



Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the sabbath. And a woman was there who for eighteen years had been crippled by a spirit; she was bent over, completely incapable of standing erect. When Jesus saw her, he called to her and said, "Woman, you are set free of your infirmity." He laid his hands on her, and she at once stood up straight and glorified God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured on the sabbath, said to the crowd in reply, "There are six days when work should be done. Come on those days to be cured, not on the sabbath day." The Lord said to him in reply, "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger and lead it out for watering? This daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years now, ought she not to have been set free on the sabbath day from this bondage?" When he said this, all his adversaries were humiliated; and the whole crowd rejoiced at all the splendid deeds done by him.

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I believe in you with a faith that never seeks to test you. I trust in you, hoping to learn to accept and follow your will, even when it does not make sense to the way that I see things. May my love for you and those around me be similar to the love you have shown to me.

Petition: Lord, protect me from spiritual old age.

1. **Jesus Is Showing his Messiah Credentials Again:**

Jesus' opponents were desperate. They didn't want to believe that he was the Messiah, and they especially didn't want anyone else to think he was the Messiah. But there was the pesky problem of his miracles. They knew that when God sent someone to speak for him, he usually performed signs through the person so that people would believe in him. The sign was proof that the person (Jesus in this case) was sent by God. Jesus was doing plenty of miracles, which most people were taking as the sign that he was sent by God. What could Jesus' opponents do? They could only try to discredit the miracles any way possible.

2. You Can Do a Lot More than You Think on the Sabbath: .

This miracle was done on the Sabbath. The head of the synagogue had a problem with that. Didn't God himself rest on the sixth day? Oughtn't we to do the same? How does this Jesus heal on the Sabbath if he is truly from God? In fact, there were many exceptions to the rules about the Sabbath. In another place, Jesus himself says that the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). Certainly, the observance of the Sabbath was always subject to the practice of charity, that it was always permissible to break the Sabbath rest in the case when needed to do some necessary act of charity for another. Jesus mentions situations when for practical reasons (necessary farm chores, like watering animals) work can be done without breaking the Sabbath rest.

3. Lord, Please Let me Keep my Mediocrity: .

And so, there is really nothing to the objection. The head of the synagogue does not want to believe because what Jesus says and does seems threatening to him. If Jesus is the Messiah, he foresees having to change his life, and he does not want to do that. He may not even realize that this is his real objection, but it is. We can be this way, too. We don't want to accept something Jesus teaches us through his Church because it would mean that we have to change our lives, and we don't want to. We are comfortable the way we are. If we had to do what Jesus asks, it would take us out of our comfort zone. Sometimes it is mere fear of something different. Jesus always is offering us something different, but we don't want it. We want to stay in our rut. We have surrounded ourselves with limited horizons and are afraid to stretch them.

Conversation with Christ: Dear Jesus, help me to accept you fully. If I am rejecting you or your teaching without realizing it, show me. Help me to overcome my attempt to construct my own little universe in which I am God. If I have grown old spiritually, renew my youth, cutting down the and help me break through my restricted, shrunken horizons that exclude you.

Resolution: Where in my life have I settled into spiritual routine and old age? Do I habitually skip some prayer I should be saying, telling myself it isn't that important? I will make an extra effort to pray it today. Is there some other aspect of my spiritual or moral life that I have removed to make life "more comfortable" for me? Time to start doing it

again!