

STUDY 9



The transforming touch of Heaven

Sunday 17th June 2018

Reading – Luke 5.17-26

9. THE SIGN OF THE KINGDOM

In the kingdom manifesto of Jesus recorded in **Luke 4.18-19** Jesus declares that *the Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.*

Jesus made the clear announcement of his kingdom ministry (based on Isaiah 61.1-2) and followed it through with fulfilment in his actions.

- Take the reading from **Luke 5.17-26** and begin to reflect upon the healing as a sign of the kingdom. What stands out for you in this story of the paralysed man?
- Alan highlighted Lk 5.17 and the statement how *the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick*. Is there the place to pray that the power of the Lord would be present in wbc? Are there times when God withholds the display of his power?

There are numerous challenges with regard to active faith but we see in this incident how Jesus gave priority to forgiveness over the healing of paralysis.

In the series we have often spoken of how the kingdom has come but also, it is still to come. The healing and wholeness that we long for will never be complete until the ultimate transforming touch of heaven takes place when Jesus returns and makes all things new. The healing of the present physical order will only be complete in the future age, Rom 8.20-23.

1. THE HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS

Throughout the gospel accounts we have Jesus (Matt 4.23-24) *preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people.*

Matt 8.16 *When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him...and (he) healed all the sick.*

How do you imagine the healing ministry of Jesus taking place when faced with a huge arena of human need?

Acts 10.38 is a good summary of Jesus' ministry.

- In what way is healing a sign of the kingdom? Do you find this a surprising sign of the kingdom breaking in?

Matt 12.28 particularly has reference to exorcism, *but if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

- In what way can the healing ministry be seen as a declaration of the new creation that is a foretaste of the kingdom's fullness?

2. THE HEALING MINISTRY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

God is spoken of as the one who intervenes and heals.

There is the promise to Moses in Exodus 15.26 *I am the Lord who heals you.*

- Go round your group with each choosing a particular 'healing event' in the OT that has significance in its impacting power. For instance, I love the healing of the Naaman (1 Kings 5) from his leprosy through the ministry of the prophet Elisha.

3. THE HEALING MINISTRY THROUGH JESUS' FOLLOWERS BEING SENT OUT

- The 12 were sent out – (Luke 9.1-6; Matt 10.1) and ministering healing was a key element of their ministry.
- The 72 were sent out Luke 10.8-9. How did they return and what did they declare?
- Jesus has given us authority – commissioned and authorised by the Lord himself. Why are we slow in taking up this authority?

What do you think about the ministry of **HEALING ON THE STREETS**? Look up the web site <http://www.healingonthestreets.com/> and see some of the encouraging stories of God at work on the streets. Frequently the unchurched are more open to receiving prayer than the church!

The healing on the streets indicate that they seek to **'create a thin place on the streets where heaven and earth meet and people can encounter Jesus.'** This echoes our strap line for the series *the transforming touch of heaven!*

4. THE HEALING MINISTRY CONTINUES THROUGH ACTS

Acts indicates clear evidence of the healing ministry continuing and impacting the lives of many. Acts 5.15-16 ... *people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.*

- Within your group take one of the healing events in Acts and see its impacting power in the witness of the believing community.

To ponder: 'Signs and wonders occur on the frontier between the Kingdom of God and the dominion of darkness. If you are not seeing signs and wonders ask yourself if you are any longer on the frontier.'

FOR YOUR NOTES