

Its time to work: Matthew 9:36-38

This week we will be finishing chp 9 in Matthew by looking at the harvest Jesus is speaking about here.

Last time we were together we spent our whole time in v36 and we gave an in depth look at how Jesus saw the lost people that were around Him.

We are told Jesus was moved with compassion.

- The Greek word that is translated moved with compassion is the strongest Greek word that can be used to describe pity.
- That phrase is saying that Jesus was moved to the deepest depths of His being because He saw that people were lost!!
- **Jesus was utterly and completely broken over the lost condition of people!**

Jesus said in John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life! Amen!

It's so important for us to understand Jesus' motivation for ministry because His motivation needs to be our motivation!

✠ Jesus' ministry was motivated by His deep compassion and so must ours. Amen!

When we look out into the world what do we see? We see trees and buildings and cars and of course people.

- Jesus tells us that when He looks out into the world He sees an immense Harvest field.
- Every single nation to Him is a vast harvest field.

China, Russia, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Africa, America, and of course Staten Island are all harvest fields to Jesus.

Not only does He see the world as harvest field but He also sees a harvest that is ready for the reaping. Amen!

- In John 4:35 Jesus said, Do you not say, There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest.
- In other words Jesus sees millions of people that need salvation. Amen!

Its time to work!

Lenski said: like a great ripe field of grain they stand before the eyes of Jesus, needing only to be gathered in.

Patrick Johnstone: has put a book together in which he tells us the state of the world as far as the harvest is concerned:

- He says in *Operation World* that only in the 1990s did we get a reasonably complete listing of the world's peoples.
- He says, **For the first time we can see clearly what is left to be done.**
- There are about 12,000 ethnolinguistic peoples in the world. About 3,500 of these have, on average, 1.2% Christian populations.
- That equates to about 20 million of the 1.7 billion people. And that is using the broadest, nominal definition of Christian.¹
- In other words there is well over a billion people in the world that have never heard the name of Jesus or His message of salvation.

Its time to work!

Staten Island; even in Staten Island there is so much work to be done.

- A couple of years ago I was sharing with a guy at work and he told me he never heard the verse John 3:16.
- Or when we were watching a young boy for a while who was about 7 at the time and he said he never heard the name of Jesus until he came to our house.

When John Wesley said, “The world is my parish”, he completely understood what Jesus is saying here.

V36-38 read-slow: Jesus mentions four aspects here to reaping the harvest;

- Shepherds, laborers, prayer and God.
- Lets start off by looking at the subject of Shepherds.

Shepherds play a very important role in the harvest Jesus is speaking about.

God speaks about Shepherds often in the bible. And unfortunately a lot of His time is spent addressing bad Shepherds.

- Bad shepherds have caused a great deal of harm to the children of Israel.
- And bad shepherds are a problem in America, and they will be a problem in the end times.

Remember the thing that prompted Jesus to say these things in the first place was that He saw the people as sheep having no shepherds.

- When in fact they actually did have shepherds. The scribes the Pharisees and the Priests and High Priest were all in Israel at this time.
- Yet these shepherds were so bad that Jesus saw these people as being without a shepherd.

The shepherds at the time of Jesus were in the ministry for themselves not the people.

- Instead of ministering to the people they used the people.
- Jesus is going to rebuke these shepherds later in Matthew 23 by telling they put burdens on people that they themselves do not bear.
- He also says you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

In other words Jesus is saying that a bad shepherd will produce bad sheep and that is why we have the problems that we do!

Today: In our day we have the same thing taking place. America is a nation where the majority of people believe in God yet how can our nation be in the mess that it is in?

- One of the top reasons for this mess is bad shepherds.
- There are shepherds that want to beat the sheep, fleece the sheep, and mislead the sheep.

Beat: There are shepherds in America that love Jesus and doctrinally sound but unfortunately they simply beat the sheep.

