

The Harvest and the Laborers

Scripture: Matthew 9:35

Code: 2269

Matthew chapter 9, looking at verse 35 and following into the 1st verse of chapter 10...We've had a great week this week sharing with those who have been with us. In our morning sessions, we have been teaching the principles of ministry out of the life of the Apostle Paul; and, now, this morning, in the wonderful sovereign working of God, we come to our passage of Scripture in Matthew which teaches us the ministry principles of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. So now we learn from the Master Teacher who Himself taught the Apostle Paul. How fitting it is that the Spirit of God has brought us to this instructive and thrilling passage for our time together this morning.

Let me read it to you. Follow along as I read. "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they were faint and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest. And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.'"

Now, this passage is more quoted I think than explained, and more used than understood. I hope this morning that we can gain some insight into what our Lord is really doing here; because I think in a very wonderful way in a very small section of Scripture, we get very comprehensive insight into the style and the direction of our Lord's ministry.

Now, the text marks a transition point in Matthew's planning. Systematically, Matthew has moved through the writing of this Gospel to present all of the salient elements of the Kingship of Jesus Christ. He began with the ancestry of the King, the genealogy in chapter 1. Then the arrival of the King, the virgin birth. Then the anticipation of the King, the fulfillment of all of those Old Testament prophecies. Then came the announcer of the King, John the Baptist; and then the approval of the King in His baptism. As the Father said, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." Then the attack on the King as Satan met Him in temptation. Then the affirmations of the King as He taught in chapter 5, 6, and 7 and affirmed the authority of the Word of God. And then most recently we've been looking at the attestations of the King. The miracles in chapters 8 and 9 that attest to His deity.

And, now, as we look at chapter 10, we meet the associates of the King as He calls into service the twelve and sends them out with the message of the Kingdom. But between the attestation and the miracles and the section on the disciples is this very small transition taking us out of His miracle ministry and into His discipling ministry, away from the multitudes and toward the individual discipling of His apostles. And that transition is very important. Jesus sees the vastness of the task and realizes that He has to have some help; and so, in chapter 10, we begin an entire section on the discipleship process; and we'll be getting to that in our next study.

But, for now, we look at this most significant section in the transition. We see three things as we look at the Lord here. First of all, His ministry, verse 35. Then His motives, verse 36 and the first part of verse 37. And then His method, the last of verse 37 and through the 1st verse in chapter 10. His ministry, its motives, and methods.

Let's look, first of all, at His ministry; and we have already looked at verse 35 in our last study together, so we'll not spend a tremendous amount of time in detail; but I do feel it's important to understand it, so we'll review somewhat. Verse 35 says, "Here is His ministry." "He went about all the cities and villages," and we remember from Josephus that, in Galilee, there were probably at least 3 million people living in about 204 cities and villages, and He moved about all these places, "teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." Whether they were tucked in little obscure hamlets on the hillsides, or whether they were down in the heat of the valley, or whether they were in the large cities that ringed the sea itself, He went everywhere, and even in between, in the vineyards and the fields, and He met the people, and He met their needs.

Basically, we find in His ministry three specific elements. First, verse 35 says, "He was teaching in their synagogues." The synagogues were the place of teaching. The Yiddish word for synagogue is still the word *schul*, S C H U L, much like our word school. They saw the synagogue as the place where they met to be instructed in the Word of God; and when they came to the synagogue, and they came not only on the Sabbath, but at least two other times during the week, plus on every other festival day, feast day, and holy day. And every time they came, an officer would read from the Pentateuch, the Law; and then another one would read from the prophets; and the someone would translate that Hebrew into Aramaic, which was the common language of the day; and then someone else would stand up and give an expository sermon from one or both of those passages.

Philo, the historian, wrote that, "The main feature of a synagogue was the detailed reading and exposition of Scripture." They came there to hear the Scripture and to have it explained to them. That is why in Berea, when Paul spoke, they searched the Scriptures to see if, in fact, these things were really true. And there was a custom known as quote unquote the freedom of the synagogue; and the freedom of the synagogue provided that any visiting rabbi or distinguished guest could be the one to give the exposition, or the sermon. Consequently, our Lord took advantage of that all over

Galilee. He would go into the synagogues, wherever they were meeting, and when it came time for the sermon, as a distinguished teacher, He would stand and He would interpret the Old Testament which had been read.

