

# Loosed From Thine Infirmity

by Alan Redpath

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*The sermon emphasizes the need for Christians to come out from behind their camouflage and pretense and allow Jesus to see them and call them to him, in order to receive healing and deliverance from sin.*

**Duration:** 29:50

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:7, Luke 13:11-12, John 8:36, Romans 8:1, Philippians 3:13

**Topics:** "Infirmity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of the gospel to break the power of long-standing complaints and habits. He shares the story of a woman who had been crippled for 18 years and how Jesus healed her in the synagogue. The preacher encourages the audience to examine their own lives and identify any long-standing complaints or habits that have held them back. He emphasizes the importance of prayer and surrendering to Jesus in order to experience freedom and transformation.

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## Transcript

I want in the closing message of this evening to meditate with you for a little while in a wonderful story that you will find in the 13th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 13, I'm only going to read a few verses for the sake of time. Verse 11, Luke 13, 11, And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. This lovely story is both a miracle and a parable.

I think all our Lord's miracles are parables because they are just an illustration of the kind of thing that the same living, triumphant, risen Lord Jesus can do in your life tonight, if you're prepared to meet him. You will notice, please, the place where this miracle was effected. It was in the synagogue.

Now, I'm not getting involved in any dispensational issue on this. All I want to say tonight is that the place where the greatest miracles are needed is within the sphere of the Christian Church. That somehow, God would take hold of crooked Christians like this poor crooked woman, and make them straight, that they might thereafter glorify him.

You know, we think that the world is a very difficult place to live in, and that it has immense problems, and that it's in the grip of the enemy, and it's very powerful. Well, so it is. But God has no problem with the world.

The Lord Jesus looked into the face of his disciples and said to them, be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. And we think the devil's very powerful. Oh, so he is.

And we know something of his subtlety, and how often we've been caught unaware, that the Lord Jesus at the cross stripped from himself principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly. And how glad I am tonight to be able to speak to you in the name of the Lord, our Lord Jesus, who has conquered all the wiles of Satan, and our enemy is a defeated foe. God has got no problem with the world.

He's got no problem with the devil. God's great problem, and how humbling, how humbling it is, his great problem is with his people. With his friends, not with his enemies, but with people who have been redeemed by his precious blood, and who have given to them, in the grace of God, all the resources of heaven to enable them to live gloriously, and for his honor and praise, to get people like that to live in his will, to get crooked Christians made straight.

That's God's problem. And I think of this woman tonight, and I'm only going to spend the briefest of moments, because Mr. Samuel has dealt with this aspect of our evening message so thoroughly. I want to ask you to notice the condition of this woman, her need, and you know, whenever I look at this story, as indeed, whenever I find myself looking at the word of God, we're looking at a mirror all the time, aren't we? And you look at the condition of this woman, and what a reflection it is of our own need.

What was the matter with her? She had a spirit of infirmity, 18 years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself, poor soul. She was bent double, a spirit of infirmity, and I believe I'm right in saying that the word there conveys the meaning of our English word, neurasthenia. Now, if you had neurasthenia, my, it would be worth paying a lot to a specialist to be told you've got that.

It sounds terrific if you've got neurasthenia. Tremendous. But if I tell you that neurasthenia is simply a lost connection between your mind and your body, that's not so good.

You see, it operates like this, though we don't take time to think about it. Your body never loses, moves an inch without receiving instruction from up here. The brain is the managing director, and the brain says to the body, body move, and the body replies, all right, and move.

The brain sends a communication to the foot and says, one step forward, march, and forward you march. The brain says to your hand, lift yourself up, and the hand raises itself. Everything's wonderful when it all works.

Ah, but it's tragedy when it doesn't. And when the mind says to the foot, foot move forward, and the foot sends back an SOS right through your personality, through your nerves, and says to the mind, sorry, can't be done. And your body is unable to fulfill the will of the mind.

