

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

102- Beseech the Lord of the Harvest to Send out Workers into His Harvest- Part 2

Church June 23, 2024

Matthew 9:33-10:1

33 After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

34 But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

The term, "*Evangelical*" should be used to describe that "Branch" of Christianity that holds to the preaching of the biblical Gospel to other people as a *primary* Component of the normal, daily Life of Believers. The word, "*evangel*" comes from the Greek, "*euangelion*" and has to do with the "*Good News*" that Jesus lived and died and rose again to save Sinners. And the Good News is also called, the "*Gospel*". And so, the one who heralds that glorious Gospel is an "*Evangelist*". And so, *Evangelical* Christians are those who take **Matthew 28:18b-20** seriously when Jesus said:

**18 ... All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**

And since this is a Commandment to EVERY Believer- the rest of the people, who say they are saved and who make up the visible Church on the earth- and yet, who are NOT doing this- are in Rebellion and Disobedience to these “red-letter Words” and should repent and become an Evangelical.

I have no idea what gives people the Right to say they are saved and then live in abject Disobedience to this Command. And I really couldn't care less what Logic they may use to justify their Rebellion- they should simply repent and begin to obey God.

So, as far as I am concerned, EVERY genuine Believer should be an Evangelical; and should preach or teach the Evangel (Gospel) to as many people as possible- every single Day- using every Means available to them.

Now I realize that everybody is NOT a Preacher or Teacher. I got that. But nevertheless- EVERY Blood-bought saint of God should be doing *something* to bring the Gospel to the Lost- precisely because what Jesus said here is NOT an Option- but an Order from the Captain of our Salvation, who also told us,

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.

Now there are approximately 85 million people who live in the United States who are a part of 21st Century “*Evangelicalism*”. And that means that Evangelicalism is the *largest* Christian Group in this Country- far *more* than all other Groups¹. But the ONLY reason those 85 million people are saved- is because *somebody* loved them enough to present the Gospel to them.

Now even though Evangelicalism is spread between everything from Baptists; to Presbyterians; to Pentecostals- what *unites* them all is the core Belief that to be Obedient to Jesus- the Gospel MUST be preached to every single human on the earth. So, while we may be divided over secondary or even third-tier Issues- we are *united* in hearing and in believing and in striving to obey what Jesus Himself said,

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.

¹ The 2nd largest Group are Roman Catholics with an estimated 74 million.

And that Reality tells me that the New Covenant is a “*Go and Tell*” Covenant. And so, the LAST thing any Evangelical worth his salt would want- is that his Love for and his Belief in Jesus- might remain a secret.

Now contrast that with the “*Old*” or the “*First Covenant*” that by any Measurement, was a “*Come and See*” Covenant. And it was *primarily* a “Come and See” Covenant with basically one People (the Jews) and a single Nation (Israel).

So, one of the *main* things that makes the New Covenant to be *infinitely* superior to the Old- is the biblical Goal that, when Jesus comes back- there will be People “out from” EVERY Nation; Tribe; and Tongue represented in the Church on this earth to welcome Jesus back to whom **2Thessalonians 1:10a** applies:

when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed ...

... which tells me that the Church will be on the earth when Jesus comes back!

Therefore, I do NOT believe that the 2nd Coming is a “rescue Mission” to take us all away from all the evil Ones. The Coming of Jesus to this earth the 2nd Time is, instead, the final Crescendo to the “Song of the Redeemed” that began in a Prayer Meeting in an Upper Room and has been sung now for over 2,000 years in every Language on earth!

The Return of Jesus to this earth will proclaim loudly and unmistakably the unmatched Success of the Gospel! It will cry out that Jesus won! And it will herald the glorious Truth that satan *could not; will not; and did not* overpower the Church of Jesus!

And that marvelous Victory was won by the Fact that the “Church militant” did NOT prepare themselves to *leave* this earth- but kept on faithfully beating against the “Gates of Hades” until those Gates, like the “Walls of Jericho”, could NOT and did NOT prevail! And so, those Gates fell down flat; and the people of the Church left the Comfort and Security of their Homes and they went to the Ends of the earth so that the worst Sinners and Barbarians on earth could become bond-slaves of the Lord Christ!