Now, this was the way it had been for a long time. When the people came back into the land after the Babylonian captivity, of course, by then, they had founded synagogues. They were founded in the captivity; and when they came back from there, they came back to the land, you remember they take...they took the Word of God in the 8th chapter of Nehemiah, and they read it. And then it says they gave the sense of it, or, that is, they explained what it meant. Translating it and explaining it.

Paul writing to Timothy says, "Until I come, give your attention to reading the text, explaining the text, and applying the text." So our Lord's pattern of ministry was this. When He gathered together with the religious people, when He gathered with them in the synagogue, He taught them the meaning of the Scripture. He expounded the Old Testament, a didactic, expository teaching ministry; and we still believe that that is the mandate for the people of God when they come together to be taught the meaning of the Word of God.

Secondly, it says He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. The word here is *prophos*, to herald or to proclaim or to announce, to make a public proclamation. Outside the synagogue, on the streets, the highways, the hillsides, by the sea, in a house, anywhere and everywhere He went, He was announcing the Kingdom. He was proclaiming the Kingdom. He was affirming that God was the King, and that God had a Kingdom, and that God was offering that Kingdom, and there was a standard for entry into that Kingdom, and He was telling them what that was. And that entering into the Kingdom brought about tremendous and eternal blessing, and so He was proclaiming the Kingdom.

You might say that was the evangelism; whereas, the teaching in the synagogue was the edification. So the people gathered together to be taught; and they went out to proclaim; and we believe that that model still stands, even in the church. The church gathers to be instructed and scatters to proclaim. Our Lord having established the pattern. Everywhere He went, as summarized so marvelously in the Sermon on the Mount, He would announce that the Kingdom was at hand. He would announce that, to be blessed, you must enter the Kingdom. He would announce that the entry into the Kingdom is narrow way, but it is a way of blessedness. He was proclaiming the Kingdom. He was proclaiming salvation.

But there was a third element of His ministry. It says in verse 35, "He was healing every sickness and every disease among the people." As I've told you before, for all intents and purposes, in His lifetime, Jesus utterly banished disease from Palestine. In fact, John says in his Gospel that, "All the books of the world couldn't contain all of the things that He did." The miracles of chapter 8 and 9, and there are basically nine miracles, are only samples in various categories of expressions of power. By no

means do they touch anywhere near the number of miracles that He did.

Now, why did He do these miracles? Why did He heal every sickness and every disease among the people? For two reasons. No. 1, because it was a way to verify His message. You see, Jesus went into the synagogue and taught differently than all the other teachers. He went into the highways and byways and preached different than all the preachers. He was saying things that were diametrically opposite the things that the people were being taught by their leaders. He was in utter disagreement with the leading religious lights of His time...

Any...in most of His messages, He actually confronted and attacked them. Now, why should the people believe such messages? Why should they listen to this gentleman from Nazareth who was not even trained in the proper schools? Well, frankly, the miracles were the thing that convinced them that He was of God. They were verifiers of His message. The blind man had it right when he said, "We know that this Man must be of God." Nicodemus had it right when he said, "We know that no man can do the things that You do except God be with Him." Jesus said, "If you can't believe My Words, at least believe Me for the very works' sake." How else you gonna explain these supernatural miracles? So the first purpose was to verify the message.

But there was a second purpose. I think this is most, most important. I believe Jesus did these miracles to demonstrate the loving tenderness of the heart of God. I believe that Jesus wanted those people to know that God was not like the Pharisees said He was...but that God was compassionate. God was sympathetic. God was tender. God was loving. God was filled with kindness. God was merciful...I believe this is a part of Jesus' ministry, and I believe that it is essential in ours, as well.

