

The True Marks of an Apostolic Healer

Introduction:

1. Last week we learned that true apostles of Christ had two primary characteristics:
 - First, they had actually seen the resurrected Christ, physically, after His resurrection from the dead. **1 Corinthians 15:4-9**
 - Second, they demonstrated the validity of their apostleship through the manifestation of miraculous signs and wonders. **Hebrews 2:3-4; Mark 16:20; 2 Corinthians 12:12**
2. There are men today who claim to be apostles and have the apostolic sign gifts. It seems that the number one gift that they purport to have is the apostolic gift of healing.
3. Multitudes of people with sickness and disease crowd into auditoriums hoping to find deliverance from their infirmities through the means of a "faithhealer." Make no mistake about it, it is a big money business.
 - **Illustration:** Benny Hinn lives in a multi-million dollar oceanfront mansion, drives a Mercedes-Benz, sports elaborate clothes and jewelry. He brought in \$89 million in donations in 2002 (L.A. Times).
4. We learned last week that the sign gifts were given for three reasons:
 - To validate the apostles of Christ
 - To confirm new truth given to the apostles
 - To serve as a sign to the nation of Israel
5. There are no apostles today, we have God's completed revelation, and Israel was set aside nationally in Acts 28. Therefore, there is no reason for sign gifts today.
6. Many people go crazy when you say this. They quote **Hebrews 13:8**, "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*" From this verse, they draw the false conclusion that Jesus is **working** the same way today as He did in the gospels and Acts time period (this verse is dealing with Christ's character, not His dealings with man).
7. Then here is what I propose. Let's put them to the biblical test. Jesus said that His apostles would actually do greater works than He did. **John 14:12**
8. Faithhealers today should exemplify the same biblical characteristics in their healing ministries that Jesus and the apostles did in their ministries. Let's look at some of these characteristics from God's Word.

First, Jesus and the apostles went where the sick people were. Matthew 9:35; Acts 5:15

1. Jesus went from city to city finding and healing sick people. The apostles went through the streets of Jerusalem healing sick people.
2. They went where the sick people were; they didn't wait for them to come to them.
3. How thrilling it would be to really have this gift. Imagine being able to go to the hospital and walk through the hallways and touch people that are sick or dying and heal them.
4. Think about flying to great disease pockets of the world and walking through the crowds healing aids, cancer, etc.

5. Why is it that the faith healers are not hanging around the nursing homes, hospitals, and sanitariums? Why is it that they rarely come out of their church buildings, auditoriums, tents, and coliseums to exercise their gift?
6. They seem, for the most part, to exercise their gift in a controlled environment, staged their way, according to their schedule, with their workers prompting and screening the crowd.

Second, Jesus and the apostles healed instantly. Matthew 8:13; Mark 5:29; Luke 17:14; Acts 3:7-8, 9:32-34

1. People will say, "I've been healed and now I'm getting better. My back feels better, my arthritis isn't as painful, my tumor is shrinking, my cancer is in remission, etc."
2. This is wonderful, but it is **not** the gift of healing as exercised by Christ and the apostles. When they healed, it was instantaneous.

Third, Jesus and the apostles healed totally. Matthew 8:14-15; Acts 4:14, 16

1. There was no recuperation period necessary when Jesus and the apostles healed.
2. Peter's mother-in-law was healed and got up and started serving them.
3. When Jesus and the apostles healed, there were no "lying symptoms" to ignore.
4. When the apostles healed the man lame from his mother's womb, the next day he was seen standing with them before the Jewish council and unbelievers could not deny that he had been healed miraculously.
 - **Illustration:** Hobart Freeman, little boy at Hinn crusade.

Fourth, Jesus and the apostles healed everyone.

1. Many times in the Scripture, the Bible is careful to note this. **Matthew 4:23-24, 9:35; Mark 6:56; Acts 5:15-16, 28:7-9**
2. Obviously, people had to want to be healed and come in faith. Jesus and the apostles didn't push their gift on somebody who was antagonistic toward them.
3. But when somebody did come to them and sincerely and genuinely desired healing, they healed them. There were no misfires. It wasn't a case of some being healed and others left in their sick condition.
4. Unlike healers today, they did not leave long lines of disappointed people who had to return home in their wheelchairs. They didn't end their healing service to catch a jet or because their TV time expired.
 - **Illustration:** William Nolan, a medical doctor who wrote, "*Healing: a Doctor in Search of a Miracle.*" He attended a Kathryn Kuhlman meeting.

Fifth, Jesus and the apostles healed organic disease.

1. They didn't just heal lower back pain, headaches, heart palpitations, arthritis, and other invisible ailments.
2. They healed legs crippled from birth, withered hands, palsy, blind eyes, deaf ears, leprosy, etc.
3. Their healings were undeniably miraculous. **Matthew 15:31; Acts 4:16**
 - Jesus took an ear that had been cut off and healed it. **Luke 22:50-51**
 - Peter healed a man who had been crippled and in bed for 8 years. **Acts 9:34**

4. Paul actually does the reverse of this to a man in **Acts 13:8-11**. He was withstanding Paul, and Paul strikes him with blindness.

Sixth, Jesus and the apostles performed the ultimate of all healings - they raised the dead.

1. And they did it in front of crowds of people. **John 11:38-45; Acts 9:36-43, 20:7-12**
2. Those who claim to have the apostolic gift of healing are not raising people from the dead that have been dead for four days as Jesus did, or dead bodies that have been washed and laid in an upper chamber as Peter did.

In Conclusion:

1. We have seen from the Bible six characteristics of a true apostle's healing ministry.
2. Despite the claims being made today, nobody is exhibiting these six characteristics from God's Word in their healing ministries.
3. If a person wants to conveniently disregard the six things that typified the biblical sign gift of healing, that is fine, but they should not call themselves apostles and claim to have the sign gift of healing.
4. Why is this important to look at and study? Because so many people today are living under guilt and condemnation because they did not receive their healing. They are afraid maybe they are inferior, maybe God is mad at them, maybe they aren't good enough, maybe they don't have enough faith.
5. There are others who are filled with false hope and end up devastated with their faith in God being undermined.
6. Christian, do not despair. Paul called this dispensation "*the sufferings of this present time.*" Paul said that though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.
7. We have a hope that extends far deeper than the physical healing of these corruptible, mortal bodies.
8. "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" **2 Corinthians 4:17**