



Introduction:

Before the message on Sunday, we sang an awesome collection of songs that encouraged and challenged our hearts. In *“Bound for Glory,”* we sang that this world is not our home. Paul informs us, the body of Christ, of our heavenly citizenship (Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:6-7). We sang that Christ’s empty tomb shows that we are bound for glory (Romans 6:5). We sang “The saving work is done; death is not my ending. My God has overcome; I am bound for glory.” For those of us who have placed our faith in Christ, we know what Christ has done; and we know where we are going, but do we care enough to extend God’s grace and glory to others – to the world? We sang, “All my pain, hurt, and shame, gone when Jesus calls my name; endless joy, endless praise, all when Jesus calls my name” (1 Corinthians 15:19-28, 52). This is good news to us who have heard and believed, but what about those who have yet to hear the good news of Christ, what about their hurt and pain? Will you be one to go in Jesus’ name, to tell them how He loves them and desires to reconcile them back to God?

The Focus:

- **We can’t afford to miss the harvest? Why?**
 - **People are blind.**
 - **People are bound.**
 - **People are lost.**

While Christ was on the earth, Christ was all about doing the will of God the Father (John 6:38) and ministering to people (John 6:9, 11). Being sent by God, Jesus knew the order of things because of the prophecies by the prophets, centuries previous to His birth (Luke 9:22; 1 Peter 1:11). And because He knew, He was greatly moved by the needs of the people, seeing they were like sheep with no shepherd (Matthew 9:36). Unlike the scribes and Pharisees, Christ was too concerned about the souls of people to get distracted with minor, unimportant things. Unfortunately many Christians and churches love to major in the minors. And if we aren’t focused on Christ, we too can become self-absorbed and inwardly focused like the Pharisees, causing us to miss the harvest (Matthew 9:36-38). The harvest is very important to God; therefore, we need to be ready to do our part to bring in the harvest.

In part one, we learned that Christ reached out to different people with completely different needs. Previously, we learned that Christ reached out to those who were desperate (vs. 1-8), sick (vs. 9-13), and spiritually dead (vs. 18-26). The next people Pastor Dan spoke about were people who were blind (vs. 27-31). Two men who were physically blind, after hearing of the fame of Christ, followed Jesus and begged Him to heal them. In a similar manner, the Pharisees were declared by Christ to be spiritually blind (Matthew 23:17, 19, 24, 26). Physically they could see perfectly, but spiritually they were blind to the truth. And this problem of spiritual blindness still persists today. Actually, it is Satan’s main strategy in keeping people oppressed and in bondage (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 4:18). To combat this today, God is using the church – it is our commission to declare the good news of Christ, which can open blind eyes, so that they

may see the darkness that surrounds them, that they may understand and receive the light of the truth (Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 5:8-14; 2 Timothy 1:9-11). Our mission is to shine the light of Jesus Christ. Your light needs to shine where there is darkness, for the souls in darkness. The church is people, and it is our mission to go out into the world, wherever we are, to declare God's saving grace.

Another person shown was a man bound. This man couldn't speak because he was completely in bondage to Satan. He could not help nor save himself, but Jesus loved him and set him free. Another aspect of Paul's commission that was given to the church reveals that our message has the ability to turn people "...from the power of Satan unto God..." But again, where did they find the man to bring to Christ? It says in verse 32, "As they went out..." The gospel of Christ has the power to transform anyone, it has the power to save (Romans 1:16). Upon our trusting in Jesus, it should compel us to go out and bring people to Him (vs. 31-32). This is God's plan for the church. As followers of Christ, it is our responsibility to go out and be witnesses for Christ. Do you know God's plan for the church in our community, and also in the world (1 Thessalonians 1:8)? The gospel is something that was always sent or extended. Jesus said to the twelve "Go ye therefore..." To Paul concerning the nations (Acts 26:17), He said, "unto whom now I send thee." Jesus, while on earth and prior to His exaltation, said for the disciples to pray to God that He would "send" laborers into His harvest (Matthew 9:38). Based on the commissions given to the twelve and the commission given to Paul, I would say He has sent. The question therefore is not of being sent, but of going. Hudson Taylor once stated, "It will not do to say that you have no special call to go... With these facts before you and with the command of the Lord Jesus to go...you need rather to ascertain whether you have a special call to stay at home." Pray that the Lord would direct you to someone in need that you can lead toward Christ.

