

Series: John

Title: Fields White to Harvest

Text: John 4: 31-38

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The disciples had gone in to town to buy lunch. They returned to find the Lord Jesus speaking to the Samaritan woman—they stood silent. Suddenly she ran off to town. They did not know the Lord Jesus had just quickened this woman to eternal life by his word. The Master stood looking on the horizon.

John 4: 31: In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. 32: But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33: Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? 34: Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Our Lord's spiritual bread, his purpose, was "*to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work.*" He worded it that way—"to do the will of him that sent me"—because it is Christ who sends his church, his witnesses, even as the Father sent him—to preach Christ and his finished work of redemption! So he is teaching us some things about our charge.

He declares the urgency and expectation we should always have in preaching the gospel of Christ—*35: Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.*

He declares the wages for our labor is the harvest of chosen sinners brought to faith in him—*36: And he that reapeth receiveth wages.* The wages are lost sinners brought to faith in Christ. *And gathereth fruit unto life eternal.* The fruit he sends us to gather is the spiritual dead sinner gathered unto life eternal—what great fruit!

He declares no competition in his field. This is the rejoicing of both he that sows and he that reaps—*36...that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 37: And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 38: I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.*

OUR BREAD IS CHRIST'S BREAD

John 4: 34: Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Christ's meat was to gather the lost elect of God through his word. That is the meat of his church—to send the gospel forth through which Christ gathers his redeemed.⁰

God the Father sent our Lord Jesus Christ. It was the *Father's will which* the Father sent Christ to accomplish. God is a just Judge who will be no means clear the guilty—but God also delighteth in mercy—a just God and a Savior! So it was God's will for Christ to bear the cross in the place of his elect. Also, it was the will of God to reveal to chosen sinners that he is our merciful Father. His will is to show guilty sinners mercy.

Christ came preaching the gospel to the Samaritan woman because it was the Father's will to make her know God the Father chose a people for Christ to save—and she was one of them. God blessed us with all spiritual blessings by choosing his people in Christ before the world

was. But it was also God's will that all his spiritual blessings be bestowed upon us by Christ. So Christ's meat, his reward, his rejoicing was to come to these elect Samaritans, reveal himself and give them all these spiritual blessings through faith.

It was the Father's will to reveal to his people that Christ is the Righteousness of God—the Righteousness God our Father provided for his people. Christ honored the law of God for his particular people who the Father sent him to redeem because it was his Father's will. Having redeemed us from the curse, he gives us free forgiveness through faith in his precious blood because it is his Father's will. So Christ's meat was to bear witness of himself to this Samaritan woman and her friends—to give them this living water—righteousness through faith in him—it was his Father's will!

It was the Father's will to predestinate his people to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. So Christ's meat was to bring the gospel and give her the Spirit of adoption—that she might know God is her Father and she his child. That is why Christ “must needs go through Samaria.” Christ said my meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish the work.

It was the Father's will for Christ to make known to us the mystery of his will that in the end God the Father shall gather all his people together—elect Jew and Gentile, in heaven and in earth—and give us an eternal inheritance with Christ his Son. Christ's meat was to do the will of him that sent him—to reveal to this half Jew, half Gentile woman and her friends that they were children of God and joint-heirs with Christ, even as his elect among the Jews.

In all it was God the Father's will that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted Christ. So Christ's meat was to accomplish the will of the Father by bringing her and her friends to praise the Father who first trusted Christ. He did it by bringing them to put all their trust in Christ.

Brethren, when Christ sent the gospel to us and gave us the Spirit and faith to believe on him—it was *because it is God the Father's will*. To make us cease fearing God's wrath by beholding that his justice is satisfied in Christ. It was our Father's will to bring us to cry out to him as our merciful heavenly Father.

Romans 8: 15: For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;

Matthew 18: 14: It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Brethren, it is the Father's will for Christ to send us to preach him. He has called us and he send us into the world. It is because it is the Father's will that Christ call his redeemed to faith through the gospel. It pleased the Father to save through the foolishness of preaching using those Christ already called. So Christ is accomplishing the Father's will by sending us forth. We are to go forth preaching the gospel because “*it is the will of Christ who sent us.*” It is that work of bringing the gospel to his lost sheep that he is specifically speaking about in our text. He said “*my meat is to do the will of him that sent me*”—because Christ says to us John 20: 21...as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

He is teaching us this is our preeminent business and purpose in this earth even as it was his. Our meat is to do the will of Christ who sent us—to preach Christ and him crucified. He was

hungry to do the will of him that sent him like a hungry man is for natural bread. He is teaching his church to have the same hunger.

