



Wednesday Prayer

11th Sunday after Pentecost – To be Set Free

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. Luke 13:10-13

Human liberation. To be set free. Here, we learn of a woman who was unable to physically stand tall for 18 years, but we don't know of her spiritual or emotional well-being during all this time. It's hard to imagine staying faithful, not getting cynical, angry, or beaten down after so many years. After Jesus laid his hands on her and she's able to stand up straight, she **immediately** begins praising God. Was her faith intact all this time? If we imagine her place in society, as a woman, most likely invisible or even outcast, this liberation is remarkable.

We are always left to consider the longer term outcomes of these Biblical stories, and to think about how they might apply to present times. For those liberated from sexual exploitation and trafficking, the path to healing is long. As described by survivors and social service professionals in www.thelifestory.org,

"I was in this subculture, I just never thought that I would be normal. I never thought that I would be out of the life. Never."

"You start to have conversations and you plant seeds, that you hope someday they're gonna think 'I am more than a transaction.'"

"I have faith that somehow this is gonna work out. We should always stand tall and know that we are still standing within the Lord's eyes."

In addition to the physical and emotional wounds, we as a Church have the opportunity to mindfully help in healing spiritual wounds. May we journey on this path of learning together.

God of healing, empower us to be your presence to those who have faced trauma or have felt outcast. Restore individuals and communities to be set free and stand tall. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.