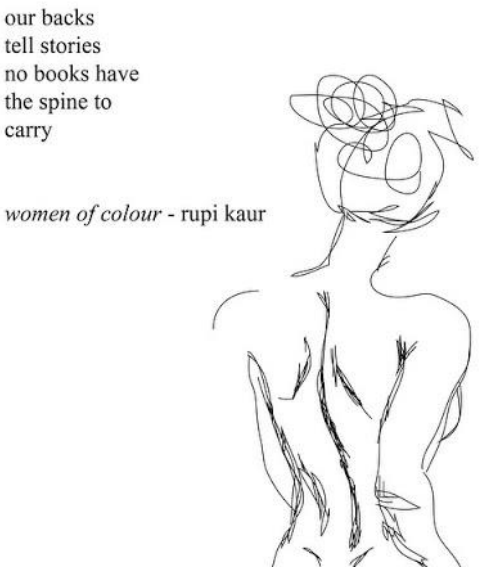
March 24, 2021 Lenten Devotional
Luke 13:10-17 – “A Woman Healed on the Sabbath”
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Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent 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.

-Luke 13:10-17

Reflection

What kind of loud celebration, what kind of joyful hooting and hollering might we imagine burst forth from that woman on that fateful sabbath day. I can imagine her hands rushing toward the sky as she inhaled deeply and stretched her back upward, her shoulders rolling back, her chest opening toward the sun as a loud cry of praise rang forth from a fully-inflated diaphragm, filled to its capacity for the first time in a generation. A moment of pure grace and liberating elation to her, a moment of impious disruption to others. God’s work of liberation rarely abides by our norms or standards or even liturgical sensibilities. And the holy vessels of God’s liberating spirit, are so often found on the outskirts of our communities, like this unnamed woman whose joy and praise brings near the Kingdom of God.

How often have I reacted like the religious leaders in this text? How often have I dismissed the urgent work of liberation that my siblings are calling me to, by hiding behind the safe confines of policy and procedure, respectability, and bureaucracy? God’s work of healing and restoration does not, unfortunately, fit neatly into a predictable or controllable schedule. As Jesus shows the leaders of his day, the urgent work of holy compassion breaks down the dividing walls of tradition and decorum that we might use to separate ourselves from others. Jesus calls us into a deeper

relationship and connection with all of God's children, which likely requires us to leave behind our need to be in control.

Let us pray.

Dear God, empower me to see others as beloved vessels of your liberating spirit that they are. Help me to release my grip on the structures and systems that distort your moments of grace into moments of disruption. Help me to carve out moments for unbridled joy and praise, especially when I feel most busy and burdened. Amen.