That is neurasthenia. In the spiritual sense, dear folk, Paul spoke about that in Romans chapter 7. With my mind, I serve the law of God, but with my flesh, the law of sin. And at once this parable begins to live, and at once it comes out of the pages, as it were, of the New Testament, and it hits right into my heart, because this has been my experience time and time again.

With my mind, I serve the law of God, but with my flesh, the law of sin, neurasthenia. And this woman had been like this, in this condition for 18 years. Bent double, twisted, earthbound, crooked.

I've no doubt that from the very moment of her birth, there were the symptoms of this disease in her. And as she became a girl, and an adolescent, and a young woman, gradually she became more and more bent double, until now she was unable to lift up herself, not to the uttermost of her ability. It was quite beyond her to straighten her poor, bent, double back.

What a picture this is, you see, of sin. I'm not concerned about what your particular profession of Christianity may be, but the tragic thing about many people is that the experience of conversion, as such, seems to have made mighty little difference. In spite of the fact that you claim to be born again, in spite of the fact that you've believed John 3, 16, in spite of the fact that you've received Jesus Christ into your heart to be your Saviour, in spite of all this, and, of course, you're a Christian, but nevertheless, as a Christian tonight, you are still bent double.

You are still earthbound. You've believed everything that the preacher has told you to believe, and you've believed your Bible implicitly, but the fact of the matter is that somehow or other, there's a principle of evil within you which has overcome you time and time again, and there's no victory. Don't let's be afraid of facing that fact.

As I said this morning in the morning meeting in the tent, conversion was the act of faith in which I put my faith implicitly upon the atonement of Jesus Christ, and I was justified by faith, but that was something that took place outside of me, the objective work of Christ on Calvary for me. That work in itself did not touch an evil principle within me, the principle of F-I-N, capital letters. By the act of conversion, by the wonderful, wonderful fact of trusting Christ, all my sins are forgiven.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. You know, I remember, my, it makes me feel so old. It's 30 years ago now, in a little public house called the Gray Bull in Haltwistle in Northumberland, not so far from here.

Wonderful county, wonderful place, wonderful country. On the 10th of August 1926, as a young fellow, a friend of mine pointed me to that verse, Romans 8.1, and for the first time in my life, I believed, I was saved. And I underlined those three letters, N-O-W.

There is therefore now no condemnation, so heavily that I went right through to the epistle of the Philippians in my Bible and ruined it the first night. Oh, but it was worth it. Like Christian in Pilgrim's Progress, I just gave three leaps for joy.

Ah, but see, that wasn't the end of a battle with sin, it was the beginning of it. Before, I had been sin's ally. Now, in the name of the Lord Jesus, I wanted to be sin's enemy.

I wanted to know what it was to hate the things I used to love. But I found, as a young Christian, there were many, many things that were still pulling me down. There was an evil principle that was still there, and I found myself earthbound.

And see, the tragic thing about this woman was that she'd been like this for 18 years. It's wonderful to have so many folks from young folks' organisations, Boys' Brigade, and Covenanters, and Crusaders, and all the rest of you. It's such a thrill to have you at a meeting.

And I'm all in favour of every work among young people, CSSM, Crusaders, everything. But I want to tell you, my friend, that the gospel I know about is a gospel that breaks the power of long-standing complaints. The eighth Spurgeon asked one Sunday night by his deacons how many converts he had, replied, three and a half.

Oh, said his deacon, do you mean three adults and a child? No, he said, I don't. I mean three children and one adult, three whole lives and one half. Wonderful thing when a whole life comes to Christ.

But listen, my concern tonight in this message is with people in Christian leadership and Christian work who have settled down to something less than full salvation, who are content with a second best, and who, in spite of years of Christian experience, are still earthbound. I don't mean that you're bogged down of necessity by David's sin. That may be so.

I don't mean that. But I just mean that you probably spend far more time watching a television than you do reading a Bible, and you're earthbound, my friend. Earthbound.