URGENCY AND EXPECTATION

John 4: 35: Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest...37: And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 38: I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

We are to bear witness of Christ to lost sinners with urgency and expectancy. Men sow seed then wait about four months till the harvest. The Lord says that is NOT how it is in his vineyard. As soon as he revealed himself to the Samaritan woman she believed and ran to tell others the good news and they believed on him. So he looks over the horizon as the crowd begins to appear and says—*"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."*

The Lord is teaching us to "redeem the time" for "time is short." Today is the day of grace. Each and every day is the day to sow—to declare to sinners the person and work of Christ. And we are to sow expecting an harvest!

Today we may reap where others sowed yesterday. Where we sow today others will reap tomorrow—*"And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.* The reason the church exists in the world today—the reason we exist here—is due to other men's labor. We are the harvest that other men sowed in the past. In time, others will reap the harvest from our sowing today. Or when we speak to an individual we never know but that Christ may have used another laborer to already plant the seed and Christ make us reap the harvest.

It is the promise that his word shall never return void. His word shall accomplish the thing whereunto he sent it. There shall be a plentiful harvest in this gospel age because Christ shall call out his redeemed.

Leviticus 26:5: And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

Psalms 126:6: He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Amos 9:13: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

The reason there shall be a harvest is because Christ is the Premiant Sower and Reaper. The Lord Jesus used some laborer to sow the seed of the gospel to us. Christ brought in the harvest. He sent the Holy Spirit and gave the increase giving us life and faith in him

Now by Christ we labor in sowing the gospel. He draws his people under the gospel. He blesses the seed sown. He gives the increase by blessing the word within his people. He adds to the church daily such as should be saved. He preserves his vineyard

1 Corinthians 3: 5: Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6: I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7: So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8: Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9: For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry,...

Isaiah 60:21 Thy people also *shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Isaiah 61:3 [God the Father anointed Christ to redeem and quicken and call his people]...that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Christ gets the glory for keeping his vineyard.

Isaiah 27: 2: In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. 3: I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

THE REWARD FOR OUR LABOR

John 4: 36: And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

Sending the gospel forth and preaching is labor. But Christ promises a reward for our labor. It is those elect, redeemed, sinners that the Spirit regenerates and bring to have eternal life in Christ through faith. Our brethren called to faith in Christ are our reward. What better reward!

Vain religion is big business. They labor for numbers because the more in the pew the more money. But Christ's servants are not seeking money. We are not trying to build churches and plant churches. Our treasure is Christ and his glory in saving his lost sheep, seeing Christ glorified in the salvation of his people.

Matthew 6: 21: [The Lord said] Where your treasure is there will your heart be also...25: Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?...33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

It so great a privilege to be used of the Lord to be his witnesses that it is reward enough. But Christ declares that the wages we receive are lost sinners brought to faith in Christ. It is not merely names on a church roll. Our purpose is not to baptize—to make converts—but to preach Christ and him crucified. But Christ promises our wage, our reward, is to behold Christ glorified in the salvation of one he everlastingly loved and redeemed by his precious blood.

It is the joy of “*gathering fruit unto life eternal*”—the lost, spiritually dead sinner gathered unto life eternal. Our joy is seeing Christ snatch a sinner from the devil’s jaws, from the fires of hell and bring him to glory only in the Lord. The Corinthians were a covetous people so Paul would receive no money from Corinth so that money would not be an hindrance from them hearing the gospel. He said what then is my wage if not money? He told Timothy.

2 Timothy 2: 10: I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:19: For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

There is no competition between individual laborers or between congregations—“*both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*” We rejoice in earth and there is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents. And it is the same between laborers and reapers in this earth.

The Lord used us to sow here then the Lord sent brother Eric and brother Kevin to pastor other congregations. That is not a decrease but an increase. The Lord used those churches to sow the gospel. The Lord has already harvested fruit in those churches. He adds to the church such as should be saved. We all rejoice together. The Lord promises

Zechariah 8: 12: the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry,...” (1 Cor 3: 9)

Amen!