to help them. – Luke 11:46b NIV



When you straighten others up, do you tend to load 'em down? Know what the one finger is, that they each had, that had the power to enlighten minds and lighten their loads?

It's the Jewish scripture pointer, called a yad (hand), which they all used to keep from touching the scrolls.



This one is a couple hundred years older than *Jesus*.

Used correctly, it points people to truth.

And, it may likely be exactly what Jesus is referring to.

[Remember how He says to them, after the devil accusation:] If I drive out demons by **the finger of God**, then the kingdom of God has come to you. – Luke 11:20 NIV

In Jesus' hand, the yad was the very finger of God.

And, He used it skillfully to ease burdens and lighten loads.

Don't point a religious finger at those who offend.

Lift your finger, give 'em a yad, point 'em to God, and lighten their load.

Why do you think Jesus refers to the woman as a "daughter of Abraham"?

Well, He *knows* that one of the rulers is having a personal crisis, on this very big day. Might be the spokesman. Might not. But, his 12-year-old daughter is within 24 hours of death.

And yet, he's too bound by religious rules, and his fears of the condemnation of his peers, to bring her to Jesus to be healed.

Until safely after sunset.

Except, Jesus will be *gone* ... along with this ruler's only *hope*.

But, don't worry. After a horrifying high-seas adventure, (Mk 4:41) and a terrifying graveyard confrontation with a couple thousand demons, (Mk 5:13) Jesus will be back bright and early. (Mk 5:21)

'Cause ... He's always up to something.



And, when Jairus learns that Jesus returns to Capernaum, he comes running, and throws himself at Jesus' feet in front of his peers, and begs Him to come and touch and heal his daughter. (Mk 5:22-23)

Jesus has made His point; and, **Jairus couldn't care less about the self-righteous rules of his callous religious colleagues. *This is his daughter!***

And, he now comprehends how Jesus felt, the day before, when, on the Sabbath, He healed the daughter of the Father of a multitude.

Amazing how judgmental we can be ... until it's *our* child.

Amazing how judgmental we can be ... until it's *our* marriage.

Amazing how judgmental we can be ... until it's *our* crisis.

So, are those around you being pulled in, or pushed away?