

RECONCILIATION PRAYER SERVICE

INTRODUCTION: We come before our loving God, aware of our failings and of our need for wholeness. Trusting in God's desire to heal us, we pray.

READING: from Luke 13: 11-17

Jesus was teaching in one of the meeting places on the Sabbath. There was a woman present, so twisted and bent over with arthritis that she couldn't even look up. She had been afflicted with this for eighteen years. When Jesus saw her, he called her over. "Woman, you're free!" He laid hands on her and suddenly she was standing straight and tall, giving glory to God.



The meeting place president, furious because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the congregation, "Six days have been defined as work days. Come on one of the six if you want to be healed, but not on the seventh, the Sabbath."

But Jesus shot back, "You frauds! Each Sabbath every one of you regularly unties your cow or donkey from its stall, leads it out for water, and thinks nothing of it. So why isn't it all right for me to untie this daughter of Abraham and lead her from the stall where Satan has had her tied these eighteen years?"

When he put it that way, his critics were left looking quite silly and red-faced. The congregation was delighted and cheered him on.

(The Message)

REFLECTION: This woman had a serious disability, bent over, unable to see much around her. Move to compassion, Jesus is moved to compassion and healed her. Focus on the woman's faith. She is weighed down with his disability, yet comes to the synagogue presumably to praise God. Whether bent or straight, her intent is to praise God. Whether in adversity or health, her intent is to praise God.

The timing of the healing is important, for Luke tells his gospel with a sense of urgency, that now is the time of salvation. The present moment is the time to accept God's liberation. That time is now, for the woman and for us. While there is any brokenness in the community, to that extent, the entire people are in need of healing. While there is any brokenness in my heart, we are all in need of healing and forgiveness.

We may not be bent over as the woman in the gospel; nonetheless, we may be bent over by worries about the future, or painful memories of the past. We may be bent over by our sense of failing to love others, by our lack of forgiveness to those who hurt us, by our jealousy over

