

Scriptures for Healing: *The Disciples*

The disciples are the close circle of Jesus' hand-picked followers that He was training to believe what He believed and to do the works that He did which included the "children's bread"—healing and deliverance.^[1] The Holy Spirit recorded occasions which demonstrate both their success and their failure while they were still "babes in Christ." This is certainly intended to be an encouragement to us: We too are disciples, hand-picked by Jesus and we too experience failure along with success. May we learn from both.

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" Luke 10:17 ESV

Lessons the Disciples Can Teach Us

The disciples who walked with Jesus during His three years of ministry were given authority by Him to heal "every disease and affliction" and to cast out spirits. But they were not always successful as their failure to liberate the demonized boy demonstrated. We can draw some encouraging insights from these two glimpses into this seldom recorded aspect of the disciple's lives:



- 1) Saving faith is not required.** Not a single one of these first disciples were born again or had "saving faith" at this point in their lives, yet they were still empowered by Jesus to pray for healing and deliverance. Apparently, Jesus is so willing to heal people that He will work through the prayers of anyone who is willing, even if they have a still undeveloped faith relationship with God.
- 2) Moral perfection is not required.** Even Judas, who later betrayed Jesus, was among those who were sent out working miracles. Moral character is always desirable, but apparently is not necessary for being a vessel of God to heal and liberated others. I note this not to promote apostasy, but to counter the enemy's accusations that you may not be "mature" or "worthy" enough to be used by God. Don't wait for moral perfection to arrive before you set out to be used of God.
- 3) Steady success is not required.** We are shown that even the disciples who walked with Jesus and who would become the mighty apostles of the early church, nevertheless, experienced failure and perplexity all along the way. That should encourage us to keep trying to be used and seeking to learn the ropes.



4) Being "somebody special" is not required. Jesus entrusted the healing ministry to fairly untried, new recruits that He had just invited to walk with Him. These were ordinary people like all of us. They only became extraordinary long after they began following Jesus and seeking to be of service to Him. Jesus seems to love to release people into ministry, even if it means that they will get in over their heads at times.

The Sending of the Twelve

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Matthew 10:1-9 ESV

Disciples Unable to Heal a Demonized Boy

And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." And Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you." Matthew 17:14-20 ESV

Next Healing Essential

The Apostles After the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus His close followers are no longer called disciples. They have become the apostles, the "sent ones" who are now fully commissioned to carry on in the Lord's absence the work He trained them to do: preach the good news and heal the sick. To their number others have been added,



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most notably Paul of Tarsus. The Church is launched with signs and wonders; so is its healing ministry.

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Scriptures and Footnotes

[1] In His conversation with a non-Jewish woman who was seeking healing for her daughter, Jesus called the ministry of demonic deliverance "the children's bread." Children's bread indicates that healing and deliverance are not only for the "children" of the covenant, but also that such supernatural working is meant to be as commonplace and life-giving as our daily bread: **And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."** Matthew 15:22-25 ESV