You can teach the Word of God. You can proclaim the good news of the Kingdom and how to enter it, but you must also know that Jesus touched people where they hurt and was sympathetic and kind and caring and loving; and that's part of it, too. It's so important that people understand that. That's why Paul says, "If you speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not...what? ...love, you're nothing but noise. Sounding bronze and a tinkling cymbal."

Dr. Paul Brand, who has worked so wonderfully with those who have leprosy, writes this in his book, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, and this about his Lord he writes. "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 asking, "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 writes, "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. 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."...

Then he says, "I wonder how effective Granny Brand would have been had she dropped leaflets from an airplane."...In Hebrews it says that Jesus is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. That He learned suffering through His humanness. It's a...it's a stupefying concept that God's Son learned through His experiences on earth. Before taking on a body, God had no personal experience of physical pain of the effect of rubbing against needy people. But God dwelt among us and touched us and was touched by us and fully identified with our pain. And that is part and parcel of the uniqueness of Christianity, that we touch people.

Hinduism is...is the most cruelly neglectful of all religious systems in the world. Its castes forbid that anyone of a certain caste ever touch anyone of another caste. Mohammedism, whose history runs red with the blood of murdered slaves in a secular and religious bloodshed, cannot be expected to show much pity for those in need. They give gifts only to gain merit for the giver. The Buddhists do the same. Confucianism allows a man to drown in sight of a crowd without anybody lending a helping hand. Christianity is not so...

Jesus touched people. I think He was talking to us. We can't do the miracles. We can do the sympathizing...love, and I believe we're called to do that. What was the ministry of Jesus? It was teaching, expository teaching. It was preaching, proclaiming; and it was healing people by the affection and the tenderness of His care that manifested the heart of God. What motivated Him?

Let's look secondly at His motives, and this is the heart of our message. What motivated Him? Why did He do this? Why did God condescend? Why did God care?...Verse 36, "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they were faint and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, 'The harvest truly is full.'" Stop there. Now in those few phrases we have the motives of Jesus. Marvelous uncovering of the heart of our Lord is right there. There are three elements to His ministry: teaching, preaching, touching; and there are three elements to His motive. One, compassion. Verse 36. What a beautiful thought. "He saw the multitudes and was moved with compassion on them." You can picture Jesus on an elevated place, perhaps on a hillside; and, as He looks down the little bank, the slope, He sees this mass of people before Him. They were always there... and they came mostly with physical needs, diseases, deformities, hunger; and He sees them; but He sees beyond the physical to the real needs; and we get a glimpse into His heart.

As Matthew says, "He was moved with compassion." What does that mean? Well, our word compassion from the Latin *cumpasayo*, means to suffer with. Jesus suffered with them. He felt their pain. Now, listen, this basically has nothing to do with us. This is the expression of an attribute of God. He cared because God is love, and love cares. It is the nature of God. The first great motive in the heart of Christ to teach and preach and heal was that God cares about men. It is His nature to care. It is His heart to care; and so it is over and over again stated in the Gospel record that Jesus had compassion, for God cares by virtue of who He is.

In Matthew 14 verse 14, "Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion." Chapter 15 verse 32, "Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, 'I have compassion on the multitude.'" In Matthew chapter 18 verse 27, He gives a parable and says, "The lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him and forgave him the debt," and He, of course, is the Lord in the parable. In chapter 20 verse 34, "Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."

And it isn't just Matthew. Mark 1:41, "Jesus was moved with compassion, put forth His hand and touched a leper." Chapter 5 of Mark verse 19, again, it says, "Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and hath had compassion on you." He had compassion, because it was His nature to love.

Now, the Greek term here is very, very interesting. Very interesting. It literally means to feel something in the bowels...the word splanknais the noun form, and it means bowels. If you wanna know how it's used in the Bible, listen to this. Talks about Judas...and it says, "Judas purchased a field...Acts 1:18...and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out." The word literally means the midsection, the internal organs, the intestines, the entrails, the inward parts. We would use it in the vernacular today and say the guts.

