

Bent Out of Shape

By: David Burruss

We've all heard the phrase, "bent out of shape." Usually, it describes someone who's upset, annoyed, or emotionally rattled by something small. But what if we took that idea more literally? What if being "bent out of shape" isn't just about our attitude, but also reflects something deeper, something spiritual or even physical?

Luke 13 introduces us to a woman who lived that reality. For eighteen years, she was physically bent, unable to stand upright. But her story is about more than her spine. It's about the burdens we all carry. It's about what Jesus can do when life, sin, or even religion leaves us bent out of shape.

A Bent Out of Shape Woman (Luke 13:10–13)

"Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up." (Luke 13:10–11)

We don't know her name, age, or background. All we're told is her condition. She was bent over, crippled by a "spirit of infirmity" for nearly two decades. Her eyes were likely fixed on the dirt, her world a small, downward view. Every step hurt. Every day was hard.

But here's what's remarkable: she was still in the synagogue.

She hadn't given up on God. Despite the pain, the shame, the fatigue, she still showed up. Eighteen years of being physically bound, and yet her heart was still free enough to worship.

How many of us would do the same?

We live in a world where people walk away from God for much less. One prayer goes unanswered. One church service doesn't meet expectations. Someone says something hurtful. And suddenly, they're done.

But not this woman. She let her worship speak into her suffering. Her back was bent, but her faith was upright.

Then Jesus sees her. He doesn't ask her to explain. He doesn't make her prove anything. He simply calls her forward, lays His hands on her, and says: "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." (Luke 13:12)

And immediately, she straightens up and begins glorifying God.

What doctors, time, and effort couldn't do, Jesus did in a moment.

If you're reading this and you feel bent under shame, grief, addiction, or regret, hear this: Jesus still sees you. And if you keep showing up, He'll meet you. He still heals the bent.

A Bent Out of Shape Leader (Luke 13:14)

"But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath..." (Luke 13:14)

You'd think everyone in the room would be rejoicing. A woman who had suffered for eighteen years had just been healed. But not everyone was celebrating.

The synagogue leader, the man in charge, was angry. Not at the suffering. Not at Satan. Not even at the fact that she had been bound for years. No, he was mad that Jesus healed her on the Sabbath.

Imagine that. A miracle happens, and his first instinct is to police the calendar.

He doesn't even speak directly to Jesus. He turns to the crowd and scolds them, essentially saying, "Come back on a weekday if you want to be healed."

This man was so tied to his system that he couldn't see the Savior. He was close to the house of God, but far from the heart of God.

There's a warning here. We can be so caught up in our church routines, our personal preferences, or our sense of religious order that we miss the actual move of God right in front of us.

Let's not become so committed to structure that we miss the Savior standing in our midst.

A Bent Out of Shape Law (Luke 13:15–17)

"Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?" (Luke 13:15)

Jesus doesn't stay silent. He calls out the hypocrisy. These leaders would untie animals on the Sabbath so they could drink, but they were angry when a woman was untied from her suffering.

Their compassion for animals outweighed their compassion for people.

And Jesus presses the point further: "So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" (Luke 13:16)

She was a daughter of Abraham. Part of God's covenant family. If the Sabbath is about rest, renewal, and worship, then what better day could there be for healing?

Sadly, their law had become twisted. Not the law itself, but the way it was used. It had become a cage, not a cure. It no longer reflected God's heart. It just enforced man's control.

Verse 17 wraps it up: "And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him."

Some were put to shame. Others rejoiced. That's often the response when grace disrupts legalism.

The Same Jesus Today

Let's be honest. We all find ourselves somewhere in this story.

Maybe you're like the woman, burdened by something you didn't ask for. Bent by life. Wounded by sin. You didn't choose to be in this condition, but here you are, and you're wondering if you'll ever stand again.

Maybe you're like the synagogue leader, so used to how things are supposed to be that you've grown uncomfortable with the unexpected ways God shows up.

Or maybe you've let your faith become a system instead of a relationship. Rules have replaced love. Control has replaced compassion.

But here's the hope. Jesus walks in. And when He speaks, everything changes.

"Woman, you are loosed..." (Luke 13:12)

That word is for all of us.

Loosed from shame.

Loosed from addiction.

Loosed from fear.

Loosed from tradition that suffocates rather than saves.

And when He touches your life, you won't just stand straight. You'll glorify God with your whole being.

You're Invited

Maybe today is the day God is calling you to take a step forward. Not after you've cleaned yourself up. Not once life is perfect or pain-free. But right now. Just as you are.

At North Main Church of Christ, we want you to know there is a place for you here. Whether you're bent by the weight of the past or just searching for something real, you are welcome. We are a family of believers who worship in spirit and in truth, who love deeply, and who believe in the power of God to change lives.

We don't claim to be perfect. We serve a perfect Savior. And we're committed to walking alongside each other in faith, in love, and in the grace that only Jesus can give.

So come.

Come with your questions.

Come with your wounds.

Come with your story, whatever shape it's in.

Let Jesus touch what's been bent. Let Him heal what's been hurting. Let Him speak freedom into your life like He did for that woman so long ago.

Your posture may have been one of pain, but your future can be filled with purpose.

We invite you to worship with us, learn with us, and grow with us. And if you're ready to take the next step in your faith, to repent of your sins, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we would be honored to walk with you through it.

You don't have to wait any longer.

We'd love to meet you this Sunday at North Main church of Christ.

Come and see what God can do.
Come and stand tall again.