

Text: Matthew 9:35-38

Title: “The Lord’s Laborers”

INTRODUCTION

Open your Bibles this morning to Matthew 9:35-38. As you’re turning let me remind you about next Sunday, Sept.10. We’ll have one worship service at 10:45. Bible study is at 9:30. I need this time with all of our church family together to talk to you about something that is on my heart for the future of our church. It has to do with our children. Yes, the children of our church, and the tens of thousands of others in our city whose future hangs in the balance.

Read text.

This morning as you got up to eat your bagel or your toast, or your bowl of cereal, maybe the fruit on your cereal, or even as you drank a cup of coffee or tea, did it occur to you that you enjoyed that breakfast because some farmer somewhere went to the trouble to prepare the soil and sow the seed and to tend the crop that began to grow? And then when it came time for the harvest of the grain, or the coffee bean, or the strawberries, that farmer faced the fields and went to the task of working to bring in the harvest. Nothing stopped him, his harvest was ready, and it needed to be brought in.

I would imagine that for most of us, that never crossed our minds as we sat down to our breakfast this morning.

Will you fast-forward with me, past time into eternity? Think about the countless multitudes in heaven enjoying the feast that God has prepared for us there. We stop and look around us and see the people from every nation and people-group on the face of the earth. But unlike our breakfast this morning, we will know that we are all there because one day our Lord faced the harvest fields.

Jesus went to the Cross to die for our sins, and rose again victoriously from the grave. He sent the Holy Spirit to continue on His work when He ascended into heaven. And what was that work? In part it was to give power to the people of God to go and be His witnesses in ever-radiating circles into a great spiritual harvest, until everyone on the face of the earth has the opportunity to be saved.

You see, if you are saved today, it is because someone responded to the call to be the Lord’s laborer. Maybe they didn’t think about it in those terms. But that’s exactly what they were. They were people who joined Jesus in the sweet labor of facing the fields with an eye on the harvest.

From the verses we read earlier, it’s clear this is exactly what Jesus had in mind. Please notice...

1. JESUS WAS SENT.

Look again at v.35.

“Jesus went...” – Jesus went because He was sent.

Luke 4:18 - “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,

“Jesus went through...” – This is an imperfect tense verb describing continuous action. Sometimes we must go over and over the same fields. We go back to the same people, because rarely is someone saved the very first time they hear the Good News. Some fruit is ripe, some isn’t.

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages...” – The Galilean countryside was covered with little villages and towns having from a few hundred to a few thousand people. Every town, every village was different. Each of them needed a visit from the Savior.

Today Jesus is walking through nations ... through cities and towns and villages in those nations ... and through neighborhoods and streets in each city, town and village. He’s walking where people are ... and we do the same.

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching ... preaching ... healing...” – Notice carefully the order of Jesus’ activity. Teaching and preaching is so critical. The Gospel is information that has power and it must be told, it must be taught and preached. But he healed as well. Why? Because he was concerned about physical needs. He knew that a physical need was path down which God could move to meet the greater, spiritual need.

I’m thankful to know that the mission program of our church sent people into just about every conceivable kind of setting where people live. They worked as the Lord’s laborers. They taught, they preached, they met needs.

TESTIMONIES

Jared Wasdin was one of a group of our college students who went to England to minister in the schools in England. Jared, tell us what God did in your life?

Rachel Holcomb was one of great group of our middle school students who went to San Antonio. They worked among the poor and the underprivileged in that city. They loved and sang and packed boxes of food. Rachel, tell us what God did in your life through this.

Janet Reed, along with David and Rhonda Brantley did something very different. They traveled to Thailand to do a special kind of ministry. They took care of the children of missionaries who had come from all over South Asia for a meeting. Janet, what did God do in your life?

Jesus went because He was sent. And we are all sent. But also...

II. JESUS WAS SENSITIVE.

Jesus had a heart for the hurting. Jesus went because He was sent ... He was effective because He sensitive.

Verse 36 talks about Jesus’ sensitivity.

- **“He saw...”** – Jesus saw, perceived and paid attention to the needs of people. We must see before we’ll do anything. How easy it is for us to be desensitized ... to look at needs and to not be moved.
- **“He had compassion...”** – The word means “to be moved in the inward parts.” He couldn’t look at a desperate situation and not be moved down to his very core.

What moved Jesus to such compassion was what he saw.

- **“Because they were harassed...”** – In the days of Jesus this word “harassed” would have been used to describe someone who had been on a long journey. They were exhausted ... ready to quit. They just couldn’t go on any more.
- **“Because they were ... helpless...”** – This word was used to describe someone who had been knocked down. People feel knocked down ... by poverty, by divorce, by unemployment, by hunger, by depression ... knocked down.
- **“Like sheep without a shepherd...”** – People are scattered and confused. They don’t know which way to go. They need a shepherd. They need Jesus the Good Shepherd.

Wherever our teams went this summer, they saw people who were harassed, helpless and confused.

TESTIMONIES

- **Christopher**, you were part of large group of high school students who went to New Orleans. We’ve all seen the devastation that occurred there through Hurricane Katrina one year ago. More than that tens of thousands of evacuees came to our city and we became involved in their lives. But then RJ Holt and our student ministry planned a trip for our students to go and help with rebuilding houses. It was a bit frightening for the students and their parents. But we prayed for you all and God did an amazing thing. Tell us what God did in your life?
- **Lauren**, you were one of a group of 12 high school students and sponsors that went to Cambodia to do some really tough work. The people that went on the trip are: Zach Collins, Katie Cranford, Kalee Kirk, James Lewis, Rachel Marette, Grant McDonald, Lauren Moore, Amy Perehoduk, Chris Reed, John Walter, RJ Holt, and Kyle Crowell.

You know, we Americans take our drinking water for granted ... not so in Cambodia. Our students help with projects like this. Lauren, tell us what God did in your life.

Jesus went because He was sent. Jesus was effective because He was sensitive.

Then Jesus does something that may seem a little out of character. He turned to His disciples and said, “I don’t intend to do this alone.”

Matthew 9:37-38 - Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Jesus was telling them to pray for us ... for you and for me ... to be sent by God into His harvest field.

Will we go because we are sent ... will we be effective because we are sensitive?