The Bible talks about the bowels of the earth. That means that central portion, the stuff that's in the middle; and, literally, it says, "Jesus was moved in the bowels upon them." You say, "What...why did they use that word? What a strange thing to express concern." I mean if you were to go to your girlfriend and say, "I love you with all my bowels," someone would take that wrong.

You wanna know something? That is no different than going to someone and saying, "I love you with all my heart." That ugly, bloody, pulsating blob of muscle that quivers in your chest. So all depends on how you perceive that. When we see a little valentine with a little thing that doesn't look like a human heart at all. If you ever sent a valentine to somebody with an actual...well, you understand...It was just basically an expression. It was just an expression; and the Hebrews talked about the heart; and they talked about the bowels; and they had something in mind. They talked about the heart as the...as the seat of thought and action and will.

For example, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Or Proverbs 16:23, "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth." Or Hebrews 4:12, "The thoughts and intents of the heart." Or Romans 10:10, "With the heart man believes." Or Matthew 15, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." Or, Out of the abundance of the mouth...out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." The heart, then, is the initiator in Hebrew thinking...There you find the root of thought and action and will. The bowels in the Hebrew thinking are the responder...the reactor. The Hebrew expressed attitudes and emotions in physiological symptoms, not in abstractions.

And so when they wanted to express something they felt very deeply and were very pained about, they said, "I hurt in my midsection." Now, we understand that. Our midsection responds to pain. When we see a horrible accident or a disaster, we get sick in our stomach. Sexual feelings, fears, needs, we feel anxieties here. We have ulcers, colitis, upset stomachs, because here is where emotion grips us. Jesus literally said that He was wrenched in pain in His midsection when He saw these people.

Listen, does God care? Does God care supremely? Does God care and love beyond anything that human being could ever experience? Yes. Then put God in a body, and let Him love like that, and let Him care like that, and it'll wrack that human body; and that is what it did...It's not an abstraction; and I see that in Matthew 8:17, where it says that, "He was dealing with all these sick people, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.'" It isn't the idea that He got the leprosy when He healed the leper. It is the idea that He wrenched in agony in sympathy and compassion, for He felt the pain of seeing what sickness did to those He loved. I've seen parents sick to death over an ill child, and no parent has ever felt the compassion or the love that Christ felt, because it was God loving in that human body.

For an illustration, look at the 11th of John; and Lazarus is dead; and Jesus comes there...and He goes to the grave...and in verse 33, it says, "When Jesus therefore saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, He groaned in His Spirit and was troubled." I...I can't express the depth of what that means. The terms mean He was deeply moved. He was seized by an anguishing emotion; but only He would know how a supremely loving God is wracked by the pain of seeing the ones He loved in anguish; and I don't think He was just pain because of Lazarus, 'cause He was gonna raise Lazarus out of the grave. I think He felt there all the pain of knowing that all of humanity that He loved was going to live its entire history out in anxiety; because it would always be facing the death of those it loves. I think He gathered together all of the anguish and pain that the knowledge of death itself could bring into one person's thoughts.

He was pained, and it says literally in verse 35, the Greek says, "He burst into tears," and if He cried, believe me, He cried in an utterly comprehensive manner. Verse 8...38 then says, "He groaned again," and you could translate that one, "He shuddered." He actually was wracked with emotion. He sobbed and wept and felt deeply the pain.

See, our Lord was, by nature, sympathetic because He was God, and God loves His people. God is not willing that any should what? Perish. God doesn't enjoy the sorrow that He sees in the world. I really believe, if you wanna know the heart of God, then look at the emotion of Jesus and see the heart of God...

Our Lord, every time he saw a need, was just wracked with...wracked internally with compassion. See Him in the Garden in John 18. The soldiers come to take him, and twice he says to them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth," twice; and He said then, "Those are your orders," in effect. "Let these men go." He was so compassionate on His disciples that He didn't even give a thought for what He was going into.

In the 19th chapter, you see Him on the cross; and He's hanging there with those four great wounds in His body. And if ever there was a moment when He could've thought of Himself, it would've been

then; but He looks down at the foot of the cross, and He sees this little lady, his mother Mary; and he knows that He isn't gonna be around anymore to care for her; and he knows that Joseph is dead, we assume, and that the brothers and sisters in the family have not yet believed and don't until after the resurrection; and who's gonna take care of Mary? That's what's on His heart, and He commits her to John, and John to her, and once that's done, He can go ahead and die.