One of the greatest Examples of this- “all but forgotten Theology” and this Determination to preach Jesus Christ until MORE people believe than don’t- was a man named, William Carey (17 August 1761- 9 June 1834). And as he prepared himself to obey the Words of Jesus to “*Go; Make; Baptize, and Teach*” he said this,

“To obey the Will of God we need an open Bible and an open map”²

² William Carey; *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*

... signifying the Call of God that he believed fell on every genuine believer to reach the lost peoples of the world with the “Good News”.

So, as I listen to those great Evangelists of the Past speak about doing MORE; going to MORE places; preaching and teaching MORE often; to MORE people; utilizing MORE Means; so that MORE will hear- it is a strange thing to me to hear so many people in our day speak about leaving this world behind- basically handing it and the people in it to satan and his followers- as though their souls don't matter. And so, I look to Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our Faith- Who, instead of telling me to get ready to leave- told me,

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.

Now last time- I told you that there were at least five things in these seven verses that we need to try to understand:

1. The *Amazement* of the People (v. 33)
2. The *Rejection* of the Leaders (v. 34)
3. The *Ministry* of Jesus (v. 35)
4. That which *Motivated* Jesus' Ministry (vs. 36b & 37a)
5. The *Method* by which Jesus carried out His Ministry (vs. 37b-4:1)

... and we covered the first two last time- so, let's continue on by looking at number 3:

3. The *Ministry* of Jesus

Matthew 9:35

Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

... so, here are the four Parts of Jesus' earthly Ministry:

1. Go through all the cities and villages
2. Teach in their Synagogues
3. Proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom
4. Heal every Disease

... so, these are the four Attributes or Characteristics of Jesus' earthly Ministry during His *first* Advent. And they should also be the Attributes and Characteristics of the Church that Jesus is building and over which Jesus is Head.

Now when Jesus comes back- He will NOT do what He did the *first* Time. When Jesus *returns* to this earth- He will NOT preach or teach; He will NOT proclaim the Gospel; and He will NOT heal the sick. He will NOT cast out demons and He will NOT raise the Dead. When our Lord and Savior comes back- He will Judge the world in Righteousness! And He will rid the entire Earth of ALL Evil by removing ALL evil people from the earth and casting ALL of them into Hell. Please read what Jesus Himself said about this from **Matthew 13:24-30**:

24 Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

25 But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away.

26 But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also.

27 The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

28 And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?'

29 But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them.

30 Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

... so, Jesus is determined to remove the Tares from the earth- FIRST- and then gather the Wheat into His Barn!

And so, in His *first* Advent- Jesus' Ministry was *summarized* by what He Himself described in **Luke 19:10**:

the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

... and that has been the Cry of the Church since our King left. Jesus went about Seeking and then Saving the Jewish elect. So, our Lord went about to first Find (Seek) those Jews, who had been chosen for Salvation from before the Foundation of the world- and then He went about teaching and preaching the Gospel to them- *confirming* that the Gospel was legitimate and "Heaven-sent" by giving "Divine Credibility" on the radical Theology that He was preaching (Primarily the

Sovereignty of God in Salvation) through the Miracles; Healings; the casting out of demons and raising the Dead!

And the Gentiles (non- Jews) had the Gospel preached to them first by the Apostles AFTER the Jews hardened their hearts and refused to believe. And we are now Commissioned to follow in our Lord's Footsteps and, "Go"; and "Make"; and "Baptize"; and "Teach" so that ALL of those God has chosen to save- will be saved. That is what will bring to our Lord the *most* Glory. And that has been the *primary* Calling of the people who make up the Church for over 2,000 years now.

So, as we are now living at the beginning of the third Millenia of the "Last Days" or the "Church Age"- we see that the words of Jesus ring in our ears when He said,

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.

... and because William Carey and others like Him believed those words and responded to those words in the Way they did- today there are MORE people preaching the Gospel all around the world to MORE people than at any Time in the History of the Church!

