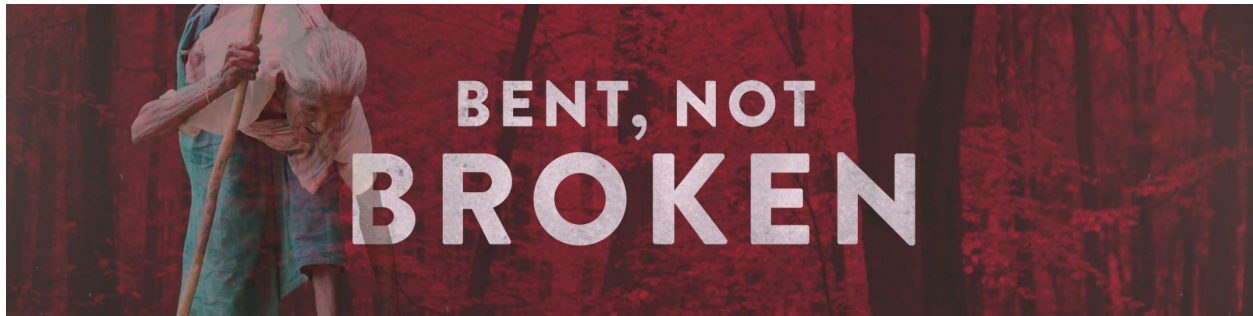




Joseph Swan // September 6, 2026

Have you ever kept showing up, kept praying, and kept believing, even when nothing seemed to change? This message tells the story of a woman who lived with a painful, visible condition for eighteen years. She showed up to the synagogue every week and went home unhealed every time, yet Jesus finally saw her and called her forward. Her story reminds us that our circumstances don't get the final word on our identity, and that staying faithful in the wait matters even before anything changes.

Scripture: [Luke 13:10-13, 16 NLT](#) // [2 Chronicles 16:9a NLT](#) // [1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT](#)

Bottom Line: You may be bent, but you're not broken.

Digging In:

1. Can you think of a time when you prayed for something and the answer came instantly? What happened?
2. Now reflect on a situation when you prayed and nothing changed, maybe for a long time. How did you respond?
3. Read Luke 13:10-13 together as a group. What stands out to you about this woman's situation, and about the fact that Jesus is the one who notices her first?
4. The woman had returned to the synagogue every week for 18 years with no change in her condition. What would it take for you to keep showing up like that? What would tempt you to stop?
5. Joseph shared that pain, shame, or rejection can become a label we carry, like it's our name. Is there a label from your past or present that you've allowed to define you?
6. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18. What's the difference between generic gratitude and being truly thankful "in all circumstances"? Which is harder for you, and why?
7. The woman kept giving thanks, even though her prayers weren't being answered. What would it look like for you to be thankful in the midst of a situation that hasn't changed yet?
8. Jesus called her forward rather than going to her. Why do you think he did that? What does it cost her to respond?
9. In Luke 13:16, Jesus refers to the woman as a "daughter of Abraham," rather than by her condition. Is there a place in your life where you need to hear God's name for you instead of the label you've been carrying? What difference would this make?

10. What's one circumstance right now where you feel bent, but not broken? What would it look like to bring that honestly to God this week?

Moving Forward:

This week, notice where you've let a circumstance, a label, or a lengthy delay shape how you see yourself. Instead of waiting for things to change before you thank God, choose one specific thing to thank him for today, even in the middle of what's unresolved. If there's a label you've been carrying, ask God to show you what he actually calls you instead.

Prayer Prompt:

Invite everyone to sit quietly and finish this sentence in their own head:

God, the label I've been carrying is _____.

After a moment, invite them to silently pray:

But I trust that you see me as your son/daughter, not my circumstances.

Then offer this prayer to conclude your time together:

God, thank you for seeing us even when we feel overlooked or unnoticed. Where we've believed a label instead of your truth, set us free. Teach us to be thankful even in the middle of what hasn't changed yet, and give us the courage to step forward when you call us. Amen.