

Luke 13:10-17

"The Freedom of the Sabbath"

September 14, 2025

1. Intro

- a. As Christians living in a day of tolerance and cancel-culture, we have to be very careful about presenting to people a Jesus that the Bible simply DOES NOT present
 - i. The world around us really has no problem with a Jesus who is meek and mild...
 1. They really have no problem with a Jesus who just loves everyone as they are...
 2. For the most part, just about everyone, including many of the world's religions, are perfectly willing to accept a Jesus who was a good rabbi that just went around teaching good morals to live by
 - a. THAT Jesus is someone that EVERYONE can get behind
 - b. THAT Jesus is someone that EVERYONE ought to desire to imitate
 - c. And THAT Jesus would have NEVER been sent to the cross
 - i. Just think for a moment what the cross represented in the Roman Empire of the first century
 1. The cross was a form of execution reserved for the lowest of the low in that society
 2. Roman citizens were forbidden to be crucified
 - a. If you were a Roman citizen, and you committed some vile crime, you WOULD likely be executed
 - i. But it would be a quick and merciful death from the executioner's sword
 - ii. But for the non-Romans... those who committed the most atrocious of crimes... they were sent to the cross
 1. Well, first, they were beaten by the Roman soldiers
 - a. Because you don't want these criminals hanging on the cross with just a little bit of pain and discomfort
 - b. They need to be IN AGONY as they hang there
 2. And as they hung there, by the nails in their wrists, you didn't want them to die too quickly from suffocation...
 - a. So they put a long nail through the feet or the ankles so the criminal could lift themselves up and relieve some of the pressure on their lungs
 3. And of course, you don't want this to be done out in the backwoods somewhere where no one could see...
 - a. You want this to be a deterrent against future criminals...
 - b. You want this to be a warning to all who would seek to cause such trouble...
 4. So these crosses would be placed on roads that many travelers would travel on
 - a. And EVERYONE would see the shame and the horror of these awful criminals dying an awful death
 3. My friends, if Jesus was simply a meek and mild and quiet and humble carpenter from Nazareth, how did he end up on the cross??

- a. If Jesus simply taught everyone to love each other, just as we are, how did he end up getting sentenced to an execution that was reserved for the lowest of the low??
- b. If Jesus was simply a good Jewish rabbi, teaching the people how to live good moral lives, why was it that the Jewish religious leaders were constantly trying to kill him??
- ii. And this is why we must be careful to present to the world a BIBLICAL Jesus, not just a Jesus that appeases the masses
 - 1. You see, the BIBLICAL Jesus was indeed meek and mild toward the downtrodden, toward the oppressed, toward the sheep who had no shepherds...
 - a. But he was fiercely antagonistic against those shepherds who had ABANDONED their sheep
 - 2. The BIBLICAL Jesus did indeed love all sorts of sinners – he regularly ate and drank with tax collectors and prostitutes and drunkards...
 - a. But he had nothing but words of rebuke for those who were unwilling to admit to their sin of self-righteousness
 - 3. The BIBLICAL Jesus was indeed a good Rabbi who taught the people how to live a truly good and moral life
 - a. But he never once spoke ill words against the law of Moses
 - b. He never once taught the people that they no longer needed to follow the law of God
 - c. He never once said that people can live however they choose
 - i. Instead, Jesus held up the law of the Lord – the law of his Father – and he told the people...
 - 1. It does not matter ONE BIT if you live out this law perfectly, and your heart is still full of evil and wickedness
 - 2. It does not matter ONE BIT if you can quote the law backwards and forwards from memory, if in your heart you hate your neighbor
 - 3. It does not matter ONE BIT if you are in the synagogue on every Sabbath, you tithe a tenth of all that you have, you fast three days out of the week...
 - a. None of that matters ONE BIT if what your heart truly longs for is wealth and power and authority and recognition
 - d. If your HEART is not surrendered to God in love and humility and a JOYFUL willingness to submit to His rule in every area of your life...
 - i. Then you are a hypocrite
 - 1. And hypocrites have no place in the Kingdom of God
 - iii. My friends, THIS is why the religious leaders sought to have Jesus killed
 - iv. THIS is why they were constantly trying to trap him in his words
 - v. THIS is why they would eventually hand him over to Pontius Pilate to be crucified
 - 1. If Jesus had simply claimed to be the Son of God, they could have written him off as a crazy man
 - a. But instead, Jesus exposed their hypocrisy
 - i. And the Scriptures say that they literally gnashed their teeth at him because they hated him so much
 - 1. This was one of the reasons why Jesus came, wasn't it?