And so, as we sit on the cusp of the greatest Awakening the world has ever seen- as we are on the threshold of seeing the "great Harvest" that Jesus promised- we see a dichotomy of two prevailing Opinions- of which BOTH are Bad and Wrong and Unbiblical.

On the one hand- we see that MORE people who lay claim to be saved than ever before have all but *abandoned* the Call of God to reach ALL of the Elect with the Gospel; and are now simply *using* Jesus Christ as some type of "cosmic Tool" to help them acquire *more* and *more* of this world's Goods. And their Preaching and Teaching and their Prayers are NOT in line with the Call of God to "**beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest!**"

Their Cry is that the Lord of the Harvest will make them rich and prosperous and famous and that He will *ignore* the unsaved elect of this world; and do *more* and *more* for them! But it will be very hard for those people to equate themselves with what the Apostle Paul said in **1 Timothy 6:3-11:**

3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,

4 he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,

5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

But on the other hand- there are those- who say they are saved- who see Trouble rising up; who sense that the Future for Christians in America will be far *less* Easy; far *less* Safe; far *less* Secure; and far *less* Enjoyable. And those who are afraid of the Future are also Preaching and Teaching and Praying *contrary* to the Call of God to, **“beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest!”**

And these seek to *abandon* this world to satan and his people. They are *more* than willing to basically leave the unsaved elect to fend for themselves- as they honestly believe that they are *entitled* to never suffer for the sake of the Gospel. These wayward souls see NOTHING worthy of having to live as Strangers and Pilgrims and Aliens in this World for. And so, they seek to be whisked away- safe and sound- so they may not even get their hands dirty- while they ignore what Jesus Himself said when Christianity was an illegal and persecuted Religion,

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.

We can all be very thankful that those who came before us- did NOT seek to be Safe and Secure. They sought to be found Faithful, Fruitful, and Busy in the Work of the Lord- patiently *enduring* whatever God sovereignly allowed to come their Way. They did NOT say, *“What will happen to ME- if I say that?”*; instead, they said, *“What will happen to THEM- if I do NOT say that?”*

Now a *huge* part of Jesus’ earthly Ministry was Him telling various Parables. But there is a very strange Passage that deals with *why* Jesus taught the people through Parables that we find in **Matthew 13:10-17** that says,

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

11 Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

12 "For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

13 Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

14 In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.'

16 But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

17 For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Now this Passage basically says several things that we need to know and believe:

- Understanding the Bible is a Gift from God that is *sovereignly* “granted” to those who have been chosen by God
- The Gift of comprehending the Bible *correctly and fully* has NOT been granted to everyone.
- The Reason Jesus spoke to them in Parables was so that ONLY the elect would understand while the non- elect would NOT understand
- Verse 12 was spoken specifically to the Jews- prophesying that the Relationship with God that the Jews had would be taken from them and given to the Gentiles because the Jews rejected Jesus.
- What Jesus showed us in His earthly Ministry was far above what the Old Testament Prophets understood
- By quoting the Prophecy of Isaiah- Jesus was saying that this is the Way it has ALWAYS been and is NOT new

Now I'm going to get into this much more deeply when we get to Chapter 13- but suffice it to say that as Jesus taught the people in Parables- He was *emphasizing* both the *Importance* as well as the *Necessity* of the Sovereignty of God in Salvation.

In His *first* Advent- Jesus was the humble Carpenter's son; the suffering Servant; and the Prince of Peace because Jesus came the first time- to die. But that Ministry was NOT normal. It wasn't like the Pharisees. It was odd and strange and different from anything the Disciples had ever seen.

And so, when He explained His divine Will to die and rise again and then ascend into Heaven- Peter interrupted Jesus and John Mark recorded this in **Mark 8:33**:

But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.

Now I have thought a lot about this over the years- and I'm NOT sure that I would have understood what Jesus was saying and doing any better than the Disciples did. My ONLY Hope would be in the Fact that, since God has chosen me- God would sovereignly give me the Understanding that I would need.

But we need to remember that the Jews had been eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come for hundreds of years. They talked about it a lot. They also sang about it and even prayed fervently that Messiah would come.

