

THE HARVEST
MATTHEW 9:36-38; JOHN 4:35

INTRODUCTION

I grew up on a small farm in Brunswick, Georgia. Brunswick is known more for its tourism, shrimping industry and pulp and paper products than farm products. It is a land of pine trees.

However, my father saw to it that me and my two brothers had our share of time out in the fields to try to minimize the amount of time we had to get into trouble. I hate to think where I might have wound up if not for the farm. It kept us busy.

I spent a lot of my time during my teen years out in the fields. In the spring, we would break up the fallow ground, plant, and fertilize.

In the late spring and early summer we would nurture the crops by hoeing, fertilizing, and watering them.

And, finally, in the late summer and early fall there would be the reaping of the harvest. (Fresh corn, peas, butter beans, okra, tomatoes—the list goes on!)

The time of reaping a harvest was a short time, but critical time. If you didn't harvest the crop in time, it would ruin in the field.

Jesus wanted His disciples to see this most critical work—the work of reaping the harvest.

Notice what he Jesus said about the harvest:

I. WE MUST LIFT UP OUR EYES AND LOOK ON THE FIELDS!
(John 4:35)

- A. You Have To Look On Purpose To See The Fields!**
You will never see the fields as long as your attention is elsewhere.

We're not told what the disciples attention was on. However, if we look at other passages of Scripture we can get a good idea.

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Sometimes their focus was on work.
Sometimes their focus was on doctrine.
Sometimes their focus was on themselves.

Could I tell you that most believers are preoccupied with everything else in the world—except for the fields.

You Have To Look On Purpose To See The Fields!

B. You Have To Look On Purpose To See The Multitudes!
(Matthew 9:36)

I don't know about you, but I am awed by a crop field, especially a very large crop field.

When you see a large crop field you see the vastness of the fruit.

Let me ask you, when you are out and about—at the shopping center, at school, at work, wherever you go, or even what you see on the news broadcasts—do you see the multitudes?
The vastness of the fruit?

C. You Have To Look On Purpose To See The Possibilities!

I don't know what you see when you see a vast cornfield—I see a lot of grits!

- 1. Do you see the possibilities?**
Seeing the possibilities says, *“I may not be able to harvest it all, but I will harvest all I can while I can.”*

- 2. Or do you see the futilities?**
Futility says, *“Man that's a lot of work, we can't possibly harvest it all!”*

D. You Have To Look On Purpose To See The Urgency!

Crops go through three stages: green, ripe, rotten.

Harvest is effective only at one stage—ripe.

WE MUST LIFT UP OUR EYES AND LOOK ON THE FIELDS!

We Have To Look On Purpose...

- A. *To See The Fields.*
- B. *To See The Multitudes.*
- C. *To See The Possibilities.*
- D. *To See The Urgency.*

II. WE MUST BE MOVED WITH COMPASSION BY WHAT WE SEE AND KNOW! (Cf. Jude 22-23)

- A. What We Will See Are The Multitudes Yet Unharvested!**
Lost in their sin with no help and no hope unless someone does the reaping. Does that stir any compassion?
- B. What We Know Is Their Destiny If They Remain Unharvested!**
Crops that are left out in the field have a destiny— an eternal destiny— that is, eternal ruin; unrecoverable! (What a waste!)

The multitudes of lost souls that go unharvested also have a destiny— an eternal destiny—that is eternal ruin in hell, never to be recovered! (What a waste!)

III. WE MUST SEE THAT THE HARVEST HAS NOT YET ENDED!

There are still souls that can be reached for God!

- A. The Laborers Have Not Been Called Out Of The Field Yet!**
Jesus said in *John 9:5*— “*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*”

1 John 4:17— “*As He (Jesus) is, so are we in this world.*”

Matthew 5:14-16

- B. There Are Fields That Are Still Available To Be Reaped!**
Can't you see the ripened fields?

IV. WE MUST SEE THAT MORE LABORERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE HARVEST!

It has become harder and harder to get reapers for the harvest in this country of ours.

That is as true in the spiritual realm as it is in the physical realm!

V. WE MUST SEE THAT MORE LABOR IS NEEDED FOR THE HARVEST!

The world has more winnable people than ever before ... but it is possible to come out of a ripe field empty-handed.

We must exert labor in the field—witness, prayer, etc.

VI. WE MUST PRAY TO THE LORD OF THE HARVEST FOR HELP.

(e.g. When my father used to plant butterbeans, I asked for help!!)

Conclusion

Where are your eyes? Are they on the fields?

Are you in the fields? Are you working?