

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ
The Harvest is Plenteous but the Laborers are Few

Last time...blindness – physical and spiritual

Two blind men who saw/believed vs sighted people of Nazareth who did not see/believe

Jesus said “Good-bye” to Capernaum (will visit again) and Nazareth (never to return)

Mark 6:6a And He marveled because of their unbelief

This time...Jesus begins His 3rd Preaching Tour of the Galilee...a big harvest with few laborers

We will be in Matt 9...for a very challenging message

v35 All...teaching...preaching...healing:

Mark 6:6b And He went round about the villages teaching

Jesus went to...all cities and villages in the Galilee

He went everywhere His Father sent Him, everywhere the Holy Spirit led Him

(Luke 4:1, 14)

He kept all of His appointments and He took no shortcuts

And in all those places He spoke the words His Father gave Him to speak and did the works His Father gave Him to do

- teaching:
 - the Word of God
 - to those who have a some understanding of the Word of God
- preaching:
 - proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of heaven/God
(Note: enemy to be overcome is sin and death)
 - to those who have not heard
- healing:
 - body and soul, as the teaching (Word) and preaching (Gospel)
was for the spirit
 - every...He is more powerful than every disease and sickness

Has any Rabbi or Pharisee or scribe or prophet ever ministered to the people as Jesus did?

Has anyone loved them like Jesus did?

Can we make this personal:

Has anyone ministered to us as Jesus has/does/will?

Has anyone loved us like Jesus has/does/will forever?

v36 He saw...moved with compassion:

Jesus saw the multitudes...as God sees them, as no mere man can:
both outwardly and inwardly

And what He saw broke His heart and He was moved by what He saw –

- moved to do something about the great need of others
- moved to act on their behalf, even to His own expense

Compassion: kindness given, knowing you will be getting nothing in return
Compassion does not stoop and stare, compassion stops and cares.
Compassion is not passive, compassion is active.

What was it about the people that broke Jesus' heart and moved Him to act?

- The Creator saw them as His beloved creatures
- The Good Shepherd saw them as His beloved sheep
- And His sheep were in dire need
 - fatigued, distressed, troubled
 - dispersed, cast aside
 - shepherd-less
 - driven in terror
 - exhausted
 - being attacked by wild beasts
 - helpless

Also undoubtedly stirring in Jesus' heart: Ezk 34

v37-38 The harvest...the laborers...Pray...the Lord...He will send:

Jesus can see what His disciples cannot...so He illuminates their minds and eyes

Situation: As seen by the Lord

The harvest

- seeing the multitude, the harvest refers to that of the souls of men (not grass that is here today and gone tomorrow)
- truly: certainly and intensely
- plenteous: many, large, abundant, a “bumper crop”

but

- a disconnect
- a contrary development, a hindrance

The laborers

- the helpers/workers that gather the increase
- are few: small/puny in number or effort

So many lost, so few saved, fewer still serving/working

Call to Action: From the Lord to His disciples

- Pray (petition/request/beg)
to: the Lord of the harvest
Ezk 18:4a
because Ezk 18:4b, 23, 30-32
why: to “receive” His heart and mind
what: The Lord send laborers/helpers
where: into HIS harvest

Enlightened to the situation by the Lord

- to see what the Lord sees
- to feel what the Lord feels
- to be in one accord (heart and mind) with the Lord

the call to action, the prayer of His disciples, will lead to

- “Here I am, Lord, send me!”
(hearts and minds willing to receive what the Lord sees and feels)
- the Lord sending laborers to harvest souls

Thus far in His ministry, Jesus has been “going it alone” in His harvest while He is pouring His heart and mind into the 12 disciples

Next week, Jesus will send the 12 disciples into His harvest...

without Him for the first time, their 1st mission trip (Galilee where live)

Later in His ministry, Jesus will send 70 disciples into His harvest...

those who went first go with others, again, to where they live

At the end of His ministry (Part 1), Jesus will send...

ALL of His disciples into His harvest

Matt 28:18-20

Truly, John 14:12 and John 16:7

We...you and me...are sent into the world for the same reason Jesus

- came into the world
- subsequently sent His disciples into the world

Ezk 18:4a

Ezk 18:4b, 23, 30-32

To see the lost souls as He sees them – outwardly and inwardly

To have His heart toward them – with the love of God, broken-hearted

To be moved with compassion – to do something about their great need

What is that something we are to do?

- Pray
- Go
 - Teach the Word of God
 - Preach the Gospel
 - Heal body, soul, and spirit

Now to apply the lesson of this passage in our hearts and minds...for each of us individually:
2 Cor 13:5 examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves

Do I/you/we

- Pray to the Lord of the harvest
 - seeing what He sees
 - feeling what He feels
 - led to “Here I am, Lord, send me.”
- Go into His harvest
 - Teach the Word of God
 - Preach the Gospel
 - Heal body, soul, and spirit

Honestly, probably...No!

Why not?!