- There was a recent article on the internet where they were speaking about the decline of Christianity in America and one of the people that wrote a comment spoke of how they grew up in a church where they were told week in and week out is that they were sinners.
- Unfortunately that is true. Some shepherds simply believe they can't tell people enough of how sinful they are and how short they fall.

Myself: I can attest to doing that very same thing early in our church plant. I was so zealous to do the work that I tried to beat people into submission and the reality is it bears very little fruit. **Ken Graves.**

Mislead the sheep: however the greatest problem today and in the end will be those shepherds that mislead the sheep. Those who beat the sheep speak too much about sin and yet there are those that mislead the sheep and never speak of sin at all.

Unfortunately Bad shepherds will produce bad sheep that will not be profitable for the harvest.

Good shepherds: But God wants good shepherds that will produce good sheep that will be great laborers for the harvest. Amen!

- **Jeremiah 3:15** And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.
- God's major concern is that His sheep know and understand His word!

John 21: In John 21 when Jesus is having His discourse with Peter about how much he loves Him, Jesus says three things concerning the care of His sheep.

- First He said, feed My lambs; then Tend My Sheep; finally feed My sheep.
- Jesus knew the best thing for His sheep is to be well fed.

The best cared for sheep are the best feed sheep!

- **Chuck Smith** hit the nail right on the head when he said well fed sheep will produce other sheep.

Acts 20: In Acts 20 when Paul is giving his exhortation to the Ephesian Elders he says some things that are very interesting.

- First he said he is innocent of their blood because he has taught them the entire counsel of God.
- Second; in Acts 20;28 he said: So now brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified.

Paul taught them the whole counsel of God and then committed them to that word which is able to build them up. Amen!

- In order to build sheep up for the ministry Shepherds are to be feeding them the word of God. Amen!

Think of it this way: If someone labors without food they will get be very sick and possibly die.

Church plant: a number of yrs ago there was someone else that was doing a church plant and what happened is that one of the men that was going to that church told me about how the people were complaining because they did not see their Pastor doing other tasks around the church like cleaning and what have you.

And I told him they were wrong because they should want their Pastor studying and preparing a message not cleaning.

✠ I was at Old Bridge at the time and I was like I don't want Pastor Lloyd doing anything other than reading and studying the word of God.

✠ I want to show up Sunday morning ready to be fed the word of God because that is what I need.

Us-here: The same is true for us here. Everyone here should show up Sunday morning looking to be fed the word of God, because that is the best thing I can possibly do for you. Amen!

✠ If I come up here with a smile and a song and entertain you I have not helped you. Oh you may laugh Sunday, but that doesn't help you during the week.

✠ Now there is nothing wrong with a little humor because it actually helps us to learn.

✠ But I need to focus on giving you food to eat that will last during the week.

A couple of weeks ago God blessed me by helping to see the truthfulness of this.

✠ Jenn told me how on Tuesday night the women were talking about a certain aspect of the message from Sunday.

✠ Then I believe it was either Thursday or Friday I spoke with someone and they remembered the point of the message and used the message to help them get through a very difficult time.

In Ephesians we are told that Prophets, Pastor-teacher, and Evangelist are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry! Amen!

Jesus encompasses everything we have been speaking about so far.

- The bible says Jesus is the Good Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd.
- He was the greatest example in both word and deed.
- And one of the things He did the most while He was here were teach the people.
- Many people point out that Jesus was a preacher and a miracle worker, but He was mainly a teacher.

When Jesus was here He had disciples and Apostles.

- Disciple means learner, and you can't be a learner unless you are being taught.
- Apostle means sent one.
- So the first thing Jesus did was teach them and then He sent them! Amen!

And one of the best ways to produce laborers for God's harvest is to have shepherds that will produce well fed sheep! Amen!

- **Let me say it this way: One of the greatest weapons in the hand of God is an encouraged believer! Amen!**

V37 read-slow; Jesus is telling us here that He needs laborers for the harvest. Amen!

- In other words its time to work.
- A laborer is a worker and that is the way the NASB and NIV translate this word.

