



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA**

**PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”**

57 CARR ST, WEST PERTH WA 6005 PARISH PRIEST: FATHER EMMANUEL STAMATIOU

MOB: 0419 961 313 EMAIL: [stamatem@iinet.net.au](mailto:stamatem@iinet.net.au)

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**SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER 2016 – A WOMAN HEALED ON  
THE SABBATH**

**EPISTLE The Reading is from St Paul’s Letter to the Galatians  
[3:23-29, 4:1-5]**

**But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians, and stewards until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**

## **EXPLANATION:**

St Paul writes that the Law has been a custodian or **tutor** to bring us to Christ, but no man is made righteous on the basis of the Law. Righteousness is granted on the basis of faith in Christ. Once the faith has come, there is no going back. **(3:24-25)** Those who accept faith in Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, became **sons of God** through **Baptism. (3:26-27)** Through Baptism we share one human nature in Christ. Therefore valuing people on opinions and ethnicity (Jew or Gentile); pride and social status (slave and free); and gender (male or female) has no place in the Church. All are one in nature and so all are one in dignity. **(3:28)** All are part of the messianic community – **“Abraham’s offspring”** to whom the promise had been made. And since **“heirship”** is bound to this promise and not to the Law, the Galatians are full heirs of Abraham and of the promise of blessing made to him and his offspring. **(3:29)** But as minors (that is, children in their spiritual understanding) they require **guardians** and **administrators** who provide the special discipline and protection required for their spiritual growth. **(4:1-2)** So also with us, when we were children (minors), we were enslaved under the **“elements of the world”**. That is, because **“we”** includes Paul, then elements of the world must point to the Mosaic Law. **(4:3) And God sent his Son, Who was born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law** and to fulfil his promise to Abraham and all his offspring. So in adoption we became everything God is, except in nature. We become members of His family by grace – a new birth, a new life – born again. **(4:4-5)**

## **GOSPEL The Reading is from St Luke [13:10-17]**

**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. But**

when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, *“Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.”* And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, *“There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.”* The Lord the answered him and said, *“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? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound – think of it – for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?”* 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.

#### **EXPLANATION:**

The woman in this Gospel suffered from demoniac affliction and was **“bent over” for 18 years**. Jesus spotted her whilst He was teaching in the synagogue and immediately went to her aid. As soon as He healed her, she became upright and was **loosed from her infirmity. (13:10-13)** But the **ruler of the synagogue was filled with indignation because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath**. Satan who desired her continued affliction bound the ruler of the synagogue with spite, and through the mouth of this man reviled the miracle. Acts of help towards others on the Sabbath were considered work and were forbidden, except in life-threatening situations. However, the Lord rebukes him and puts him to shame by using the apt example that if animals needing water are cared for on the Sabbath, then is it not more important and humane to deliver this poor woman from Satan’s bondage on the Sabbath. **(13:15)** The ruler, rather than joining in the jubilation that followed Christ’s healing, instead burned with rage that Jesus had healed at all. Why? Because of jealousy that

Jesus had assumed authority and power over the ruler and all His adversaries in the synagogue, and not that the ruler cared much about the Sabbath. Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27) That is, only God can say He is Lord of the Sabbath (“The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”) (Mark 2:28)) Jesus is motivated by compassion. He does not deny Sabbath traditions to keep the Sabbath day holy, but teaches that it is more important to do good on the Sabbath than to maintain the strict observance of Sabbath rest. The religious leaders are motivated by zeal for the rigid performance of rabbinic tradition; for them outward performance is more important than doing good. The two perspectives are incompatible. The Lord, Who straightened out the back of this woman continues to make straight today the lives of those who are bent over by sin. There is not one of us who is not “bent over” and hurting in so many different ways. Each one of us is bent over with our own individual sorrow, our personal grief, our unique affliction and disappointment of which the world knows nothing. It may be a terminal illness upon us or one of our loved ones; or the loss of a close family member; or loss of occupation that causes economic hardship, and so on. Jesus cared for the woman and healed her with a very special care and power – just as He does for all of us who come to Him bent over by all the burdens and cares of life. All we need is faith and prayer and we will leave His presence lighter and straighter than ever before. We come to Him bent over with discouragement; we leave looking up with hope. We come to Him bent over with sin and guilt; we leave Him with sweet forgiveness. We come bent over by weakness; we leave reinforced with God’s presence with us. We come bent over by fear of death; we leave walking upright in the light and joy of Christ’s glorious Resurrection.

**(13:16-18)**