What compassion. What compassion. He looked at those people so many times with pain in His heart. He said to them on one occasion, "You will not come to Me...that you might have life." The 23rd chapter of Matthew in the 37th verse, one of the most pensive things that ever came out of His mouth. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even like a hen gathering her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

And the 19th chapter of Luke tells us in verse 41 this about Him. "And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it." And I can't imagine the dimensions of weeping that must have come from the heart of God; and He said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this the...thy day, if thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they're hidden from thine eyes. If you only had known. If you'd only known." The Bible says He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It means sorrow and grief as God would feel it. So Matthew uses the strongest word there is for compassion. He was wrenched in His midsection. Oh, how He loved. Oh, how He loved.

Thomas Watson said this. "We may force our Lord to punish us, but we will never have to force Him to love us. That's His nature." This must have been some news to the people of those days. The Greek gods were indifferent. In fact, the Greeks said that the No. 1 attribute of their gods was apaythaya, apathy, indifference.

The Jews had been taught by the Pharisees that God was an ogre, uncaring, uninterested, and indifferent. Jesus brought a whole new message. Anna Barbauld wrote, "Jesus, the friend of human kind, with strong compassion moved, descended like a pitying God, to save the souls He loved. And still for erring, guilty man, a brother's pity flows, and still His bleeding heart is touched, with memory of our woes."

Peter, in 1 Peter 3:8, calls on us to have the same compassion...and I guess if you don't understand what I'm saying, that tells how far removed you are from Him. We not only are called to minister, but we're called to minister because we love, because our hearts are broken...over those who are lost. That prince of expositors, G. Campbell Morgan, wrote this. "There is no reason in man that God should save. The need is born of God's own compassion. No man has any claim upon God. Why, then, should men be cared for? Why should they not become the prey of the ravening wolf, having wandered from the fold? It has been said that the great work of redemption was the outcome of a

passion for the righteousness and holiness of God. That Jesus must come and teach and live and suffer and die, because God is righteous and holy. I do not so read the story. God could've met every demand of His righteousness and every demand of His holiness by handing men over to the doom they had brought upon themselves...But deepest in the being of God, holding in its great energizing might both holiness and righteousness is His love and compassion. It out of the love which inspired the wail of the divine heart that salvation has been provided."

What moved our Lord? Love, compassion. There's a second motive, or a second element in His motive. I call it condition. Condition; and now we move to the Man, and look what He says in verse 36, "They were faint and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." He moves from His nature to the need, and He saw them in their real condition. He was not fooled by their religious fronts. He was not fooled by the façade, the superficiality. He said, "These people are desperately in need," and He uses two tremendously rich words. Faint and scattered abroad don't really translate the core of meaning. Askulmanoy and arimanoy, two tremendous words.

The first one can mean worn out, exhausted. It can mean beaten up, battered, mangled, ripped, torn, skinned alive. They were devastated. They were skinned, mutilated, worn out, exhausted, battered, bruised, beaten. The second word means to be thrown down, lying prostrate, totally helpless, and it's used in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament in Judges 4:22 to speak of a man who was laying dead with a spike driven through his temples...It means they were mangled and devastated, and then thrown on the ground lying prostrate and utterly helpless. That's how He saw 'em. They...it was as if they had no shepherd.

You know who claimed to be their shepherds? The scribes and the Pharisees said they were the shepherds of Israel. That's what their shepherds had done to them. This, my friend, is an indictment of their spiritual leaders. Their spiritual leaders didn't show 'em any pasture. Their spiritual leaders didn't feed them. Their spiritual leaders didn't bind their wounds. Their spiritual leaders literally mutilated them...They were flayed. They were mangled corpses, plundered by the scribes and the Pharisees, and now they were lying prostrate, devastated. It is a graphic picture of the uncaring, unconcerned leaders; and we see the weariness, the bewilderment, and the wounds that have left these people desolate. It happened because their shepherds...never helped them, but, rather, harmed them.