In our day and age in America when harvest time comes the Farmers have these big tractors that now do the harvesting.

- But God doesn't use machines He uses men and women. Amen!

When God created Adam He didn't say now Adam, I created all of this for you so go on vacation and enjoy the world.

- But rather the bible says in **Genesis 2:15** That God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden, to tend and keep it.
- In other words he went to work!

God has always and will always expect His people to serve in the ministry.

- The Jews are God's chosen people but what they seem to forget is that God said He chose them in order **to serve Him.**

When God appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush, He told Moses He would bring them out to the Mountain and there they would **serve Him.**

- In the book of Exodus God told Moses to go and speak to Pharaoh for Him.
- And 8x's God said, let My people go that they may **serve Me.**

Nehemiah: Nehemiah gives a great picture of this! The book of Nehemiah is about him going back to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the wall.

And in chapter 3 when he starts reporting about the work being done he says Eliashib the High Priest rose up and built the sheep gate.

- And as the story unfolds the phrase **next to him** and **after him** continues to appear.
- It says, this one did that, and next to him, this one did this, and next to him, this one did that and after him, and next to him, and after him and on and on it goes.
- In other words everybody was working together side by side to rebuild the wall.

Key: but the key is found in **Nehemiah 4:6** So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height,(and here's the key) **for the people had a mind to work.** Amen! **Repeat**

John Witcomb said: No portion of the OT provides us with a greater incentive to dedicated, discerning zeal for the work of God than the book of Nehemiah. The example of Nehemiah's passion for the truth of God's word-whatever the cost or consequences, is an example sorely needed in the present hour.

There is so much work to be done and Jesus needs His people to have a mind to work. Amen!

1st Peter 4:1-3 Therefore since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles.

- Peter is telling us we wasted enough of our time living in sin, so now let's use the rest of our time living for the will of God! Amen!

D.L. Moody: Late one evening D.L. Moody the premier American evangelist of the 1800's arrived home late from speaking at a meeting Emma his wife was already asleep. As her exhausted husband climbed into bed, she rolled over, and murmured, so how did it go?

- ✠ Pretty well two and half converts. His wife lay silently for a moment pondering the response then finally smiled. That's sweet she replied, how old was the child?
- ✠ No, no, no, Moody answered. It was two children and one adult. The children have their whole lives in front of them.
- ✠ Listen to the next line. The adult's life is already half gone!

My attitude in the world: when I was in the world I worked hard and I party hard.

- ✠ Now that I am a Christian can't I give the same type of an effort for the kingdom of God.
- ✠ Peter says that's exactly what we should do!

Whitfield: I speak often about Geore Whitfield the great evangelist of the past. Yet as you study his life you can see that he lived a life of complete and dedicated labor for Jesus.

Whitefield: From his first outdoor sermon on February 17, 1739, at the age of 24 to the coalminers of Kingswood near Bristol, England, until his death 30 years later in 1770, his life was one of almost daily preaching.

- ✠ Sober estimates are that he spoke about 1,000 times every year for 30 years. That included at least 18,000 sermons and 12,000 talks and exhortations

It is believed that he preached just about 60hrs a week for 30yrs!

- ✠ This doesn't include preparing messages. He literally preached for about 60hrs a week for thirty years.

Biographer: Whitefield demonstrated a callous disregard for his private self, both body and spirit. The preaching moment engulfed all, and it would continue to do so, for in fact there was nothing else he lived for. . . . The private man and the family man had long since ceased to exist. In the final scene, there was only Whitefield in his pulpit.

Jesus and Paul: in the NT the best examples we have of laboring for the harvest are Jesus and Paul.

Now the reason we know that Paul labored harder than anyone else other than Jesus is because he says so. In **1st Corinthians 15:10** Paul said I labored more abundantly than they all and he is comparing himself with the Apostles. In **2nd Corinthians 11** he said the same thing, Are they ministers of Christ?-I speak as a fool-I am more; in labors more abundant.

