SERMON TAKE-HOME NOTES — August 24, 2025

Bonus! Two Gospels in One: Twin Stories of Healing ("Set Free")

Luke 13:10-17	**Luke 14:1-6**
[10]Now [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.	[1]On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.
[11]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.	[2]Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had dropsy. [3]And Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, "Is it lawful to cure people on the sabbath, or not?"
[12]When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." [13]When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.	[4]But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him, and set him free.
[14]But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." [15]But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? [16]And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?"	[5]Then he said to them, "If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a sabbath day?"
[17]When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.	[6]And they could not reply to this.

You can really see how they're parallel stories (using many of the same words) in outline:

Bent Over Woman
Scene set: Synagogue on the sabbath
"Just then": woman bent-over appears
Jesus heals — sets free
Challenge about healing on sabbath
Jesus asks about helping ox/donkey on sabbath
Opponents put to shame

Man with Dropsy
Scene set: Dining with Pharisee on sabbath
Man with dropsy appears
Jesus heals — sets free
Challenge anticipated by Jesus
Jesus asks about helping child/ox on sabbath
Pharisees are silenced

The Second Rich Man Sequence in Luke's Gospel
These healing stories open the second of six encounters of Jesus with Rich Men in the middle of Luke's Gospel — comprised of our Gospels this week and next. The story of the man healed of dropsy is itself a story of Jesus healing a rich man. But it also takes place as Jesus is about to dine at the home of a leader of the Pharisees, where next week we will see Jesus giving wisdom to the wealthy about where to sit at dinner parties and who to invite in the first place. The story of healing the woman bent over, who likely is poor, is a prelude to the Second Rich Man Sequence.

Double Bonus! Jesus Twice Heals *Two* Bodies at Once: the Physical Body and Social Body
Human beings not only have physical bodies but also the social dimension to those bodies which are very real and important. We are taught so many things about our physical bodies through our social bodies, our "body politic." Cultures show us how to dress and feed our bodies, how to take care of them, and even how to see them. Are we attractive or unattractive? That's cultural, a matter of our social bodies — influenced heavily today by *social* media!

Sin infects the social body in many ways that bring harm to our social bodies. They can even bring enslavement in many respects. Greed of the wealthy can trap the rest of us in healthcare systems that are unavailable or under-resourced. Jesus, in this Second Rich Man Sequence, brings the promise of liberation from healthcare systems infected by greed. All the other industrialized nations in the world today have already moved toward universal healthcare which greatly reduces the affects of greed.

John McCain giving thumbs down to cutting the ACA in July 2017

I believe that today's double-bonus Gospels mean that we disciples of Jesus can work to advocate for more justice in our healthcare systems, too. How do we respond to the planned cuts to Medicaid for millions of people in the recent Big Morally Repugnant Bill? Could 2017 be our model when millions of protesters led to blocking Congress from cutting the Affordable Care Act? Would Susan Collins, Lisa Murkowski, and John McCain have 'crossed the aisle' to vote no without millions standing up to make their voices heard? With even hundreds arrested for protesting in the capitol office buildings? Memorable for me, especially with the image of the bent-over woman healed to stand-up straight, was a brigade of wheel-chair protesters led by a young man with ALS named Ady Barkan. They literally were unable to stand-up straight, being wheel-chair-bound, but they metaphorically stood up straight to have their voices heard.

Ady Barkan in wheel chair protest of cutting the ACA in early 2017

Siblings in Christ, on this Healing Sunday, we come to pray for the healing of our physical bodies. I believe we also come to pray for the promised liberation of our social bodies from the affects of greed on our healthcare systems. Jesus offered up his body on the cross so that he might confront the powers of greed and violence that not only inflict our physical bodies but also enslave and kill our social bodies. He confronted the powers-to-be not just for the promise of life-after-death but more importantly for liberation from deadly powers like greed in this life. With his suffering and resurrection, we are not only healed but set free. How will we express that freedom, live that freedom, in confronting the deadly powers of greed in our time and place?