



My Beloved Ones,

As we continue on our journey to Bethlehem, this Sunday's Gospel lesson emphasizes an important aspect of our Lord's Incarnation, one that was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah. *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined."*

Today's Gospel finds Christ teaching the people in a synagogue on the Sabbath. Luke tells us that as Christ looked upon the faithful, He saw a woman who had a severe disability, and had been unable to straighten her back for 18 years. Christ knew her pain, as He knew her faith, and so He said, *"Woman, you are free from your infirmity"*, and when He laid hands on her, she was thus healed.

The ruler of the synagogue however, did not marvel or rejoice at this miracle. Instead he became indignant that Christ had violated the Law, reminding the congregation that *"There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the*

Sabbath day."

Our Lord, as the Incarnate Word of God was understandably angered by the hardness of their hearts. *"Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"*

Of course, His enemies were put to shame at their lack of compassion, but He did not speak out against them to place Himself above them. When we read of our Lord finding Himself in conflict with the religious authorities of the day, it is always to remind them that the Law was created because of mankind's weaknesses. Moses gave the People of Israel the Law, as a means to help bring them closer to God, even in their imperfections.

However, some became less focused on the spirit of the Law—justice, mercy, and compassion—and upholding it to the Letter; believing that it would be better to leave this infirm woman in pain than to violate the commandment which is intended to keep the Sabbath day holy. Christ, as both Man and God understands that the holiness of the Sabbath day is exemplified, not diminished when we serve others.

My brothers and sisters, as we prepare to receive the coming of the light, let us always remember that our Lord's commandments are not meant to restrict but to save; and that if we intend to truly live out the will of our Creator, we must love others, and seek to help them, no matter the circumstances.

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