

The Calling of the Laborers

Matthew 9:35-38

INTRODUCTION

In about three and a half year of the Lord Jesus' ministry on the earth, He spent most of His time with His twelve disciples that would carried on the work of God in the world to **“make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;”** (Matthew 28:19-20)

In Matthew chapter 9 verses 35-38 we will discover a significant transition in Jesus' ministry. Until this point, the disciples have simply been listening, observing and learning the words and the works of the Lord Jesus.

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Notice the works of the Lord Jesus were teaching, preaching (proclaiming) and healing every sick and disease. His teaching and preaching were verified as divine and true by the display of supernatural power in His ministry of signs, manifested especially through healing.

We must understand that Jesus came into this world to fulfill God's promise and prophecies of the Old Testament of the Messiah, the Savior, who would redeemed the sins of the world through His death on the cross. The Lord Jesus did not come into this world to give temporary physical healing, but He came to seek and save the lost. That whosoever believe in His should not parish, but have everlasting/eternal life.

Notice that every miraculous sign that Jesus performed was not based upon physical needs, but based upon the faith of those people who trusted in Him.

1. (Matthew 8:1-4) Jesus cleanses a leper - after He heard and saw the confession of the heart of the leper, He healed him.
2. (Matthew 8:5-13) Jesus healed the Centurion's son because the Centurion man had great faith in Him.
3. (Matthew 8:14-15) Jesus healed Peter's mother in-law, after she was healed she immediately serve Him (Mark 1:29-31).
4. (Matthew 8:16-17) Jesus cast out demons and healed the sick to fulfill the prophecy to Isaiah (Isaiah 53:4).

NOTE: Unlike many Christian movements today, their focus on the ministry is to meet the physical needs rather giving them the Spiritual food from the Word of God. They use the Word of God to satisfy their personal desires and wants. God gives us His Word to reveal Himself to us so that we may know Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, to have a personal relationship, and to see His glory and power.

The **COMPASSION** of the SAVIOR (v. 36)

36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

1. **As Jesus was busy teaching, preaching and healing the multitude, He saw the multitudes...**
 - a. As the Lord Jesus busy fulfilling the Father's works, He did not lose sight of the heart of God for the mission.
 - b. Jesus "saw" - meaning that He looked **purposefully, carefully and with understanding**.
 - c. The Lord Jesus took time to see into the hearts of the multitudes that were lost and hopeless.
 - d. **What caused Jesus to "see" the multitude purposefully, carefully and with understanding of their hearts?**

2. **As He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them...**
 - a. Before the Lord Jesus "saw" the multitude, He loved them in the first place.
 - b. 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.**"
 - c. The Love of God that moved the eyes, the hands and the feet of God toward the lost multitude.
 - d. We cannot see the multitude the same way as God see them, unless we understand and have the love of God in our lives.
 - e. As He saw the hearts and the lives of the multitudes, Jesus was moved with compassion on them.
 - f. Notice that the love of God moved Him with compassion, not with hatred or condemnation, but with LOVE.
 - i. The word "**compassion**" in the original text has the same meaning as "**mercy**".
 - ii. Mercy has the understanding of **not giving what one deserves**.
 - iii. The Lord Jesus knew that "**those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, ⁹ tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil,...**" (Romans 2:8-9).
 - 1) The definition of **SIN** is **self-seeking and disobedience to the truth**.
 - 2) (God's) **INDIGNATION** and **WRATH** carry the same meaning, which is the righteous anger and wrath of God toward sinners. Because sin is very offensive to God and His holiness.
 - 3) (Men and women will experience) **TRIBULATION** and **ANGUISH**, which means **OPPRESSION** and **DISTRESS** of Sin and Satan.
 - g. The phrase "**moved with compassion**" in the original text literally refers to the "**bowel/intestines**."
 - h. Meaning that the Lord's compassion upon the multitudes was **agonizing**, which involved **His mind, heart, and emotion**.
 - i. I can almost picture the face of the Lord Jesus, sadness mix with agony that came from a heavy heart toward the multitudes of sinners (those that He loved)!

NOTE: There is no reason in man that God should save; the need is born of His 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 have met every demand of His righteousness and 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 mighty, both holiness and righteousness, is love and compassion. God said according to Hosea, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?” It is out of the love which inspired that wall of the Divine heart, that salvation has been provided. (G. Campbell Morgan, the Gospel according to Matthew).

3. because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

a. The Scripture wrote two reasons of Jesus’ compassion:

i. **Because they were weary...**

1) The word “weary” in the original text is “*eklyo*” which means **harassed, distressed, bruised, severely troubled, hard pressed.**

a) The multitudes has been harassed, distressed, bruised and severely troubled, inwardly by their sinful and hopeless condition.

b) The Lord Jesus knew deep in their hearts that their sins had severely troubled, harassed, bruised their souls.

2) Christians, whenever we see a lost person, we must understand their souls’ condition; they are **harassed, distressed, bruised, hard pressed, hopeless, battered, worn out and exhausted in their sins.**

ii. **... and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.**

1) The phrase “**scattered**” in the original text has the same meaning as “thrown down”.