They're called again in chapter 10 verse 6, you see, "The lost sheep of the house of Israel," and the phrase literally means the sheep that have perished. Terrible indictment of their leaders. They were offering a religion that didn't lift burdens. It bound burdens on them. They were fooling around with subtle arguments about the law and their traditions. They were utterly indifferent to need. They coulda cared less.

In Matthew 24:23, Jesus says, "You devour widows' houses... You bind on My people...23:4 says...needless burdens."...And in 23:13, Jesus said, "You shut people out of the Kingdom." What an indictment. Oh, what an indictment...This...this was their leaders, their supposed shepherds...Jesus saw that condition. I see that today. People say, "Oh, you know, you shouldn't speak against this situation, shouldn't speak against those other religions. You shouldn't say anything against those other groups." Listen, they are shutting people out of the Kingdom of God. They are mangling them and flaying them and mutilating them and leaving them lying prostrate and helpless; and if you don't perceive that, you miss it. You don't see it the way the Lord did.

Can you imagine how wonderful it must have been when they heard Him say this? "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I'll give you...what?...rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy. My burden is light." That whole little section there, Matthew 11:28 to 30, plays off of things the Pharisees said. Their yoke was hard, painful, killing. Jesus said, "Mine is easy." They needed a shepherd, and He longed to shepherd them, to gather them.

There's a fearful passage in the 34th chapter of Ezekiel. It talks about shepherds who feed themselves instead of their sheep. It talks about shepherds who come with no healing for the wounded sheep. It talks about shepherds who never seek the lost sheep; and then if you go into the 11th chapter of Zechariah, you'll find that there are shepherds even presented there who eat their sheep and who eat so ferociously their sheep that they pull apart their feet to get every morsel remaining."...

The Apostle Paul was concerned about this. So was Jesus. Jesus, in John 10, said, "I am concerned, in effect, about those who come into the sheepfold and climb in and are not the true shepherds." And Paul said, "I'm concerned about those who come along and will devour You." And Jesus had already said in chapter 7, "There come along some false shepherds wearing sheep's clothing." It does not mean that they're dressed like sheep. Sheep's clothing is wool, and that was the garment of a shepherd. They are false shepherds; and they devour the sheep; and Jesus saw what false teachers and false shepherds do. He had compassion, and He saw that their condition was they needed a shepherd.

Someone wrote, "Let me look on the crowd as my Savior did, till my eyes with tears grow dim. Let me view with pity the wandering sheep, and love them for the love of Him."...Then He changed the metaphor to give us the third element of His motive, from sheep to a harvest, and I call this consummation.

Jesus loved them and cared for them and ministered to them because of His compassion, because of their condition, and because of the coming consummation. Verse 37, "Then saith He unto His disciples, 'The harvest truly is filled up.' Pitches, filled full. What does He mean? Some people

think the harvest here is the lost. Some people think it's the elect. Some people think it's the seekers after God. Some people think it's the number to be saved. Let's see if we can find out what the harvest is. First of all, it is not the field of John 4. That's a different picture.

What is the harvest? Listen as I read to you for a moment, and see if it doesn't become abundantly clear. The words are Isaiah's words in the 17th chapter and the 10th and 11th verses. Just listen. "Because thou has forgotten the God of thy salvation and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength, therefore shall thou plant pleasant plants, and shall set it with a strange slip. In the day shall thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shall thou make thy seed to flourish; but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow. Woe to the multitude of many people."

The harvest in Isaiah 17 is judgment. Listen to Joel 3 verse 9. "Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare war! Make up...wake up the mighty men! Let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.' Assemble yourselves and come, all ye nations, and gather yourselves together round about; there cause the mighty ones to down, O Lord." God calls the nations to judgment. "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, get down; for the press is full, the vats overflow -- for their wickedness is great!...then this...Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision."