Far more interested now in radio, in business, in making money, in progress, in worldly ambition, in material things, far more concerned about that than the salvation of a soul. Earthbound. Far more interested in feathering your own nest and making life comfortable in ensuring the future than blazing your life out for God.

Earthbound. And somehow or other, in the course of life, in spite of the fact that 18, 20, 30 years ago, you professed conversion, let's honestly face it, has it made much difference? At home, you're still critical, and still rather unpleasant to live with, still unkind to your wife and your husband. That home of yours is not really the corner of heaven that it ought to be.

It's sometimes more like the other place. Oh yes, and you're a professing Christian, and the home is being held together simply for the sake of show. And that's the tragedy today I find so often.

That somehow love has died out, and it's all a nominal kind of union, and there's no tenderness in it, and no, no just love and warmth in it. And you go into a home like that, and you'll find one nattering at the other. There's a sense of unhappiness and formality and coldness, and there's no warmth and glow and reality about it.

Somewhere in that home, there's someone who's earthbound. That's the kind of thing I mean. That in spite of your professed conversion, it hasn't made much difference.

Still bad-tempered, still critical, still censorious of other people, still defeated. This is the experience of this woman. Have you ever noticed in the gospel record how the Lord Jesus so often dealt with people with long-standing complaints? Have you? Think of a woman who had hemorrhage for 12 years, and she'd been to every physician.

And as Mark tells us, rather cuttingly, the only thing that happened to her was that she only got worse. Luke, being a doctor, put it a bit more mildly than that. Just simply said that she wasn't getting any better, but Luke said she was getting a lot worse.

Oh yes, in spite of all that, there was one day when Jesus came and she touched the hem of his garment, and immediately her plague was stopped. Ah, there was a day when a man who for 38 years had been in a pool of Bethesda, waiting beside the pool, had given up all hope of being cured, and one day our mighty

Lord came on the scene and said, do you want to be made strong? And he was on his feet, oh. And there was a man who for over 40 years had been lame since birth, and was outside the beautiful gate of the temple.

And one day Peter and John came and said, silver and gold have we none. Yes, at that time the church boasted of its bankruptcy, boasted of its bankruptcy. She knew that her wealth, nay not her power and resources, lay not in material things.

We haven't any of these things. We're bankrupt in that realm, but such as we have, give we thee in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk. And the church today has a good deal of material things, and it's a good deal of programs, but it's lost the power to make men do this kind of thing.

And after 40 years, poor helpless lame living, the man was on his feet leaping and praising God. Oh, dear friend, tonight with all the love in my heart for you, listen, listen. How long standing has been the complaint which bogs you down? How long has it been that this principle of sin, this ego within you, this I has caused you to fail? How long is it since some habit in your life has just mastered you? And listen, let's be honest about it.

You've stopped praying about it. You've assumed that this is a matter of temperament with which you were born, and you've got to go through life like that, and there's no answer to it. And you've stopped praying about it.

You've stopped believing about it. You've stopped trusting God for it. You used to pray about it every day, but now you've resigned yourself to defeat.

And you've thought to yourself, well, I suppose I was made like this, and I can't be altered. Christ has saved me from this and that and the other thing and this, but never from, oh, from this thing that so often I'm so ashamed of. Is that you? I'm praying as I speak to you tonight that the Holy Spirit may speak to you so really and so wonderfully that there may be created in your heart a longing, a hunger, a conviction, a belief that there is no sin that has gone too far, but that Lord Jesus tonight can smash its power.

But I want more especially to look as we close this evening at how the Lord Jesus met this woman, me, for I am sure that need is written over every one of our lives in this tent tonight. What did Christ do about it? Will you notice this? He saw her. Do you know I could just pass that by, and yet the whole music of the gospel is in there? He saw her.

