

*Acts - Learning from the early church – study 5 – ‘Mending the Broken’.*

Readings are - Acts 5: 12-16 and Luke 4: 14-21

I think it helps our understanding of the passage in Acts to read the Lukan passage first. Read Luke 4: 14-21. Jesus announces to those gathered in the synagogue that what God had promised through the prophet Isaiah is to be delivered now, in him and through him. God is now starting/doing a new thing, bringing a new blessing; things will not stay as they are currently understood.

Read Acts 5: 12-16

There is a tendency with a quick reading of this passage to see the apostles delivering healing to all the sick brought to them with resulting mass conversion, and then some wishful thinking about the church today. It is, of course, about healing and conversion, but also much more.

- 1a. Who do you think is doing the healing?
- 1b. How many things are being demonstrated by the healing?
- 1c. What connection, if any, do you see with the reading from Luke’s gospel?

The apostles and all the believers were meeting within the temple and no doubt preaching a message similar to Peter’s first sermon (Acts 2: 14ff), condemning to current religious practices and teaching of the temple leadership (Sadducees) and offering a new way and life through Jesus the Christ. From the Sadducees’ point of view – there was an unqualified group of dissenters preaching ‘under their noses and right in their face’ who were waylaying worshippers with ‘tricks and magic’ as they entered the temple.

- 2a. Verse 14 appears to contradict verse 13. Can you offer an explanation for this?
- 2b. Most commentators accept two possible explanations. Have you found both?
- 2c. Are there possible parallels today with relationships between church and State?

We tend to think of biblical healing very much in terms of the curing a serious medical condition. One dictionary defines healing as the process of making or becoming sound or healthy again; which is much wider than serious medical conditions.

- 3a. What sort of afflictions, conditions and addictions, that affect us all, are in need of God’s healing?
- 3b. Are we today (the Christian church) called to bring healing in God’s name?
- 3c. Do you think the church (that’s us all) is involved in bringing ‘healing’?