Now, I believe that when the Lord saw the multitudes, He thought of Joel's harvest...and it's judgment that Joel spoke of. I believe our Lord saw consummation. He saw the eternity perspective. He didn't see people just in their current problem. He saw them as doomed to hell. In Matthew 13...the Lord, giving a parable said this. "Let both grow together...verse 30...until the harvest. And in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, 'Gather together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them. But gather the wheat into My barn.'" It is judgment, and it is judgment on the multitudes; and some will be barned and some will be burned, but it is judgment.

Verse 39 same chapter. Tells you right here, "The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels." The harvest that He sees is not just a mission field. That isn't the perspective here. The harvest is the final judgment, the consummation, the end of the ages, the time of grief. That's what He sees. You find later on, if you look at the Book of Revelation 14th chapter 14th verse, "And I looked, and hold, a white cloud; and upon the cloud one sat like the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.' And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped." Judgment. Judgment.

Listen, beloved, Jesus ministered to people because He loved them. He ministered to people because of their terrible condition, and He ministered to people because He could see their ultimate consummation; and if you've lost that vision, you've lost a major portion of your motive. Paul said, "Knowing...2 Corinthians 5...the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. We understand hell." Romans 12, Paul talked about the vengeance of God. Hebrews, the writer talks about it. "Men will die, and after that, the judgment." In 2 Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul painted such a vivid picture. "In the day when the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels and flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

So easy for us to lose the sense of the imminence and inevitability of eternal judgment. There's no way to describe hell. Nothing on earth can compare with it. No living person can really comprehend it. No madman in the wildest flights of insanity ever beheld the borders of hell. No man in delirium's ever pictured a place so utterly terrible. No nightmare racing across a fevered mind ever produced a terror to match that of the mildest hell. No murder scene with splattered blood and mutilated bodies could ever suggest the revulsion that one glimpse of hell could suggest; and our Lord saw that...and He was moved...to reach out to people.

So our Lord saw the crowds. He taught them. He preached to them, and He healed them, because of His compass...compassion, their condition, and the ultimate consummation...I hope that speaks to your heart. It sure does to mine.

For just a moment, as we close, may I speak to you of His method? We'll get into this more in our future study, so I won't take time with it. But what was His method? Well, at the end of verse 37, He says, "The laborers are few." In other words, "I can't do it alone. The laborers are few."...What is that? That's the first part of His method. I call it insight. He has a threefold method, insight. First you have to understand the problem. What are you gonna do about it? What are you gonna do about a lost hell-bound world, a world of hurting people who need compassion? What are you gonna do about the condition of men and women who are trapped under those false shepherds who feed them lies that damn their souls? What are you gonna do?

First you have to have the insight to see that there's a problem, and you don't have enough people. That's insight. How many times in the Bible do you read this? "Watch and pray." Or this? "Be sober. Be vigilant." Or "Be alert." We've gotta know what's going on. Can you see the signs of the times? Can you see the needs of men? Are you really discerning? Do you look through the religious facades? Can you see past the phonies? Do you know how few real laborers there really are?

Like Ezra 8:15, Ezra says, "I viewed the people." Nehemiah twice says, "I viewed the walls." Have you viewed the scene? Do you understand? Seeing the need? Insight. God wants His people to see, and so He explains it to the disciples. You see, the harvest is so plenteous. I mean it'll include

everybody, but the laborers are so few. Do you understand the...the problem?...The insight moves to the second element of His method, which I call intercession. Verse 38 doesn't say, "Now panic. Panic." Doesn't say, "Do it yourself, and do it as quick as you can."... Doesn't say, "Come up with a great program." It says, "Pray... pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest," oh, what a term, the Lord of the harvest. Do you know what an amazing thing. The very God who is the Lord of the harvest, that's a judgment term, the very God who is the judge, is the One we beseech to send the workers to prevent the people from getting to judgment. Marvelous.

There's a part of God that demands that judgment, and there's an attribute of God that seeks that no one be there. "Pray...He says...that the Lord of the harvest will send forth workers...is what it means in His...into His harvest." Before the final consummation, He...He sees the harvest as all this mass of people moving toward judgment. But before it gets there, "Pray that God will send forth workers." Isn't it amazing? Isn't it amazing that, in such desperation, He doesn't say, "Now, get outta here as fast as you can and do the job." He says, "Stop and pray."