Other people had seen her, but never quite like he saw her. Other people had got used to her being there for 18 years and assumed that she would never be any different, but Jesus saw her in a way that nobody else ever had. A woman, anonymous, unnamed, and you came to Keswick anonymously, and somehow you feel yourself in this crowd lost amongst it.

Just a kind of little cog in it all, unknown to other people, but Jesus sees you. So differently from the way anybody else sees you. Could I just drive that home in a very simple illustration? It was necessary for me some years ago, nothing very wonderful about it because many of you have had to do the same thing, to get some passport photographs.

Awful agony. When I had the photograph and received it from the photographer, I opened it and, well, I was a little disappointed, and I spoke to the photographer and he said to me, well now of course that's only a passport photograph, would you like some touched-up photos? That sounded better to me, so I ordered

some of those, and I got some touched-up photographs, but to my disappointment, the American consulate only wanted the passport photograph. I offered them the other, but no, no, they wanted the passport photograph that was not touched up.

The two were completely different. You wouldn't have recognized the same person. The touched-up photograph was what I wanted other people to think that I was, but the passport photograph was the ugly reality.

It was the real thing, and the only thing to do was to submit to the diagnosis and give the man the thing he wanted. Ah, you smile, but listen, Jesus saw her. He's not wanting your touched-up life.

He's wanting just to look into your heart tonight as you really are, and he wants you to allow him to do it. The one thing to be afraid of, beloved friend, is hiding your life behind a kind of mask, is avoiding this personal interview with Christ, when you just get out from behind the camouflage, and behind the pretense, and behind the hypocrisy, and behind the sham of the make-believe, and you come right out into the open before God with an honest, open confession, and he sees, and he looks at you. He saw her.

And somehow I think that during the last two days in this convention, the Spirit of God has been looking at people rather like that. He saw her. But not only did he see her, he called her to him.

Listen, the initiative, the first move in every step of blessing is from heaven. It isn't simply that I decide for Christ. It isn't simply that I decide to do something about it.

Oh no, but there's the prompting of God's Holy Spirit, and he speaks and calls you to him. How can I hear the voice of God? I'll tell you. Has there been a moment tonight, last night, through this week, when somehow or other you've forgotten about a crowd, forgotten about even what the speakers said, and you couldn't remember a thing, but you just felt yourself in the presence of God, and he's spoken to you.

Your heart has been melted, and somehow he's drawn so near, and it seemed as if you were the only person in the tent he has been calling you to him. I do not believe that any of us is at this convention by accident. I don't believe that it's simply because your friend asked you to come.

I believe because it is in the eternal purpose of God for you to be here. He began calling you to him long, long ago before you knew anything about it, and he's done it many, many times since, and in this weekend and his mercy, he's done it again. He's seen you, and he's called you to him.

And what did he say? He spoke to her and said, Woman, do you know the first time I read that word, I thought it was a little patronizing of Christ to say that, Woman? But then I recall the times when he used that word. Do you remember a poor soul, hounded into his presence at the crack of dawn one day by religious leaders who wanted to condemn her because of her act of adultery? And what did Jesus say when he said to them, Let no man that is without sin be the first to cast a stone, and they all trooped out? He looked at her and said, Woman, where are thine accusers? A word of absolute tenderness. He said it again on the cross as he hung on Calvary, and he saw there beside the cross his mother and John, the disciple he loved, and he said, Woman, behold thy son, son, behold thy mother, Woman.

My friend, listen, if there's anybody in this tent tonight who has literally squirmed under the conviction of God's Spirit in these days, who's felt themselves to be an absolute, utter sinner, and to be hopelessly inadequate and utterly unable to do anything about it, I want to say to you, there's nobody in all this tent nearer to the heart of God than you are. And he doesn't stand over you with a whip to condemn you. He

stands in front of you and says, well, he speaks your name with utter infinite tenderness, because he died to save people just like you.