Paul was a tireless worker for the harvest.

Maybe: Listen to how he describes his ministry in **2nd Corinthians 11:22-28**

Jesus: When Jesus was on earth He had a mind to work.

- He said the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many.
- In John 17 Jesus High Priestly prayer, He prayed I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which; You have given Me to do.

John 9 In John 9 Jesus heals a blind man and His disciples ask Him who sinned that he was born blind.

- ✠ But Jesus said neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

- ✠ **I must work the works of Him who sent Me** while it is still day; the night is coming when no one can work!

Jesus at 12 yrs old: in Luke we have the story of when Jesus is twelve and His families goes to the Temple and while they are on their way home they can't find Jesus.

- ✠ So they go back to Jerusalem and find Jesus speaking with the leaders.
- ✠ And His parents asked what He was doing and He told them;
- ✠ Don't you know I must be about My Father's business.

There is going to come a time when we can no longer work for God; either we get to old where we can no longer work or we die or we go to meet the Lord in the air.

- ✠ And once that takes place we can no longer work for His Harvest.

Mark Cahill wrote a book entitled: One thing you can't do in heaven.

- ✠ He is an evangelist and his point is there is no more gathering of the harvest once we get to heaven.
- ✠ Today if the day for us to be laboring for the harvest!

Our Jerusalem: Not every one is called to go around the word but we can labor in the harvest that is right before our very eyes.

As a church we are going to do out reaches and preach and evangelize and do charitable deeds and pray and of course teach the word of God every week.

- ✠ But as individuals we can focus on being concerned with our Jerusalem.
- ✠ Whoever is in our sphere of influence try and reach them with the gospel!
- ✠ We have a harvest on our block, a harvest in our stores, a harvest in our workplace, and of course a harvest in our own house.

And those of us that are parents we need to be making sure we are giving our best effort to make sure we are raising godly off spring.

- ✠ We need to be sending out saved children not children that need to be saved!
Amen!

Sometimes we may think our home is not as important a harvest field but it most certainly is.

- God tells us in Malachi that He gives us children on order to raise up godly offspring.

Ruth Graham Billy's wife grew up a missionary and wanted to be a missionary but God had other plans.

- ✠ Yet she married a man who would preach the gospel around the entire world.
- ✠ Now her son Franklin is doing the same and so is one of her grandsons.
- ✠ Plus her daughter Ann Graham Lotz is doing a tremendous amount of ministry.

✠ This is all a result of her taking care of the harvest in her home.

Wesley: the same is true for Sussanna Wesley. Because of her labor in the home we had John Wesley who started the Methodist church and Charles who wrote hymns for the church.

✠ John could really be given credit for saving England. And the Methodist Church spilled over to America and there were a number of great fiery Methodist preachers that did a great work in America.

Think of it this way: If everyone labored in their own harvest field we would be covering a lot of territory. Amen!

V38 read-slow;

I love the fact how God brings it back to Himself. Amen!

✠ If we look closely we will see Jesus says its God's harvest.

✠ It's not our harvest or Calvary Chapel's harvest or the Baptist or Pentecostal harvest but it is God's harvest. Amen

✠ And He also states that He is the Lord of the harvest. Amen!

✠ **Because it is God's harvest Jesus tells us to pray to Him, so He can provide and motivate laborers for His harvest! Amen!**

God wants us to pray to Him so He can send out laborers for the harvest.

One of the key characteristics of the early church is that everything they did was bathed in prayer.

✠ The church is birthed during prayer.

✠ Peter and John are in Jail they pray.

✠ There is a need to minister to the Gentiles the church prays.

✠ In Acts 13 it says, As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, they Holy Spirit said, Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them.

✠ And right after the Holy Spirit called them to go it's says they fasted and prayed again.

Spirit's work: We also need to notice once again that in Acts 13 the Holy Spirit says it's His work that is going on.

- He says separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them!