1. Fear

Matt 10:28-33 (instructions when Jesus sends the 12 out alone)
2 Tim 1:7 power
Luke 24:44-49
Acts 1:1-8 (same power as “in His wings” for woman with issue of blood
by faith)
Acts 4:12-13, 17-20, 24-31
Acts 19:1-6 (v2, since vs when)
2 Tim 4:6-8

2. Busy-ness

Lack of focus
Distracted by lesser things
Improper priorities or misplaced loyalties
Heb 11:6 (diligently)
Heb 3:12-15
Heb 4:1 (fear of missing out on God’s promises and blessings)
Heb 4:11
Heb 10:19-25
Rev 2:1-5

What do we need to “Fear Not” and to be focused?

1. The baptism of Jesus Christ (Matt 3:11), the baptism of the Holy Spirit
2. A heart after God’s own heart...willing to see and engage people, all of whom are created in the image of God

Not important: the method or the tool...they are many tools in the Master's toolbox

- v4e framework
- Romans Road
- Cahill
- Schaeffer
- tracts

Essential:

- a heart of compassion (active caring)
- prayer

There are many "How To"s...they all require "Do"

Not important, even unnecessary:

- to be able

Essential:

- to be available
- 1 Cor 3:9a
- Phil 2:12-13

We have let our "spiritual muscles" atrophy

- lack of nutrition
- waste away due to lack of exercise...not "doing"

I have always been an office worker, exercising my brain but not my body

I have always resisted "working out" (boring)

I have always like sports – baseball, basketball, volleyball, golf

But sports takes a time commitment, a commitment I have not been willing to make

As a result, my body, my physical muscles, atrophied

I have recognized that my wife, my kids, my grandkids, and you need me to be healthy,
in body as well as in soul and spirit, in these days in which we live

So I have started playing Senior softball for some "enjoyable" exercise

My mind is 30...but my body is 61

I can do this...oh my, I can't do this! (speed, quickness, flexibility are gone)

Much muscle pain, stiff and sore, slow to recover

Humbling...frustrating...and fun

Monica and I started walking 2 miles in the morning

Now, I am getting stronger and better...with a long ways yet to go

Was more comfortable doing nothing...now I'm healthier due to the exercise

So it is with being a laborer in the Lord's harvest, of being about the Father's business of seeking and saving the lost

Point: Get in the Game...get to work in seeking and saving the lost!

It will stretch and hurt and frustrate and humble you....and grow you spiritually
and grow your relationship with the Lord Who has sent you!!!

Why must we...not someone else...be doers and not just hearers?

Why must we...personally...not fear and not be too busy?

Two weeks ago a 20 year old man/kid was found dead in a lake 1 mile from our home

What happened?

Did he know the Lord?

Where is he now?

His precious life was over just like [snap]

I have lived 3x as long as he did

My life, with eternity in view, is like [snap]

What is the difference between [snap] and [snap]?

What am I doing during [snap]?

It affects my eternity...and that of many others

We must repent of squandering a precious gift of God...time

How much time have we wasted...

- worrying about things that just don't matter and usually never come to pass?
- consumed with ourselves?
- blind, deaf, and uncaring about people Jesus loves to the point of death and beyond?

with nothing to show for all that time in eternity but wood, hay, or stubble?

Being a laborer in the Lord's harvest is no more complicated or involved than

- being observant about SOMEONE ELSE's situation
- being friendly and sociable
- caring enough to say "Hello, how are you?", and really wanting to know
- sharing the love, grace, peace, and joy Jesus Christ has poured all over you
- inviting the hurting to come learn more about Jesus

Bottom line: engaging someone else in a conversation

(having the power of the Holy Spirit to hear and speak)

Note: hardest word is the 1st word

Many or most Christians think it is the pastor's job to do this

Read Matt 28:18-20 carefully!

It is my job and your job

Additionally, my job is to

- stir you
- equip you
- feed/nourish you
- exhort you
- be a helper of your joy

I do not desire to "spark" an emotional impulse that will quickly die in a hostile world

I desire to ignite a spiritual devotion and an eternal perspective that endure

1 Peter 3:15 *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear

1 Peter 4:5a shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead

The Lord is calling us to

- no longer be selfishly money-motivated or career-motivated
- but to be love-motivated (Matt 22:36-40, Matt 16:24)

The Lord Who purchased us with His blood is calling us to check our hearts for Him

Are we willing to have hearts and minds to receive what the Lord sees and feels?

Are we willing to be a laborer (give vs take) with Him?

Are we willing to do for others even the smallest fraction of what He did for us?

Pray..."Here I am Lord, send me"

1. "Jerusalem"

Children's Ministry

Web

Social Media

Outreach Ministry

Home

School

Work

Neighborhood

2. "Judea"

Mexico

Business trip...plane ride and destination

3. "Samaria"

Honduras

4. "Uttermost parts"

Egypt

Jesus does not ask us or send us to do anything but that which He first empowers us to do
(John 15:5)

Who is willing to work for the Lord of the harvest, to fight against spiritual atrophy?

Who will go where you have been sent?

Let's pray...for the baptism of Jesus Christ