

February 14, 2010

Healing ministry of the people of God

(2 Kings 5:1-4, Ps61,1 Tim 1:12-17,Mark 7:31-37)

Very recently I happened to hear a TV speaker speaking on the topic "Is ministry so cheap?" In this message he pointed out that ministry was not just a last option when all doors to get a job were closed. He was indeed right. Ministry for many is just saving souls, healing, and pastoring a church and conducting gospel campaigns. Even this is not scriptural. **If we look at the verse "...all things were created by him and for him."(Col 1:16)** it is clear that God has created everything for His glory. Especially He created man in His glorious image for His glory. This is what the Bible makes very clear. Therefore as servants of God, our responsibility first is to teach people that all are in this world to do God's work, for the Bible says that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecc 12:13). Then we have to tell people that God has chosen certain people like Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and teachers to lead His people. These people in Eph. 4:11-13 are called God's **ministry gifts** to the church for the edification of people.

Some men of God think what they do is only the ministry. That shows their limited knowledge of the scriptures. We should not forget that if any body is in the world they are there to do God's work. Let me once again remind you about the five fold purpose of life given by Dr.Rick warren in his book "Purpose driven life" as worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry in the church and the mission in the world. Ministry is something very big in the Bible which has been put down, reduced and almost destroyed--or perhaps replaced, by something else.

The Bible says that Adam was put in the Garden of Eden to till the ground and keep it (Gen 2:15). This was Adam's ministry. Interestingly the Hebrew word for "tilling" is "**abad**" which is also the word for worship in Hebrew. Noah's ministry was the 120 year work of building the ark to save all the species of the animal kingdom. During this time the important ministry which Noah carried out was warning people of the coming deluge. Like was Abraham's ministry was to go the land which God showed him. In this way the Bible is the history of all the people who heard God's call and did what God wanted them to do.

As a matter of fact all human beings are God's children. What is the vocation of children? Is it not to do what their father wanted them to do? But all mankind have left the father's house like the prodigal son. Even then God has been holding out His hands all day long to an obstinate people who walk in ways not good pursuing their own imaginations and has been waiting for them to return home(Is 65:2). Man kind rebelled against God and became slaves to Satan. God's plan of salvation for the world is to set free all from the clutches of Satan through His son Jesus Christ and make Him head of everything (Eph 1:10) . In fulfilling this plan God has been choosing different people in different times. Ministry is to hear God's call and do His work. Ministry is not just preaching or healing or pastoring. It is preaching, healing, pasturing and much more.

Healing the physical diseases is only a part of the overall healing ministry of the people of God which is today's theme. In today's Old Testament lesson the words of a servant girl lead to the healing of the Leprosy of a military general. In today's epistle Paul talking about him

says he is the chief of the sinners . Never did he show the video of many healings happened even though many were healed and great miracles happened in his ministry. In today's gospel lesson Jesus after performing a great miracle of healing asked people never to speak about it to any one. Therefore to-day God is reminding us that healing is only a part of the ministry of the people of God. This is the central message of today's scripture lessons.

The Old Testament lesson: 2 Kings 5:1-6
Ministry is to live for God at all times.

We don't know the name of the Israelite girl in the house of Naaman the Syrian army general. We even don't know any thing about her parents also. But how did she have such a great faith in the God of Israel? I say that it must have come from her parents. God always reminds me through Deut 6:6, 7 and Ps 78:4-8 that bringing our children in the fear of God is the most important part of our overall ministry in this world. I always share this with my three children and teach them whatever God is commanding me to do. As a father and spiritual father God always reminds me my all important duty of teaching what ever God commands me to do. Therefore bringing up the children in the training and instruction of the Lord is the responsibility of every spiritual mother and father.

When we teach our children the way they have to walk, they will never turn away from it but will bring glory to God where ever they may be like the girl in Naaman's house. Can there be any greater thing happening to our children than their names be written in the book of life? The words of that girl, " If only my master would see the prophet

who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy” had led to the declaration that there was no God in the entire world except in Israel. Therefore there is no age limit or minimum age for ministry. Last month we saw that all had to be the witnesses of the triune God. Therefore the crucial ministry of people of God is to set our youngsters free from the clutches of Satan. In other words the inner eyes of our children are to be opened as early as possible. Jesus called Paul in today’s epistle lesson to this ministry of opening the eyes of the people so that they can see the spiritual realities of heaven and hell.

The epistle lesson: I Tim 1:12-17

The eradication of spiritual blindness in the world is the main ministry of God’s people

Jesus came into the world as the true light in body number one to give light to every one i.e. to light the lamps of their spirits(Prov 20:27) (this is same as opening their inner eyes).His ministry in the body number two i.e. the church is also the same. To prepare God’s people for this work of ministry, God have chosen leaders like Paul. The ministry of Paul also shows us that the important ministry of God’s people is eradication of spiritual blindness. Paul is a great model for all in this ministry whom God chose to open their(gentiles’) eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in God(Acts 26:16-18).

Paul boasted in nothing but the cross of Christ. He never boasted about the healings and the miracles that happened in his ministry or

the number of churches he planted, or the number of people who attend the church services. The goal of Paul's ministry is not to heal everyone but to present everyone perfect in Christ by proclaiming Jesus Christ, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom. To this end Paul labored, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully worked in him (Col 1:28, 29). Never did Paul preach Jesus Christ based on the healings that happened. God heals people by sending His word (Ps 107:20). God also has exalted above all things His name and His word (Ps 138:2). Therefore the healing ministry of God's people should begin with the opening of people's eyes for the eye is the lamp of the body. Jesus said If the eyes are good, their whole body will be full of light (Mat 6:22). The ministry which does not always boast in healings but teaches the word of God is God glorifying ministry. Our Lord Jesus also never talked about His healings .He also told people not to talk about them. This is today's Gospel lesson.

The Gospel lesson: Mark 7: 31-37
The divine ministry of our Lord Jesus

Jesus healed all types of diseases and drove demons. But speaking about His ministry He said that His ministry is to serve people ,not to be served and give His life as ransom for many (Mark 10:45).Every time He healed , He gave instructions not to speak about it again. But theses days we find some who talk about nothing but their healings and they never talk about the scriptures also. Therefore God is reminding us healing alone is not the whole ministry of God's people. Opening the eyes of the people and making them disciples is the crucial part of the ministry of God's people. Healing may happen

but they soon will be forgotten but the word of the Lord and those who does the will of God stand forever (I Pet 1:25, I John 2;17)). May God open our eyes to this reality!

Life Application:

1. If some one is healed because of our testimony about Jesus, the glory should go to God alone.
2. Preaching to multitudes from the dais alone is not ministry. To talk about the power of our God where ever we are is also Ministry .We should not under estimate the ministry of the little servant girl in Naaman's house because the words she spoke about her God lead to one military general of a gentile nation proclaiming that the God of Israel alone is the true God.
3. Do you say the work of many drivers who are involved in taking many ministers of God to serve people, ministry or not?
4. If we are not doing God's work we are doing Satan's work.

The Messenger: Jyothi Prakash Ethakoti

jpethakoti@gmail.com