

# D - The Commission

## 1. Sending out the disciples

*Matt. 9:35-10:15:* Jesus, seeing the multitudes, felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. He told them to pray for God to send out workers, and then proceeded to send the disciples themselves out.

*Matt. 10:1:* He gave them authority to cast out unclean spirits and to heal every kind of disease.

*Matt. 10:7-8:* He commanded them to preach, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons.

*Matt. 10:9-10:* He commanded them not to take anything with them or acquire money or supplies for their services, but to give freely what Jesus had given them. They were to stay with whoever accepted them, for a worker is worthy of his support (nourishment).

*Luke 22:35-36:* Jesus told the disciples that they could now to take a purse and bag with them, but He did not rescind His commission to preach and heal.

These verses give specific instructions for the disciples, including the command to preach and heal. He also instructed them that they were not to take extra possessions or charge for their services. But this was a short-term mission trip. Did Jesus mean for these instructions to continue long-term and be extended to other believers?

## 2. The Great Commission

*Matt. 28:18-20:* Jesus sent the disciples out to make new disciples, to baptize and teach these new converts to observe all that Jesus had taught them.

*Mark 16:14-18:* Jesus sent the disciples out to preach the gospel. He commented that the signs that will accompany those who become Christians will include casting out demons, speaking in tongues picking up serpents, drinking poisons, and healing the sick.

Not only did Jesus commission His disciples to long-term ministry, but the verse in Mark seems to allude to future believers as well.

## 3. The Apostles' Ministry

*Acts 3:1-26:* Peter and John healed a lame beggar (*vs. 3-8*). As a result, the beggar and those around him praised and worshipped God (*vs. 8-9*). Peter used the opportunity to remind them that the man's healing was by no means attributable to Peter's power or piety (*vs. 12*), but as a result of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (*vs. 16*).

*Acts 14:8-18:* Paul healed a lame man, and when the crowds began to worship him, Paul and Barnabas tore their robes and gave all the glory to God, humbling themselves (*vs. 14-15*).

*Acts 5:12-16:* The apostles performed many wonders, healed the sick, and many were converted as a result to Christianity.

*Acts 9:32-35:* Peter healed a paralyzed man, and the people turned to the Lord. *Acts 9:36-43:* Peter raised Tabitha from the dead, and many then believed in the Lord. *Acts 19:11-12:* Paul performed many

miracles, healing the sick and casting out demons. *Acts 20:7-12*: A boy fell out of a window, and Paul raised him from the dead.

From Acts it is evident that the apostles continued with Jesus' commission to heal the sick as well as to preach the gospel. They believed deeply that none of the power to perform such miracles was from them, but it all came from God through faith in the risen Jesus Christ. What about future believers? Was this power only confined to the apostles?

#### **4. The Ministry of the Early Church**

*1 Cor. 12: 4-11, 28-31*: The gift of healing was one of the spiritual gifts exercised in the early church (*vs. 9, 28*). As with the other gifts, only certain people had this gift, not all Christians (*vs. 30*). Judging from the examples of the Apostles in Acts, this type of healing involved an authoritative command for the sick person to be healed.

*James 5:14-16*: Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Another ministry of the early church was to pray for healing. This type of healing did not necessarily involve the authoritative command to be healed, but instead it was more a petition to God for God calls us to bear each other's burdens.

*Gal. 6:2*: Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

*Rom. 15.1*: Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

As health care professionals, we are in the position of the strong person. God asks us to bear our patients' weakness. This means listening to their struggles and empathizing with their sickness. This task is overwhelming without Christ's strength. But since He bore all of our sin, pain, and illness, only He can give us strength to do the same to others.

#### **5. Our healing ministry**

##### *A. Our Commission*

*Matt. 25.31-46*: In describing God's judgment, Jesus mentioned a number of ministries to which His followers should devote themselves. They included hospitality, care of the poor, ministry to prisoners, and ministry to the sick.

*Mark 16:14-18*: Jesus' commission to the disciples in the book of Mark included a promise that the ministry of new believers would include healing disease.

The early church, as you remember from HCBS part 1, fulfilled this commission by devoting much ministry to the care of the sick. God's commission has not changed. Contemporary Christians should seek to minister to the sick. Anyone can visit and minister spiritually to the sick. Some Christians believe that the spiritual gift of healing still exists, so they seek to be involved with faith healing. Others believe that the authoritative gift of healing no longer exists, but that God sometimes heals disease through prayer, and so they pray for the sick. As health care

providers, we have an amazing ability to fulfill God's commission by ministering to the sick physically and spiritually.

*B. Making health care a ministry*

As a Christian health care provider, you must now decide your purpose in providing health care.

Is it just a job, a way to make a living? Or is God calling you to use your profession as a tool for ministry?

In making health care a ministry, we must consider the following:

1. We have to believe that all healing is a gift of God (*Deut. 32:39, Job 5:17-18*).
2. We must see ourselves as instruments of God's healing
3. We practice medicine to the glory of God (*1 Peter 4:11*).
4. We practice it in service of others, not for our own gain (*1 Peter 4:10*)
5. We practice it in love (*1 Cor. 13*).