But there was then and still is today- a great Difference between the Way that 21st Century American Christians think about the Messiah and the Way that 1st Century Jews did. And I have talked about this before on numerous Occasions.

The Jews of the 1st Century were NOT seeking for a Messiah- in the Way that we 21st Century American Christians think about God's "anointed One". In other words, the overwhelming majority of the Jews were NOT looking for a *spiritual* man or even a *religious* man. They certainly were NOT looking for God to take on human Flesh and be born as a Man- so that Jesus was truly and fully Man as well as truly and fully God- in the SAME body; at the SAME time- without Conflict or Compromise!³

The ancient Jews were looking for a *political* and *military* Leader, who would accomplish at least six things:

1. Raise up a physical Army of Jews
2. Engage the Roman Occupiers; defeat them; and drive all Gentile pagans from the Promised Land

³ The fourth Century Preacher- John Chrysostom said that Jesus was, "*fully and truly God and fully and truly Man in the same Body at the same time- without conflict or contradiction.*"

3. Restore the Kingdom of Israel to its former Glory they enjoyed under King Solomon
4. Return all Jews who had been displaced by Persecution, War, and the Judgment of God
5. Engage the pagan kings of other lands; defeat them; and incorporate them into a “greater Israel”.
6. Rule the world from Jerusalem with a rod of iron

... and after Herod’s Temple had been destroyed in 70 AD.- the Jews were also fervent in their Belief that the Messiah would also rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

So, to the 1st Century Jews- terms like “Save” and “Heal” and “Deliver” and “Rescue”- had NO connection to Sin and Righteousness. So, they were NOT looking for the Mesiah to do what the Angel told Joseph in **Matthew 1:18-25**:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife,

25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Now pay close attention to verse 21:

She [Mary] will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

... because this verse gave the 1st Century Jew a very *unique* and a very *narrow* Definition of the word, “save”.

And they *needed* that *unique* and *narrow* Definition because to tell a 1st Century Jew that he was a Sinner who needed to be born again was to bring him into great Confusion. Case in point would be the Jewish theologian, Nicodemus in **John 3:1-12:**

1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;

2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?"

10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"

11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.

12 If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Now Jesus troubled Nicodemus greatly because of this Conversation about the New Birth. Look at his absolute Confusion when he said things like,

How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?

... and ...

How can these things be?

And we can also see how Jesus *rebuked* this man for NOT seeing or understanding this when He said,

Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?

And that proves that Jesus *expected* a Jewish Theologian, who was *supposedly* an “Expert” in the 39 Books of the Old Testament, to know and to understand what the Old Testament said about Himself and about Salvation. Yet Nicodemus did NOT understand these things at first. In other words, it WASN’T okay with Jesus for this man to NOT know what the Old Testament taught about Himself and Salvation.

And the Fact that Nicodemus didn’t *already* know these things- BEFORE he came to Jesus- proves that the Pharisees then as well as orthodox Jews today- are NOT being taught the Old Testament correctly! They were then and they are today ONLY being taught the Interpretation of the Pharisees- *about* the Old Testament! Which is NOT the same thing! And that Reality shows us that WHATEVER the Pharisees were being taught- they were NOT being taught the Old Testament correctly. And that was a huge reason behind WHY they rejected Jesus- who was God Incarnate!

So, in His first Advent- Jesus was doing what **Matthew 9:35** says. And the ancient Historian, Philo said,

“... the main feature of a synagogue was the detailed reading and exposition of Scripture.”

... so, the Jews went to the Synagogues to hear the Scriptures explained to explained to them. And that’s why, in Berea, when Paul spoke- they...

... received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. (The Acts 17:11)

“But, Brother Blair, I thought you said that the Jews were NOT being taught the Old Testament correctly! So, how did the Bereans search the Scriptures to see whether what Paul preached was correct?”

I DID say that! And the Reason I said it is because it is true. Look at the very next verse:

The Acts 17:12

Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.

