

## ENCOUNTERS: Straighten Up

Scripture used: [Luke 13:10-13](#) & [Psalms 32:2](#)

### OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued the series "Encounters," which examines everyday encounters that people had with Jesus that we see in Scripture, and from these encounters we gain deeper insight into God's heart and how He engages with each of us. In [Psalm 32:2](#), we find the declaration, "Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!" This is one of the scriptures we focus on for today's message. In another scripture we focus on today, [Luke 13:10-13](#), Jesus shows up on a sabbath day, and he's teaching at a synagogue and there's a crowd there. The crowd was mixed by gender and included rich and poor, and Jesus takes note of a woman who's been crippled for 18 years, bent over, and could not stand straight. Jesus dramatically transformed her life, and she went from being bent over to walking straight, healed from her infirmity. Like this woman, if we continue to live our lives in ways that honor God, Jesus will meet us right where we are and truly see us.

### KEY POINTS

1. [Luke 13:11B](#) says of the woman, "she was bent over and could not straighten up at all." This text suggests that this woman could not look up at all, not only physically, but mentally and emotionally as well. This text continues, "Jesus saw her, he called her forward." Perhaps during the 18 years that this woman was crippled, she had lost hope that she would be able to stand up straight again. She might have felt that no one saw her and her pain any longer, or maybe that people simply didn't care. The thing about Jesus is that He always sees the people that nobody else sees. So when Jesus saw this woman, he called her forward and she responded. She could have ignored Jesus or become embarrassed and gone another way. She obeyed. Jesus said to her, "You are set free from your infirmity." The moment we fully expose our heart to God and we are completely honest with Him, we are able to straighten up from the affliction and pain in our lives in authentic ways.
2. Two founding members of the NBCC community, Dwight and Maria Powery were blessed to bring three beautiful girls into the world. Their youngest daughter, Christiana, at the age of 7 found herself with an autoimmune disease that started to attack her skin, bones, and major organs. Christiana was full of love and light, she loved the Lord and participated in piano and sports. Sadly in December 2005, she went home to the Lord because of her illness. Christiana's family was devastated. Her mother, Maria Powery, found her daughter's last journal entry which ended "... and God also touch..." Knowing Christiana's heart, the family has held onto the assurance that to the very end, Christiana was praying for others. In spite of the pain, the Powery family is convinced that Christiana's prayer included each of them, that they would be able to hold tightly to God's love during their grieving. Because of this prayer, this family has been able to straighten up rather than be permanently broken and wounded by Christiana's loss.
3. Pastor Hurmon referenced a message shared by a colleague and friend called, "Praying Through Your Disappointments." Our inability to be honest with God through our disappointment becomes an unseen power that keeps us bent over and in bondage. Pastor Hurmon's colleague told PH that when he started being honest with God, it set him free. Little by little, the feelings that God had abandoned him were replaced with gratitude when he exposed his heart and was honest with God. Like Pastor Hurmon's friend, like the Powery's, we too can bring our deepest pain and disappointment to God, and we too can encounter a love that will allow us to "straighten up" in spite of the heartbreaking challenges of life.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Reflect on the woman in [Luke 13:11B](#). Is there something in your life that has caused you to be mentally, emotionally, physically, or spiritually "bent over"?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Holding on to our disappointments and anger, and not talking honestly to God about how we feel prevents us from gratitude and appreciation over our lives. How honest have you been lately with yourself and with God about the challenges and unanswered prayers in your life?
- 3) **DO** - Respond to this week's message with "I will pray through my disappointments." Also, it is not too late to sign up for the PF40 challenge leading up to Easter where you will receive a daily scripture, and questions to ponder on every day until Easter. Please join us next week as we continue this message series "Encounters!"