2) The basic meaning of **being thrown down prostrate and utterly helpless**, as from drunkenness or mortal wound.

3) Today’s translation is “Wasted”.

4) The multitudes were thrown down, utterly helpless and wasted like sheep having no shepherd.

5) When sheep has no shepherd, the sheep is as good as dead, helpless and thrown down.

NOTE: The life of sheep is the shepherd. The sheep needs the shepherd more than they need the green grass. The picture of the shepherd and the sheep is not the same picture as New Zealand shepherd and sheep; The Bible was written in the Middle Easter culture, where the land is full of desert and a few of green. The sheep’s life is depended upon the shepherd who would lead them to the green pastures every day. Without the shepherd, the sheep would suffer and died.

6) There are good shepherd and bad shepherd.

7) The Lord Jesus said, “**I am the good Shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.**” (John 10:11)

8) However, those who claimed to be their shepherd in the time of Christ were the Pharisees and Scribes who taught the false doctrine/teaching, and caused confusion and hopelessness.

9) Their religious leaders did not teach them the true teaching of the Word of God, but they were led to their own traditions and the law that bind them to sin and death.

b. Many religious leaders today are still endeavoring to keep people out of the kingdom by distorting and contradicting God’s Word and preventing the way of salvation. They still keep them from the true Shepherd. By telling people

they are already saved because “a good God would never condemn anyone to hell,” they lead people to be content with themselves and to see no need for repentance and salvation. - John McArthur

- c. There are some who used the Bible to teach people to work their way into God’s favor by performing certain good deeds or participating in some religious rituals.
- d. The false teachings have created many distressed (fainted) and helpless/hopeless (scattered abroad) souls.

The **COMMISSION** of the SAVIOR (vs. 37-38)

³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, **“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.**

³⁸ **Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”**

1. Before the Lord Jesus gave His commission to His disciples, He wanted them to understand the reason behind the commission.
 - a. As Jesus saw the multitudes and moved with compassion because they were fainted and scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, He wanted His disciples to understand and to see the need.
 - b. The **“harvest”** is referring to the **harassed** and **thrown down** multitudes who need a Savior, and it **was truly plenteous**.
 - c. It will be very hard for us to pray for God’s laborers if we do not see the harvest that is **harassed** and **thrown down** without the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - d. The Lord Jesus wanted His disciples to see and understand the desperate harvest that is full of distressed, hopelessness and helpless souls that need someone to give them the word of Hope, the Word of God.
2. Then the Lord Jesus commission His disciples to **pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest**.
 - a. “Pray” is not a passive word.
 - i. Sometimes, when we pray, we are asking God to do something on our behalf.
 - ii. After we turn our burden to God, we became passive.
 - b. When we pray, we are anticipating to participate in what God is doing in and around us.
 - i. As faith without deed is dead, therefore, prayer without anticipating to participate in what God is doing is also dead prayer.
 - ii. When a child asks his father to fix his bicycle, the father would expect his son to be ready to participate in fixing his bicycle.
 - iii. If we pray to God to do something without anticipating to participate in His action, then we are **COMMANDING** God.
 - iv. Who are we to command God to do our will?!?
 - v. The Lord Jesus said, **“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”** (John 4:34)
 - vi. The Lord Jesus never commanded His heavenly Father to do His own will!
 - vii. Jesus said in His prayer, **“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”** (John 17:4)
 - c. The Lord Jesus gave a commission to His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest with them being a part of it.
 - i. The word “Laborers” in the original text is the same word as “Doers”.

- ii. There are many Christians who pray for God to send His laborers into His harvest, but the truth is that they are commanding God to send some but not them!
 - iii. These Christians do not want to be the **DOERS** of the words, but **HEARERS** only!
 - iv. James 1:22 - **But be DOERS of the word, and not HEARERS only, deceiving yourselves.**
 - v. I wonder if these Christians really living their lives to glorify God or to glorify themselves?!?!
- d. Notice that the Lord Jesus said to the disciples that the HARVEST is HIS.
- i. Meaning that the Lord of the Harvest has done His work in His harvest, preparing the “harvest” to listen and to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - ii. When God send His laborers, His Spirit has already moved before we even move.
 - iii. The Lord Jesus said, **“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”**
 - iv. God the Father had done His works before the Lord Jesus Christ did His.
 - v. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring people to the knowledge and understanding of the Saving Knowledge of Jesus Christ.
 - vi. All we need to do is to be a Living Testimony, as the Light of the World and the Salt to the Earth, so that others may see the Living God in our lives.
 - vii. Acts 17:28 - **“for in Him (Jesus Christ) we live and move and have our being.”**

CONCLUSION

Do you have the compassion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in your heart?
Do you see the people around you, at work, at your neighborhood, at your school with the compassion of God in your heart?

If you do, have you pray with the anticipation to participate what God has already doing in His harvest in Auckland, in New Zealand, to send His LABORER into His harvest?

Remember that He is the Lord of the Harvest, that means that He has given His power and authority to His Laborers.

Are you the LABORER of Jesus Christ?