The trouble we fall into as Christians is that we want to burden ourselves with laboring for God. And when we do that we get frustrated, discouraged, and burntout.

But when we pray first; then God will put His burden on us.

So many people think if I pray to God and tell Him I want to be used by Him I know He is going to send me to Africa.

- But if you don't want to go to Africa you won't be any good there so God would never send you there.
- When God sends someone to Africa or anywhere else they want to go because they know God has called them.

Haggi: in the book of Haggi, he is rebuking the people because they have come back from the captivity and are not working on the Temple.

- And after he rebukes them all of the leaders and the people repent.
- And Haggi tells us that the Lord stirred up the spirit of the leaders and the people to work on the house of the Lord. Amen!

Juddson: when Adonirum Juddson told William Carey he was going to Burma, William Carey the father of modern mission tried to talk him out of it, but Juddson went because he knew that God had called him to go.

Paul; When Paul was on his way to Jerusalem he said the Holy Spirit testifies that in every city chains and tribulation await me.

- But since Paul knew that God had called him listen to what he said;
- **Acts 20:24**, but none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Biblically speaking; God's will is for everyone to be involved in the harvest in some way shape or form. Amen!

- We are here this morning in order to be equipped for the work of the ministry.
- So what we need to be doing is praying for God to send out laborers and how would He have us to labor for the harvest. Amen!

Luther: Martin Luther had a friend that was a fellow monk and he felt the same way as Luther did about the faith. They came to an agreement that Luther would go down into the dust and heat of the battle and the friend would stay in the Monastery and pray.

- So as this went on Luther would report how things were going and the monk would even give himself harder to prayer for his friends behalf.
- Then one night the friend had a dream. He saw a vast field of corn as big as the world; and one solitary man was seeking to reap it- and impossible and heartbreaking task. Then he caught a glimpse of the reaper's face; and the reaper was Martin Luther. And Luther's friend saw the truth in a flash;
- I must leave my prayers, he said and get to work. And so he left his prayers and went down to the world to labor in the harvest.

Send out: the word send out here in the Greek literally means: to throw them out; to hurry them out; to drive out, to push out to draw out.

- This doesn't necessarily mean God has to do it with violence but it could.
- In other words sometimes laborers need a little kick in the pants in order to get moving! Amen!

Caleb: I have already told Caleb that God has something for him to do, so he needs to pray and ask Jesus what He wants him to do.

- He has to hear from God because I am sending him to India and Jenn is convinced he is never leaving home.

Story: By God's grace I heard a story this week that really captures the thought Jesus is trying to convey here.

Mother Teresa: The story had to do with Mother Teresa:

Author Jean Houston once asked Mother Teresa how does it happen that you are able to do these things that most International Development Organizations can only do with immense trouble?

- She said my dear it's because I am so deeply in love. She said your in love Mother? Would you mind telling me whom your in love with?
- Oh, yes she said, I'm in love with Jesus. Well of course I said.
- No, no, no, she said, you don't understand. You don't understand I really am.
- I have such love for Jesus that I feel the presence of Jesus everywhere.
- In that day old child that was left at the convent door that needs a life and an education.
- Or that leper who comes to me and wants to be of some use in the world.
- I see Christ in that child and in that Leper. And I cannot do enough for my Beloved.
- Because I cannot do enough for my beloved she wrote, My Beloved cannot do enough for me. That is why I am able to do these things!

In order to be laborers for Jesus we need to be deeply in love with Jesus.

✠ And when we are deeply in love with Jesus we will see the world as He sees it! Amen!

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)

This is Jesus' vision for the church. And He is wondering who will run with it?

- **Who is going to see the world as He sees it and do some thing about it!**

Who is going to go out into the highway and the hedges and compel people to come in?

Who is going to go out and plead with people as though God were pleading with them?

Who is going to go out and preach on the house tops the light of the gospel?

Remember Jesus said in John 20:21 as the Father has sent Me, I also send you!

Lets pray!