When the Apostle Paul preached the Gospel to those people- he did so- *fully* and *correctly*- tying everything back to Jesus! But for the most part- when the Jews taught the Old Testament back then as well as today- they do NOT tie everything to Jesus. And so, they are NOT hearing the full and correct Meaning of it all! The Bereans were the *exception* to that Rule.

Now, obviously, some of those Jews back then were chosen by God to believe. And so, God gave those that He chose- the Understanding so they might be saved! And the others were hardened and did NOT believe. And so, they continued to persecute Paul.

So, ALL of what happened to Paul will be true with us when we conduct Ministry the Way that Jesus did. Jesus will be exalted and proclaimed. The Gospel will be heralded. The elect will hear and be saved. And great Persecution will arise against us! All of that will happen.

So, we should model our Ministry after Jesus and the Apostles:

- The Church *gathers* to pray and be edified from the Scriptures
- The Church *scatters* to evangelize the Lost under intense Persecution

4. That Which *Motivated* Jesus' Ministry

Matthew 9:36b

... He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus' Motivation for ALL that He did on this earth was "loving Compassion". And that should always be our Motivation for ALL that we do as well. Dr. Paul Wilson Brand (17 July 1914- 8 July 2003), was a pioneer in helping those with Leprosy. And he wrote a book called, "*Fearfully and Wonderfully; The Marvel of Bearing God's Image*" and in that book Brand said,

"Jesus reached out His hand and touched the eyes of the blind. He touched the skin of the person with leprosy and the legs of the cripple. When a woman pressed against Him in a crowd to tap into the healing energy she hoped was there, He felt the drain of that energy, stopping the noisy crowd and asked, 'Who touched Me?' I've sometimes wondered why Jesus so frequently touched the people He healed, many of whom must have been unattractive, obviously diseased, unsanitary, and smelly. With His power, He

easily could've waved a magic wand. In fact a wand would've reached more people than a touch. He could've divided the crowd into affinity groups and organized His miracles. Paralyzed people over there, feverish people here, people with leprosy there, raising His hands to heal each group efficiently en masse. But He chose not to. Jesus' mission was not chiefly a crusade against disease, but rather a ministry to individual people. He wanted those people, one by one, to feel His love and warmth and His full identification with them. Jesus knew He could not readily demonstrate love to a crowd, for love usually involves touching."

Dr. Brand went on to illustrate this by telling about his Parents. He wrote,

"I look at the impact my parents had. Although they went to India to preach the gospel, by living in tactile awareness of peoples' needs, they began to respond on several levels. Within a year, they were involved in the fields of medicine, agriculture, education, evangelism, and language translation. My mother and father worked for seven years in India before anyone converted to Christianity. And in fact, that first conversion came as a direct result of their healing love.

Villagers would often abandon their sick outside our home, and my parents would care for them. Once when a Hindu priest was dying of influenza, he sent his own frail, sickly, nine-month-old daughter to be raised by my parents. None of his swamis would care for the sick child. They would've let her die. But my parents took her in, nursed her to health, and adopted her as their own, and I gained a sister, Ruth, and my parents gained an unexpected response of trust. The villagers were so moved by this example of Christian love, that a few soon accepted Christ's love for themselves.

Years later, when my mother, Granny Brand, was 85, long after my father had died, she helped forge a medical breakthrough. She had often treated gross abscesses on the legs of mountain people by draining the pus and excising a long, thin Guinea worm. Distressed by the frequency of these abscesses, she studied the problem and learned that the worm's life cycle included a larval stage spent in water. Knowing the peoples' habits well, she quickly deduced that wading in water was probably the means of transmission. Cashing in on the trust and love she had built up through decades of personal ministry, she rode her horse from village to village to village" – 85 years old – "urging the people to build stone walls around their shallow wells and to prevent foot contact with the water. In a few years, this old lady had single-handedly caused the eradication of all such worms and their resulting abscesses in two complete mountain ranges. I wonder how

effective Granny Brand would have been had she dropped leaflets from an airplane.”

May God grant that we might be baptized with the very SAME loving Compassion that singled out Jesus’ Ministry.

Amen. Let’s pray.

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