

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

HEALING HANDS

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Healing on the sabbath (Luke 13: 10-17)

In this healing (which is reported only in Luke's Gospel), Luke illustrates once again how Jesus' work of healing brings him into controversy with the authorities, this time the leader of the synagogue. Jesus' reply sees healing as release from bondage to Satan and therefore a clear sign of the reign of God. Such release is highly appropriate on the sabbath, the day God gave to Israel as a weekly release from the bondage of labour. Jesus effects the healing and the release by placing his hands on the woman.

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of Jesus healing on the sabbath is *healing hands*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Luke 13: 10-13; for reflection throughout the week)

Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.
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.
When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said,
'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.'
When he laid his hands on her,
immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you laid your hands on the sick
and brought them healing.
Help us to learn from your example
that we may bring healing to others;
for you are our God.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Luke 13: 10-17

Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. 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. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. 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.' 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? 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?' 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.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Luke 13: 10-17)

Begin to explore Luke's account of Jesus healing the woman on the sabbath by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- What do you understand by Jesus laying his hands on the woman?
- What did Jesus mean by saying that the woman had been bound by Satan?
- What do you make of the response of the leader of the synagogue?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Explore the theme of Jesus' healing hands in Mark's Gospel.

- Mark 5: 23, 41
- Mark 6: 5
- Mark 7: 31-33

Explore the response of those healed in Luke's Gospel.

- Luke 5: 25
- Luke 17: 15
- Luke 18: 43

Explore the commandment to keep the sabbath.

- Exodus 20: 9

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR C) Sunday 24 August 2025

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Luke's account of Jesus healing the woman on the sabbath by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Jesus' healing hands
- Commentary on Luke 13: 10-17
- Images of healing hands

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Luke's account of Jesus healing the woman on the sabbath day is *healing hands*. Draw on your own experience of healing hands. For example:

- Have you experienced psychological benefit from healing hands?
- Have you experienced physical benefit from healing hands?
- What is your experience of healing services?

What have you learned about healing hands?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Luke's account of Jesus healing the woman on the sabbath or by the image of healing hands.

- Make a poster of Jesus' encounter with the woman on the sabbath.
- Make a collage of images connecting hands and healing.
- Make a collage of healing agencies within your locality.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Jesus' encounter with the woman on the sabbath or the image of healing hands.



EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



The scripture quotations contained in these materials are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Anglicised Edition, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and is used with permission. All rights reserved.

Copyright © Leslie J. Francis, 2025
Canon Theologian Liverpool Cathedral
with sponsorship and support from
St Mary's Centre, Wales