

# Missions: The Heartbeat of God

**Text:** Matthew 9:35-10:1 & 5; Luke 10:1-2; John 4:27-42

## Introduction:

1. There are three times recorded in the Gospels where Christ speaks of the need of the Harvest field:
  - To the 12 disciples before He sends them out two by two on their first official Evangelistic tour (Matt. 9:35-10:1; Mark 6:7-13)
  - To the 70 disciples as He sent them out to preach the Gospel (Luke 10:1-2)
  - To the 12 disciples after leading the woman of Samaria to salvation (John 4:35)
2. The preaching of the Gospel for the winning of the souls of men was the central focus of Christ's earthly ministry. Christ faithfully preached the Gospel in the cities and villages (Matt. 9:35)
3. Christ taught much on the subject of prayer (e.g. Luke 11) but the only specific prayer request He made was in relation to the need of the Gospel Harvest. This gives us a window into the heart of the Saviour for missions.
4. There are 3 heart attitudes we need to adopt in relation to the Harvest fields.

## I. A Compassion for the Harvest (Vs. 36)

Christ was moved by...

### A. The Sight of the People (36a)

1. 'saw' = means to perceive or discern with the eyes. Most frequently translated 'know' in the N.T. So, it refers to more than a casual glance. This was a knowing look. Lamentations 3:51 *"Mine eye affecteth mine heart..."*
2. Christ exhorted the disciples, *"Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."* (Jn. 4:35) We need to open our eyes and look!
3. "moved with compassion"
  - a. to feel pity or sympathy. Very strong word in the Greek language. Root word referred to the intestines (heart, lungs, liver etc...). Word translated 'bowels' elsewhere. Reference is to the seat of the affections. It means that Christ felt pity and sorrow for the multitudes in His heart, He yearned inside.
  - b. Christ's example of compassion for sinners: Matt. 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 20:34; Mark 1:41, 5:19, 6:34, 8:2; Luke 7:13 (9 references in Gospels)
4. 2 Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing***

***that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***

5. 1 Timothy 2:4 *“Who will have **all men to be saved**, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”*
6. 1 John 2:2 *“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and **not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.**”*
7. 2 Corinthians 5:14 *“**For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:**”*
8. Illustrations:
  - a. Moses (O.T.): Exodus 32:31-32 *“And Moses returned unto the LORD and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them idols of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin –; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”*
  - b. The Apostle Paul (N.T.): Romans 9:1-3 *“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”*

## **B. The Plight of the People (36b)**

1. Their weakness – ‘fainted’
2. Their wandering – “sheep having no Shepherd”
  - a. No Direction
    - i. The bulk of humanity go through life not really knowing the answer to the questions, “Why am I here?” or “Where am I going?” or “What is the purpose of life?”
  - b. No Protection
    - i. Sheep one of the most vulnerable creatures, especially in the absence of a Shepherd.
    - ii. Those who claimed to be Shepherds of Israel were actually imposters, corrupt men who laid heavy burdens upon the people. With no true Shepherd to care for them, they would make easy pickings for Satan the destroyer.
3. Song: Let me see this world dear Lord as though I were looking through your eyes...for if once I could see this world the way you see I just know I’d serve you more faithfully.

## **II. A Vision of the Harvest (Vs. 37; John 4:35)**

We need a vision of its...

### **A. Immensity (37a)**

1. ‘plenteous’ = Luke 10:2 uses the word ‘great’. John 4:35 speaks of “fields” in the plural.
2. <https://www.livepopulation.com/>
3. Illustrations:

- a. China – 1.3 billion
  - b. India – 1.2 billion
  - c. Africa – 1.2 billion
    - i. 30.4 million souls in Ghana in a country about the size of the state of Victoria.
    - ii. Approx. 600 deaths per day
    - iii. Approx. 2,405 births per day
  - d. South America – 422 million
  - e. If you put every lost person in a single line it would circle the globe 6 times
4. Death stats
- a. 55.3 million people die each year
  - b. 151,600 people die each day
  - c. 6,316 people die each hour
  - d. 105 people die each minute (almost two per second)
  - e. Yesterday over 216 people passed into eternity in our country of Australia.

**B. Opportunity (John 4:35-36)**

1. “they are white already” = there are souls ready to be harvested for Christ right now!
2. There are eternal rewards for being a part of this ministry of sowing and reaping – *“And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”* (Jn. 4:36)

**C. Scarcity (37b)**

1. The problem is not a harvest problem but a labour problem! There is a heart-breaking labour shortage for the work of the Gospel.
2. Simple mathematics! If 4 teams go soul-winning on a Sat and speak to 5 people for the Gospel, that’s 20 people. If 8 teams went, that would be 40. If 3 people letter box approx. 100 tracts each, that’s 300 tracts. If 10 people go that’s 1,000! The lack is not in the harvest field!
3. Romans 10:14 *“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? **and how shall they hear without a preacher?”***
4. Much of the mission work that does exist is humanitarian in nature and leaves the Gospel out!

**III. A Supplication for the Harvest (Vs. 38)**

**A. The Practice of Prayer (38a)**

1. ‘pray’ = aorist tense. Gives command sense of urgency. The ripeness of the harvest field and the heart-breaking lack of reapers should drive us to fervent prayer!

2. How much is the lack of laborers due to the prayerlessness of the church? The lack of laborers shouldn't surprise us considering the prevailing attitude amongst believers to the church prayer meetings.

**B. The Person to whom we pray (38b)**

1. When faced with the great need of the harvest field, we resort to the only one who has the power and resources to meet the need. God has ordained that prayer play an important part in the work of world missions.
2. Christ is the ruler and owner of the harvest field. It is His work; He is building His church and we have the privilege of labouring for Him.

**C. The Point of the prayer (38c)**

1. "send forth" = strong word. Means to "cast out" or thrust forth
2. 'laborers' = not just full-time pastors and missionaries! Every Christian can be a worker in Christ's harvest field. Every believer should be doing SOMETHING for the Harvest field
  - a. Believers who will reach out to their home mission field (soul-winning).
  - b. Believers who will give generously to the work of missions.
  - c. Believers who will join the local church team and strengthen the home base so that more can be done for missions. Every Gospel preacher needs a strong team of workers to help keep him at his post.

**D. The Performance following the prayer**

1. If soul-winning and missions is made a top priority in our prayers, then we will be more likely to make it a top priority in our schedules.
5. A passion for souls is born in the place of prayer. The closer we draw to God, the more we will learn that soul-winning and missions is the heart beat of God. Example: Isaiah 6:8 *"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, **Here am I; send me.**"*
2. We need to put legs to our prayers and go! We are commanded both to **"pray ye"** and **"go ye"** (Mark 16:15)
3. Never underrate and underestimate the importance of the part you play in the work of God, small and insignificant though it may seem on the surface.

**Conclusion:**

1. Who will surrender to the call of God today?
2. Who will join the soul-winning efforts of the church?
3. Who will by faith, increase their mission giving?
4. Who will join the local church team?
5. Who will pray, give and go!?