

FRIDAY, MARCH 5

Matthew 9:35-11:1

This passage always captured my imagination as a child. I always pictured Jesus sending out people in a field of ripe greens to go and harvest the freshly grown vegetables. While it can be easy to make this passage all about growing the church and gathering numbers, as many missions agencies and church growth strategists suggest, this passage is more about Jesus commissioning his disciples and welcoming them into his healing ministry.

Matthew 9:35 says, "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness." Then in 10:1, the author of Matthew says, "Then Jesus summoned his 12 disciples and gave authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness." In 9:35, Jesus is the one who is healing. In 10:1, Jesus gives authority to the 12 disciples to cast out demons and to heal. The same Greek word for "cure" is used twice in this passage, the word *therapeuo*, which is where we get the term "therapy." Jesus is inviting the disciples to be part of the therapy ministry.

There are two questions which then come to mind: What is sickness? What is healing? I like to think of sickness as broken relationships with God, others, self, and creation. This gives us a more holistic picture of what sickness looks like. Sickness, while it can certainly manifest itself in physical forms, is not limited to what we might think of as physical ailments. Moreover, if one of the relationships is broken, it can affect the other relationships. Healing, therefore, is fixing these broken relationships. The exciting thing about that is that God gives us the authority to participate in Christ's healing ministry through the Holy Spirit.

This is my last semester of seminary, and I think I stand alongside many others who are going through transition and are uncertain where God is calling them. Perhaps this passage is inviting us to ask not, "Where is God calling me?" but rather, "Where are there broken relationships that God wants to heal?" In asking that question, God will equip you and give you authority to be part of Christ's incredible healing ministry.

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