

How are you feeling?

- *(with kids)*
- Get people telling me about their times of illness
 - what happened to them, what was wrong...
 - and what was done to help get them better?
 - (by whom?)
- We are going to be thinking a bit about what Jesus told his disciples to do when they came across illness
 - prayer of thanks that God is able to deal with even times of illness

What do I believe?

- Selective hearing first
 - hear some things and not others...!
 - fear we do that with Scripture - fear I do that with Scripture...
- Something of where I'm coming from...
 - I'm **not** at the end of my thinking, a settled position from which to tell others what I believe the Bible says
 - there are things I'm not sure about, things I worry about, things I don't know whether they are products of my upbringing and culture and not Scripture
 - feel caught between two parts of the evangelical world: **conservative, prayer meetings, caution about excesses and charismatic, healing meetings, great claims...**
 - ...and where I think our evangelical culture is coming from, with Prayer Meeting emphasis etc
 - subtle tendency to pray for sustaining through illness and not healing from illness...

Authority (v.1)

- Jesus, God's Son, has authority over illness
 - he grants to his disciples that authority

Preach (v.7)

- Healing in Jesus' ministry was often connected with a proclamation of who he was and what he had come to achieve
 - he came preaching and healing...
 - the preaching and the healing appear to be connected, like they weren't complete without each other...
 - **(here is one of the places where I'm certainly not completely worked through!)**
 - certainly the healing of body is connected with the healing of the whole person, particularly relationship with God, that Jesus' death and resurrection accomplish

The Kingdom is near (v.7)

- Healing is a demonstration of the kingdom:
 - **your kingdom come, your will be done...** we pray each week
 - kingdom is where God reigns, where things are as they should be
 - compare with passage in Revelation 21, when God's kingdom literally comes, the new heaven and new earth...
 - **(1) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. (2) I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. (3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. (4) He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4)**
 - part of what has gone is sickness and disease
 - he has authority over them, they are not a part of his kingdom

Heal the sick (v.8)

- Here is a direct and challenging command we very rarely obey
 - some, perhaps, will hear this command and channel their obedience into the medical profession
 - there are indeed a great number of Christian doctors and nurses...

- But this command wasn't limited to Luke among the early Christians (who seems to have been a physician)
 - to all of them, to be a part of their overall ministry
 - just as some are called to be evangelists full-time, but all are called to speak of Christ...
 - so it would seem that some are called to heal, whether in medical world or by special calling as a significant part of their ministry, all are called to pray for and work to bring healing
- *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. (James 5:14)*

Prayer

- Do we have the courage and the faith to pray for healing
 - and not just for people to be sustained, or something else intangible, through their illness
 - dare we pray for miracles?
- When someone tells us of an illness, theirs or someone else's...
 - what do we do?
 - "I will pray for you" - future tense, somewhere else, often we'll do it, sometimes we'll forget...
 - what about "Can I pray with you just now?"...

And raise the dead... and cast out demons

- I believe they still happen, but rarely!

Freely you have received, freely give (v.8)

- Motivation is from what we have received, from Jesus

Trust in God (v.9-10)

- Method is to trust in God, not our own strength or method
 - I don't know what will happen if we pray like this...
 - it won't always "work"...
 - we might get confused, discouraged, profoundly encouraged, challenged, see people miraculously healed....
 - but we will be placing our trust in God, we will be obeying!

Conclusion

- Will everything be alright?
 - will everyone be healed?
 - no, I don't believe so...
 - but some will - and we need to be obedient to Jesus' command, to take the risk and step out in faith

Jeevan's story

- Story from *Life and Work* (February 2008 edition, p.18, in "Mountains to Climb" article)
 - a story from Nepal...
 - connection to conversion for many