Woman, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. Thou art loosed, and you know that word is elsewhere translated in the New Testament, thou art divorced. Thou art severed from thine infirmity.

Woman, listen, by the authoritative word of Jesus Christ, supported by the touch of his hand, that woman immediately was made straight. There was no gradual unbending. There was no gradual straightening out.

In a moment, in the moment, at that moment, when he looked into her face, spoke to her heart, saw her completely, knew her need, and she lifted that longing heart to him, he said, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. Oh, friend, all I want to say to you tonight, and oh, do get this, if you and I are being honest with the Lord and coming out from behind our camouflage and our pretense, in spite of all the years that we profess to be Christians, and acknowledging honestly the defeat that's been bogging us down through all these years, the sense of somehow or other this principle of sin within us that has caused us to be so earthbound and bent double, if we're being honest in God's presence about it. And we lift our hungry hearts to him and say, Lord, I'm sure you didn't die and rise again to leave me in this mess, and I long to be perfectly whole.

If there's a cry going up from a hungry heart, he speaks your name, and in answer, in answer, in answer to that open acknowledgement of your need, an absolute honest confession of your sin, the Lord Jesus speaks the word of power, and behind the word is the authority of an empty cross, an empty tomb, an ascended Lord upon the throne, far above all principalities and powers, and the outpouring of his Holy Spirit to come into your life to make you straight. Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity, and immediately she was made straight and glorified. God, listen, has God made you straight? Do you want him to? Straight, that your word might be your bond, that you might be a man, a woman of integrity, of righteousness? That's why you're saved.

That's why God has saved you. That's why he's brought you to Calvary, not to leave you twisted and crooked and earthbound, but to make you straight. Have I time, just as I close, to use this simple illustration, true to life? Some of you, especially from areas near here, have heard me tell you that when I was a young fellow and cared nothing for the things of God, I worked in an office in Newcastle on time, training to be a chartered accountant.

I'm only a shattered accountant now, but I was training to be that then. And there was one man in that office out of 60 others who was a Christian, and I thought he was completely crazy, absolutely crazy. He annoyed me intensely, made me angry, always got there before office hours began and never stopped work till after they were over.

Wouldn't take more than half an hour for his lunch when we were entitled to an hour, never stopped for coffee or tea. And frequently in accountancy offices we worked in pairs, and it was often my misfortune to have to go with him. And I had to work so hard, it was nonstop all day.

There was no coffee, no tea, there was no golf, there was nothing when I worked with him. And when we wanted to gather round and tell stories that weren't pleasant, we had to shut up when he came. He didn't tell us to, but they were just out of place in his company.

And do you know who I remember? There's a little tavern in Grey Street, Newcastle on time, a pub, and 11 colleagues with myself sat down round the table and drank beer, and vowed that in six months we'd knock the religion out of him. I reported him to the boss for being dishonest. I was commissioned to report him to clients for not doing the job thoroughly.

Others of them clever fellows among us, not myself, but the other clever chaps who knew all about science were determined to tell him his Bible was a lot of nonsense and fairy tales. Listen, I'm here on this platform tonight to tell you that within five months he and I were kneeling beside a bed in a little pub in Holtwhistle, and he was pointing me to Jesus. It is absolutely impossible, get this Christian, it is impossible for people to be indifferent to the things of God in the presence of a man who's straight.

Has God made you straight? Has he? People don't care about our Christianity. They can be indifferent to it. They can ignore it because we're crooked and earthbound.

Oh, but if the Holy Ghost fills our lives and makes us clean and straight and pure and men of God, then nobody can be indifferent. They won't all be converted. Some of them will hate us, but at least there will be a testimony which means, like that woman, we will glorify God.

Woman, man, Jack, John, George. Listen, Jesus speaks and says to you tonight, thou art loose from thine infirmity. And in the crisis of a moment, in response to your utter yieldedness and faith, he'll smash his power and send you out free.

Do you believe that?

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