

Let's Not Miss The Harvest!

Matthew 9 – Part 1

Introduction:

1. One of the worst things that could ever happen to a farmer is to miss the harvest. So much planning, work, sweat, and toil go into even getting to the point where you can see the harvest. He cannot afford to miss the harvest when it's harvest time.
2. In the same way, so much goes into planting a church in a local community. There is a big investment. Why? The hope is that the church will evangelize their community and reap a harvest of lost souls that will come to Jesus Christ.
3. Jesus taught that there is a harvest to reach. vs. 36-38
 - There was no problem with the harvest. He uses the word "*harvest*" three times in two verses. It is HIS harvest. But God needs laborers. God is committed to working through people. 1 Corinthians 3:6-7
4. There are souls to reach, and they will come to Jesus IF somebody will plow the soil, plant the seed of the gospel, and bring in the harvest. God will give the increase, but somebody has to plant and water.
5. There was a group in Jesus' day that completely missed the harvest. They were called the scribes and the Pharisees. They were very religious, but their religion did nothing to cause them to care for needy souls. They were self-absorbed and missed the harvest.
 - They could have been used mightily by Christ to reach people, but instead they impeded the work of Christ.
 - All through this chapter, Jesus is reaping the harvest, and the Pharisees are missing it. They were consumed with their positions, their comfort, their traditions, and their preferences.
6. This can happen today to Christians and churches. We can become so self-absorbed and inwardly focused that we become like the farmer who completely misses the harvest because he's so busy in his house. He gets so distracted in the house, he misses the harvest out in the fields. This should motivate us.
7. We cannot afford to let this happen. Why? Let's examine the people Jesus reaches just in this chapter. What do we learn? This should motivate us!

First, people are desperate. vs. 1-8

1. When you look at this story in other accounts, you learn that four guys actually took the roof apart and lowered this lame man down on a stretcher to Jesus. They were absolutely desperate to try such a drastic action.
2. There are people all over Daytona who are in “desperation mode.” They cannot call 911 for the needs that they have. What they truly need is Jesus. He is the answer, just like He was the answer for this man.
3. But how did they know Jesus was there? Mark 2:1 says that it was “*noised that he was in the house.*” Jesus is here at CrossRoads. We proclaim Him, teach Him, and exalt Him.
4. But as members of this house, we have to “*noise*” throughout this community that He is here. We cannot just put up a sign and hope people come. We must have a mission mindset like Christ. This is our responsibility as Christians and members of this church.
 - When is the last time you invited somebody to church?
 - When is the last time you spoke to someone about Christ?
5. The scribes were oblivious to the potential harvest (vs. 3). They were too busy finding fault. Let’s not be like the scribes and miss the harvest. Why? People are desperate.

Second, people are sick. vs. 9-13

1. Matthew was a tax collector who left all and followed Christ (vs. 9). Tax collectors were known as a “sick” group. They were extortionists and thieves – a rough group and not well-liked at all.
2. After Matthew comes to Jesus, he welcomes into his house a bunch of his former cohorts. Jesus is sitting right there in the midst of them, talking to them. Again, the Pharisees didn’t care for this at all.
vs. 10-11
 - They are looking through the window, I guess, saying, “Well I never...” And Jesus is like, “That’s right! You never. You never reach out to somebody in need. You’re too consumed with yourselves.”
3. What was Jesus’ response to them? “Those that are healthy don’t need a doctor, only those that are sick.” Jesus had a way of saying things to

people like this that was like a punch in the gut (which is exactly what they needed).

- Do you know why there will always be job security in the healthcare field? Because there will always be sick people. vs. 20-22
 - Do you know why there will always be a need for churches that preach Jesus Christ? Because there will always be people who are sin-sick and need help. They need spiritual healing. Jesus can make them whole!
4. When churches become like exclusive social clubs, and they don't welcome in the "sick," that church will miss the harvest for sure. Jesus didn't miss it! We aren't here to reach church people (the disgruntled at the church down the street), but the sick and needy. vs. 13

Third, people are dead (spiritually). vs. 18-26

1. In our text, this ruler's daughter had died. What faith this guy had! "Jesus, come and lay your hand on her, and she shall live." vs. 18, 23-25
2. There are so many people that are alive physically, but they are completely dead spiritually. Ephesians 2:1
3. God created people to connect with Him. If people do not know Jesus, they will live life outwardly, but be dead on the inside.
4. There are people in this community looking for life – true life. They know they are dead and just going through the motions. They long for more, but simply have never heard of Jesus and what He has done for them.
5. Church, this is where we come in. If you are saved today, you know where life is found. Let's not miss the harvest. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
 - The love of Christ constrains us. This word "constrain" means "to hold together, to arrest, or to compel."
 - A local church is a group of people that know and have experienced the love of Christ. We know that we were dead in our sins until Christ gave us His resurrection life.
 - We bind together for the purpose of sharing that love and life with all those in this community that desperately need it.
 - The fact that people are desperate, sick, and dying should compel us as a church! It should arrest our minds and hearts.

We should be strategizing and thinking continually of new ways and new methods for reaching people.

- Let's not miss the harvest!