- a. We saw just a few weeks ago when Jesus himself said in Luke 12:51, *“Do you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division”*
- b. This division began in the households of the Jewish people...
 - i. When Jesus called them to either follow him to eternal life...
 - 1. Or follow the Scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees to death and destruction
- c. This division continued on after Jesus' ascension back into heaven...
 - i. As the disciples of Jesus went throughout the Roman Empire calling people to either say, “Jesus is Lord,” and enter into the Kingdom of the Father,
 - 1. Or they could continue to say “Caesar is Lord,” and the only kingdom they would ever know would be the Roman kingdom
- d. And this division continues still today, as we, THE CHURCH, choose to stand firmly upon the Word of God, while the world around us becomes increasingly AGAINST the Word of God
 - i. Like Jesus before us, we are to be meek and mild and humble and gentle...
 - 1. But we are ALSO to be firm and resolute about the Scriptures
 - ii. Like Jesus before us, we are to be loving and welcoming to sinners from all sorts of sinful lifestyles...
 - 1. But we are ALSO to call them to REPENT of their sins and turn to him to be their Savior
 - iii. Like Jesus before us, we are to be the model of good and holy and righteous living, setting THE example of godliness and purity and faithfulness...
 - 1. But we are ALSO to contend for the faith that has been once for all delivered to the saints
 - a. We are to expose the deeds of darkness
 - b. We are to call sin what it is
 - c. And we are to strive to cleanse the leaven of hypocrisy out of the church, for this is the household of God...
 - i. The very bride of Christ
- vi. This is how Jesus lived his life...
 - 1. And one of his most favorite ways to unravel the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of his day was to mess with all of their Sabbath rules
 - a. We've already seen this in Luke 6, verses 1-5, when Jesus lets his disciples pick the grains in the fields on one Sabbath day
 - i. And he made this stunning claim before the grumbling Pharisees...
 - 1. “The Son of Man is LORD of the Sabbath.”
 - b. We saw it again in the very next passage, as on another Sabbath, Jesus intentionally called a man with a withered hand to stand before him so all could see
 - i. Luke tells us that Jesus knew the thoughts of the Scribes and the Pharisees
 - 1. He KNEW that they were looking for a reason to accuse him
 - ii. So he INTENTIONALLY called this man to stand in front of them, and he healed him... on the Sabbath

1. And the religious leaders were filled with fury at what he had just done
- c. And now, in our passage for this morning, Jesus upends their ideas on what the Sabbath ought to be once again, starting in verse 10...

2. Luke 13:10-17

- a. *¹⁰Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability." ¹³And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. ¹⁴But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." ¹⁵Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? ¹⁶And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" ¹⁷As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.*

3. Well, the first thing we want to look at in this passage is the condition of this woman

- a. Luke tells us that this woman had been bent over for EIGHTEEN years, unable to stand up straight for all of those many years
 - i. Now, with all of our modern-day technology, we would likely diagnosis this woman as having some form of scoliosis, or maybe some sort of disease in her bones that would cause her to be stooped over
 1. But Luke gives us the ultimate cause of her condition in verse 11, as he tells us that it was caused by a disabling spirit
 - a. He makes this even more clear in verse 16 that this condition is straight from Satan himself
 2. What's interesting is that, in similar passages in other parts of the Gospels, Jesus heals the person from their disability, and he ALSO says to them, "Son (or daughter), your sins are forgiven"
 - a. But Jesus doesn't say anything about this woman's sins here in this passage
 - i. Which has led many commentators to say that she was likely a God-fearing woman
 1. Not sinless of course... but in this case, the fact that she was being affected by an unclean spirit was apparently NOT a direct consequence of her sin
 3. The Apostle Paul had a similar story, didn't he?
 - a. In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul speaks about this thorn in his flesh... a messenger of Satan sent to harass him
 - i. Now there are a bunch of different speculations about what this thorn might have been
 1. But a strong argument could be made that this thorn was a physical ailment that affected Paul's eyesight
 - ii. We know that when Paul first encountered Christ on the road to Damascus, the glory of Jesus blinded him so that he couldn't see
 1. After his conversion, a man named Ananias prayed for Paul, and he received his eyesight back again
 - a. But it appears that his eyesight was never the same after that incident