It's like in the Book of Acts when the Lord met with them in the upper room. He says, "Now, you stay here, and you pray, and you don't go anywhere till the Holy Spirit comes, and then He'll send you out; but, for the moment, don't do anything." Pray, and do you notice what you're praying for? Doesn't say, "Pray for the lost." Doesn't say that. It says, "Pray for laborers." You can sit around and say, "Oh, Lord, save my old aunt. Lord, save my husband. Lord, save my neighbor. Oh, Lord, save my neighbor." And you just keep saying to yourself, "Well, they're not getting saved. I'm sure I'm just gonna keep praying. We keep praying."

Then all of a sudden start pray this way, "Lord, please send someone to reach my neighbor," and just keep praying that for a long time, and pretty soon you're gonna say to yourself, "Uh, I think maybe I oughta go."...You see, if all you're doing is praying for the person to be saved, you can keep 'em at arm's length. But as soon as you start praying for the Lord to send the person, you're gonna pretty soon feel like maybe you're the person who oughta go...and that leads you from intercession to involvement.

Verse 1 chapter 10, and that's exactly what happened. He said, "Now, you disciples pray," and then in verse 1, "When He had called to Him the twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, heal all manner of sickness, all manner of disease," and so forth, and He sent them.

Now, listen to me, the ones who were doing the interceding were the ones who got involved, right? What is God's method? First, that we have insight, that we understand...that we understand that people are lost, and there are few to reach them; and then that we begin to pray; and out of our prayers will come our involvement...

I'm not so concerned that y'all sign on the dotted line. I'm just concerned that you get on your knees. If you start praying for the lost long enough, I think God'll pull you right out into where they are. There's an interesting phrase in verse 38. It says, "He will send forth laborers." Uses a very strong Greek term that means to throw them out, to shove them out, to thrust them forth. Let God do it. Let God send 'em. So when faced with a need, we don't panic. We pray; and as we pray, we find that maybe we're gonna be the ones that are gonna do it, as the disciples prayed and found themselves to be the ones who were involved.

Marvelous...method. God's people, insight, intercession, involvement. Listen, friends, God has called us to teach His Word, to proclaim His Kingdom, to touch peoples' lives, and to be moved to do that, because His love is in us, because we see their condition, and because we understand their consummation; and He's asked us to analyze it, to have insight, to intercede on their behalf by asking God to send forth laborers; and then when the call comes, like Isaiah, "Here am I. Send me."...

It's amazing what you can do if you get involved in the Lord's work. One night in the East End of London, a young doctor was turning out the lights of a mission hall in which he was working...He found a ragged little boy hiding in a dark corner. The little boy asked him to please let him stay there, 'cause it was warm in the corner, and he could sleep, and it was a nicer place than he always slept. The doctor said no, and he took the homeless little boy to his own room. He fed him. He bathed him. Then he tried to get his story. He learned from the little boy that he was living in a coal bin, and he was living in a coal bin with a number of other little boys. So the doctor asked the little fella if he'd take him to where the coal bin was so he could see.

They went through the narrow alleys of London. Finally, in the darkness of night, they came to a hole in the wall of an old factory. "Look...look in there," the little boy said. Doctor struck a match, and he looked inside through the hole and crawled into a filthy coal bin cellar, and he found 13 little boys there, clothed with only bits of old burlap to protect them from the London cold; and one little fella had clinging to him tightly a four-year-old little brother...They were all orphans...

The doctor said that, then and there, he caught a vision how he could serve the Lord. His name was Dr. Bernardo. The story is true. He cared for those little boys and for little girls; and at the time of his death, the newspapers of London reported that Dr. Bernardo had taken and surrounded with a Christian atmosphere over 80,000 homeless children, and hundreds of them became Christians...because he had the eyes of Christ to see into the darkness and the heart of Christ to draw people into the light. Oh, that we should so minister.

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