

For a Mind at Peace

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and recognizing our need for God's mercy to heal our twisted minds and spirits.

Scripture: Luke 13:10, Luke 14:11, Luke 18:9, Romans 7:18, 1 John 1:8

Topics: "Spiritual Healing", "Humility Before God"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the healing power of Jesus, as seen in the miraculous healing of a woman with a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years. While the woman's physical healing was immediate, there was another man in the synagogue with a twisted mind, symbolizing the bondage of self-righteousness and judgment. The sermon delves into the characteristics of a twisted mind - self-centeredness, reluctance to look up to God, and a habit of looking down on others. It emphasizes the importance of humbling oneself before God, acknowledging one's sinfulness, and seeking His mercy for continuous healing and transformation.

Transcript

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Then the Lord, answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him. (Luke 13:10-17)

There were at least two people in the synagogue that day who were in bondage.

First, there was this woman who for eighteen years was shuffling through life bent over. The only way she could look up was to twist her neck sideways.

For Jesus, she was an easy cure.

"Woman you are freed from your infirmity. Come here."

He laid his hands on her.

Heat flowed through her body.

She straightened up.

And in a matter of minutes she shouted praises to God with her head held high for the first time in eighteen years.

The other person in bondage in that synagogue was not so easily healed - for this man it wasn't his body, it was his mind. In fact, we don't know if he ever was healed.

Who knows how long he had been walking around with his mind bent over - twisted just like that woman's back.

He couldn't look up either.

He didn't know what it was to look up.

And the sad thing about it was this poor guy wasn't even aware his mind was twisted.

He stood up there in the synagogue shouting orders - and people obeyed.

He stuck out his chest and figured he was on top of the world.

He was on top of his world.

His own narrow, shrunken world of synagogue rules

and synagogue tradition.

But his mind was so twisted that it was always looking down.

Down on people.

Down on this pitiful woman.

And now, suddenly, down in fury at this young Galilean who had the audacity to break the rules by healing this woman on the Sabbath.

"There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days to be healed and not on the Sabbath!"

Wouldn't it have been great if Jesus had been able to heal this man of his twisted mind just as he had healed the woman of her twisted body? But Jesus was dealing with something here that can't be healed until there is a change of heart.

When your body is twisted, you know it.

You can feel it

If you pick up that box of books in the wrong way, and suddenly something seizes up in your back, all you can do is crawl over to the couch and sit - you know you're in trouble.

But when your mind is twisted, more often than not, you don't even realize it

- the ruler of the synagogue did not know his mind was twisted.

Other people could see it. He couldn't .

And it is possible that the very things we despise in that man are present in us.

What are the marks of a twisted mind?

1. A twisted mind is bent in on itself. Hence it perceives itself as the center of the universe.

People and things have importance only as they relate to my pain or my well-being. So when someone says something or does something that takes the spotlight off me or reflects badly on me, I become indignant.

Who do they think they are?

What right do they have to invade my space?

The ruler of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus should heal someone "in my synagogue and on the Sabbath yet! Who does he think he is!"

Of course, it wasn't his synagogue - it was God's.

And this healing happening before his eyes was a sign of God's kingdom.

If that man's mind were not twisted, he'd be on his face in worship and adoration.

2. A twisted mind always has trouble looking up.

If I'm the highest authority in my life, what need is there for me to look up? Who do I answer to for what I do...

for the way I talk...

for the attitudes I hold?

I answer to me!

I decide what's right and what's wrong!

Of course, there are lots of us who claim to look up to God...

"Oh yes, I believe in God."

"Oh yes, I believe we're all going to give an account!"

But when it comes to actual living,
we're like the ruler of the synagogue.

We do what we want...

say what we want.

We haunt those roads of thought fantasy to our heart's content.

It never occurs to us that our minds are absolutely bare and open before the eyes of God.

3. Finally, a twisted mind habitually looks down - sees everything from its position as judge.

I'm up here looking down on all those hypocrites,

those half-baked Christians,

all those judgmental people.

What's the matter with them?

"God, I thank thee that I am not like those people!"

With a touch of his hand, Jesus can heal the woman's twisted back,

but when it comes to the twisted mind of the ruler of the synagogue , or you, or me...

we first have to see our need,

we have to be willing,

we have to co-operate.

Actually, it's a simple thing Jesus asks us to do.

If we do it, he will renew our minds, so that we will

think new thoughts,

see with new eyes,

hear with new ears.

Yes, he will heal our twisted minds here today, if we will learn the lesson from him which we love to apply to other people.

O, how they need it!

Without realizing how needy we are.

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others:
"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust,

adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

The tax collector was afraid to lift his eyes to heaven,

but his heart was looking up...

"God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

The Pharisee figured he had a claim on God.

God owed him.

"I'm not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers,
or even like that tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give
tithes of all I get. So don't forget Lord, on the basis of all
the good stuff I've done and all the evil I've avoided,
you owe me some blessings."

Are we any different than that man?

When a bad break comes our way and we shake our fist at heaven and say, "I don't deserve this!"

What are we saying?

God owes me something better.

God owes me!

Does he?

The tax collector's life was a mess.

He'd blown it in a thousand ways,

but he knew one thing the Pharisee didn't know.

He knew his only claim on God was God's mercy.

God doesn't owe me anything.

"God be merciful to me a sinner."

That prayer was answered - and always is answered.

Even after you're saved.

Even after you've received the Holy Spirit.

Even if you've followed Jesus for 50 years, it's still a valid prayer.

And if you're not sure you mean it, keep praying it until you do mean it.

"God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

The only righteousness we have is a gift from God.

Whatever heavenly treasure is in the earthen vessel of these bodies is from heaven not from us.

"In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing", says the apostle Paul. (Rom. 7:18)

"Every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 14:11)

She who humbles herself will be exalted...healed of a twisted mind. He who humbles himself will be exalted.....healed of a ingrown spirit.

To humble myself means that

I'm no longer the center of the universe: God is.

To humble myself means that

my heart begins to look up to the supreme authority of my life: the Heavenly Father.

To humble myself means that

I'm giving up my position of judge.

I'm not sitting on the bench anymore: God is.

And it is to him that I look for forgiveness

for help

for strength

for life.

So I cry out for the continuous healing of my mind which will surely come as I pray,

"God be merciful to me a sinner!"

One time many years ago when I spoke on this text, a man came up to me afterwards and said, "If you're saved, man, you can't pray that prayer. You're not a sinner anymore."

O yeah?

Certainly the blood of the Lamb was shed for me,

covers me,

protects me.

Certainly the Spirit of God gives me life and is changing me for the better. But as long as I'm in this body of flesh and blood, I have to keep facing the truth about myself ---

- I have a long way to go.

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins

and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8-9)

So until the Lord returns or until we leave this earth,

the safest,

most powerful

prayer for ourselves that we can ever pray is:

"God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/for-a-mind-at-peace/>

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