- iii. In the book of Galatians, which is believed by many to be the first of Paul's letters to the churches...
 - 1. Paul closes this letter by saying, "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand..."
 - a. Just a few years after his conversion, Paul has to write in large letters to be able to see what he is writing
 - b. And in most of his later letters, there is evidence that he had to dictate them for someone else to write
- iv. And so this physical disability very well could have been the thorn that Paul was given
 - 1. Which makes sense, because the thorn was given to him in direct connection with the REVELATIONS he had SEEN in heaven
 - a. But Paul makes a very important distinction in 2 Corinthians 12...
 - i. He says that this thorn, this messenger of Satan sent to harass him, was given to him IN ORDER TO KEEP HIM FROM becoming conceited
 - ii. Therefore, ultimately, it was given to Paul BY GOD, for his GOOD
 - 2. Just let that sink in, friends
 - a. Contrary to what is being taught in so many churches today, our physical ailments are not always rooted in our sin...
 - b. Our physical ailments are not always rooted in our lack of faith...
 - c. Sometimes, our physical ailments have been given to us BY GOD, in order to KEEP US FROM sinning
- ii. If you know that story of Joni Earekson Tada, you know that she has lived this principle out faithfully for many decades
 - 1. At the age of 17, Joni dove headfirst into the Chesapeake Bay, and ended up breaking her back when she struck a rock
 - a. For the past 59 years, she has lived as a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the shoulders down
 - i. She's lived through intense pain and discomfort
 - ii. She's lived through cancer multiple times
 - iii. And, in spite of dealing with seasons of anger and depression and sorrow, she has given great glory to God through all of it
 - 1. Joni had this to say in one of her books...
 - a. Most people wish they could erase suffering out of the dictionary. Today's culture of comfort and instant gratification has no patience for suffering - most people want to drug it, escape it, divorce it; do anything but live with it...
 - 2. But according to Joni...
 - a. Suffering is arguably God's choicest tool in shaping the character of Christ in us.
 - b. Suffering provides the gym equipment on which our faith can be exercised.

- c. And God uses the peaceful suffering of the saints to teach others about Himself
 - b. This was what Paul realized regarding the thorn in his flesh, as he finally came to see that the power of Christ is made perfect in our weakness
- 2. And this was what this poor woman had learned as well
 - a. As, for EIGHTEEN years, she had suffered at the hands of a disabling spirit, and yet still remained faithful to her God
 - i. But for THIS woman, everything was about to change, wasn't it?
 - 3. In the midst of his teaching in this synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus saw this woman, disabled... stooped over...
 - a. And he called her over to himself, and he freed her from ALL OF IT
- iii. This is the second thing we need to look at in this passage
 - 1. The first was the woman's condition
- 4. The second is the complete and undeniable healing of this woman, through and through
 - a. Jesus uses an interesting set of Greek words here in this passage
 - i. In verse 15, as he's rebuking the ruler of the synagogue, he says to him,
 - 1. *"You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath UNTIE his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?"*
 - a. This word that he uses for "untie" is the Greek word loo-o
 - i. Loo-o can mean, "to untie, or to release, or to loose"
 - 2. So he says to the religious leader, *"Don't you LOOSE the bonds of your donkey on the Sabbath so it can get a drink of water?"*
 - a. And then he says in verse 16,
 - i. "Ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"
 - 1. He uses the same word, loo-o in both of these passages
 - a. You're willing to *loo-o*, to loose your Donkey, on the Sabbath day, but you're not willing for this woman to be *loo-o'ed* from Satan on a Sabbath day???
 - i. Jesus exposes the utter hypocrisy in this man's heart
 - 3. But if you go back up to what Jesus said to the woman in verse 12, he said, "Woman, you are freed from your disability"
 - a. When he speaks to the woman, he doesn't just say, "Woman, you are *loo-o'ed* from your disability..."
 - b. He says to her instead, "Woman, you are APO-*loo-o'ed* from your disability!"
 - i. This prefix, APO, means a COMPLETE separation, or a COMPLETE reversal
 - 1. Jesus is saying to this woman, I'm not just loosing you from this bond of Satan...
 - a. I am fully and completely and wholly DESTROYING this bond that he has held over you
 - i. From this day forward, you will walk in FREEDOM from his chains
 - c. Friends, this was the mission for which Jesus was sent!
 - i. As he affirmed back in Luke 4:18, when he read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah,
 - 1. *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to*

proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

- a. They weren't to be distracted by their fields that needed to be harvested
 - b. They weren't to be consumed with putting together their to-do lists for the next week
 - c. They were instead called to rest, and to trust that God had ALL of that completely under His control
- b. And in their rest, they would gather together at the Temple, and then later in the synagogues
 - i. They would gather in rest as they fellowshiped with God's people
 - ii. They would gather in rest as they sang the Psalms together
 - iii. They would gather in rest as they heard the Word of God proclaimed
 - 1. The Sabbath was given to man as a blessing... a holy day where they could rest from their EARTHLY work, and be rejuvenated in their HEAVENLY work
- 2. But God's people eventually corrupted this holy day
 - a. Not on purpose... but simply doing what we always do... turning away from the Word of God, and thinking that we could do it better
 - i. And so now, on the Sabbath, you can't walk through a field of grain and pick off the heads and eat them
 - ii. On the Sabbath, you can't tie or untie knots... so there's no sewing on the Sabbath
 - iii. On the Sabbath, you can't kill any animal for food, or go hunting, or even swat a fly or a mosquito
 - iv. You can't write anything down on the Sabbath
 - v. You can't hold an umbrella on the Sabbath
 - vi. You can't light a fire on the Sabbath
 - vii. And you most certainly cannot heal a woman who has been bound for eighteen years on the Sabbath
 - 1. This day that God had set aside for the spiritual well-being of His people, had been corrupted into a day of man-made traditions
 - a. And this poor woman who had just seen God move in an absolutely incredible way in her life, was now being chastised for being healed
 - i. You should have come on the OTHER days of the week, lady
 - ii. The Sabbath is not for healing... the Sabbath is for following the rules!!
 - 2. It is no wonder that Jesus cried out in that moment... "YOU HYPOCRITES!"
 - a. And then he proceeded to put all the religious leaders to shame
 - c. You see, Jesus understood that there was so much more to the Sabbath than what man had turned it into
 - i. Yes, the Sabbath was meant to be a day where God's people rested from their work, and they entrusted their lives to him in a very real and practical expression
 - ii. Yes, the Sabbath was meant to be a holy day where God's people fully devoted their attention and the affections of their hearts towards God and towards His word and towards His people

1. But ultimately, as were ALL the religious observations and ceremonies in the Old Testament...
 - a. The Sabbath was meant to serve as a SHADOW of what was to come
 - i. This is what Paul affirmed in Colossians 2, verses 16 and 17, as he was writing to a church made up of Jews and Gentiles,
 1. And they were constantly wrestling with what to do with all the laws and regulations of the Old Testament
 - ii. Paul writes to them,
 1. *¹⁶... Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.*
 - ¹⁷These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*
 - iii. Just on a side note, this is a good argument for why the church needs to stop spending so much time trying to get the Ten Commandments posted in our courthouses and in our schools
 1. The fourth commandment in Exodus 20, verses 8-11 says this...
 - a. *⁸Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*
2. That's what the Ten Commandments says,
 - a. But Paul says, "That was just Jesus' shadow you saw on the stone tablets... All of that has passed now that Christ has come!"
 - i. So when we strive to get the Ten Commandments posted at public places in our land, we're actually giving the people the wrong message
 1. In fact, the writer of the book of Hebrews would say that we are giving them a message that is becoming obsolete and is growing old and is ready to vanish away
 - a. For its function was to point to Jesus!
 2. Calling unrepentant sinners to live by the Ten Commandments is calling them to live under the OLD Covenant
 - a. And the only thing that is capable of doing is to create a bunch of self-righteous Pharisees
6. What we need to be focusing on, Church, is calling the people to look to the NEW Covenant
 - a. We need to call them, not to observe the Sabbath as it was given in the Old Testament, but to realize that the Sabbath Day was meant to point us to the TRUE Sabbath's rest that is found in Christ and Christ alone!
 - i. Turn with me in your Bibles to Hebrews, chapter 3
 1. At the end of Hebrews 3, the writer is warning his readers about the deceitfulness of sin, and the dangers of unbelief
 - a. In verse 15, he says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."
 2. This rebellion that he's talking about is when the Israelites had been freed from their captivity in Egypt

- a. God had led them to the borders of the Promised Land, as they prepared to enter into all that God had told them would be theirs
 - i. But what happened?
 - 1. They rebelled, didn't they?
 - 2. They sent some spies into the land to check everything out,
 - a. And when 10 of the 12 spies came back talking about ferocious giants that were going to kill them all...
 - i. The people rebelled against God, and they refused to enter into the Promised Land
 - ii. And God condemned them to die in the wilderness
 - ii. As verses 16-19 say,
 - 1. *¹⁶For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did [God] swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.*
 - a. Because of their unbelief, an entire generation of Israelites fell in the wilderness
 - b. Because of their unbelief, God would not allow them to enter into His rest
 - iii. Now, look at chapter 4, starting in verse 1...
 - 1. *¹Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. ²For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. ³For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works."*
 - a. Do you see what the writer is doing here?
 - i. God had already given the Israelites the Sabbath Day command, and he had established it as the appointed day of rest for His people
 - 1. But at the same time, the Sabbath, the seventh day, was even then pointing to a GREATER rest...
 - a. The rest that they would find in the Promised Land
 - i. And they failed to enter into that rest, because they did not truly believe in God
 - b. As the writer says in verse 2,
 - i. The message did not benefit them, because they did not have FAITH
 - iv. In the same way, my friends, God has again appointed a day for us to find OUR rest
 - 1. And that day is called TODAY!
 - a. Look at verse 6...
 - i. *⁶Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."*

- v. Friends, the reason why Jesus could totally upend all the traditions surrounding the Sabbath was because he knew that the Sabbath was meant to point the people to him
 - 1. In all their wanderings in the wilderness, the Israelites never found rest on the Sabbath, even though God provided His manna for them to live off of
 - 2. In all their time in the Promised Land, the Israelites never found rest on the Sabbath, even though God had filled the land with milk and honey and all sorts of provisions for them
 - 3. Even in 1st Century Judea, God's people had not found any rest on the Sabbath, for they had chosen to look to their own traditions, instead of to the one the Sabbath had always pointed to
- vi. Brothers and sisters, God has once again appointed a day of rest for us
 - 1. And that day is called TODAY
 - a. TODAY, may you enter into the true Sabbath rest, as you surrender your entire lives to Jesus Christ
 - b. TODAY, may you find the true joy of the Sabbath, as you entrust yourself to God, and devote your life to the pursuit of holiness
 - c. TODAY, may you find the true FREEDOM that Christ is holding out for you
 - i. He doesn't just want your bonds loo-ed...
 - 1. He doesn't just want them loosed for one day out of every week
 - ii. He wants you to be APO-loo-o'ed
 - 1. He wants you to be COMPLETELY released from the captivity of the enemy,
 - 2. He wants you to be COMPLETELY loosed from his bondage of Satan's oppression
 - 3. He wants you to be COMPLETELY free from ALL of it
 - 2. So TODAY, do not harden your hearts
 - 3. TODAY, enter into the TRUE Sabbath rest of the people of God, the Sabbath of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!