Finally, we see people that are lost, aimlessly wandering (vs. 35-38). When Jesus looked at the crowd of people, His heart ached because He saw them as sheep having no shepherd. Sheep without a shepherd are prone to wander; sheep need direction. Oftentimes, people need direction in their life to get them on the right course. Many assume or guess that they are on the right path that leads to God, but oftentimes, it leads to death and destruction. Having a relationship with Christ, who is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) provides you with a friend that will direct you towards God's purposes, giving your life real meaning. We must focus on Christ, or we like sheep will wander off course and lose our way (Colossians 3:1-2). Have you yielded to Jesus and His Word for your daily decisions and direction? Are you praying for how you can join in on God's will and plan to reach the lost?

Response to the Sermon:

Along with the sermon, Pastor Dan showed a video clip about the church (Ephesians 4:12; Colossians 1:24). It stated, "church is not a building, not a denomination, not a Sunday, not a person or personality, not about its size or growth, not an address or location, but rather church is mobile and on the move." We shouldn't think of church as something "built or planted," but rather think of it as something "deployed." It said, "don't think of church as what you do for an hour each week, but think of it as who you are every day of the week." As the hands and feet of Christ we should not remain isolated and idle. With our feet we must go!

With our hands we must do! This is the church, not what we sit in as a group of believers each week. We are His body, the church; therefore, we must go! Will you shine the light of the gospel into the darkness of another's soul (Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6)? The hope that you have in Christ, will you hold it tightly hidden or will you give it away (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 18-20; Colossians 1:5, 23, 25)?

Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:

Pastor Dan referenced Paul's commission in his message. This is different from the twelve's commission. The twelve were to begin at Jerusalem declaring the gospel of the kingdom (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-49). They were to convert Israel and then move to the Gentile nations (Acts 1:8). Paul's commission was to go to the nations without Israel being converted. Israel had their chance to be used by God, but they drove Him out by force. God the Father was rejected in that His herald, John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for Christ, was put to death. Jesus, the Son of God, was rejected as evidenced by His crucifixion. And lastly, the Holy Spirit was rejected through the rejection of the witness of Spirit-filled believers, like the stoning and death of Stephen. So in essence, Israel had rejected the trinity. The nations and Israel had out and out rejected God, therefore, they were all guilty before God (Job 21:7-16; 22:15-18; Romans 3:9). But there is good news. Today, God is using the church to bring reconciliation to all people by the crosswork of Christ (Colossians 1:20-21; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

According to Acts 26:13-18, who gave Paul his commission (Galatians 1:1)? Where did Christ speak and commission him from (Acts 26:13)?

According to Acts 26:16 and Romans 15:15-16, with Paul's commission given to him by Christ, what position was he given by Christ (Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:7-9)?

As well, Paul said that he was a minister of the body of Christ, the church (Colossians 1:24-25). What people make up the church (Ephesians 2:11-22)?

Based on the previous information, who are we to follow today? Are we to follow the doctrine Christ gave Peter to teach Israel and the nations regarding His earthly kingdom or are we to follow what Christ gave to Paul, from heaven, to prepare the nations to be citizens of heaven (Matthew 28:20 cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15)?

What was Paul appointed or “*separated*” to and for what purpose (Romans 1:1, 5; Acts 26:18)?

What does Paul say we are and what have we been sent to do (2 Corinthians 3:1-6; 5:18-20)?

Application Questions:

Have you seen the spiritual blindness Satan has inflicted upon humanity (Ephesians 2:2-3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 9:27-31)? How about since you trusted Christ, have you had a time in your life when you completely missed the sin and issues in your life because you were to focused on others’ problems (Matthew 7:3-5)? How about the bondage this world brings (Matthew 9:32-34; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:3)? What about after you trusted Christ? Have you made wrong choices, choosing to serve the flesh rather than serve the Spirit (Romans 6:12-16; Galatians 4:9; 5:1)? What about the inability of people to find the right way, the truth, and real life (Matthew 9:35-38)? Have you put on the light of Christ which protects from the works of the flesh or are you continuing in sinful habits (Romans 13:12-14; Colossians 3:5-17)?

When we come to God and petition Him for the soul of a friend, family member, or stranger, how must we approach Him in prayer (Matthew 9:27-29)?

What happens when someone puts their faith in Christ (Matthew 9:29-30; Acts 26:18)?

As people are transformed by the gospel of Christ, what should be our prayer for them (Colossians 1:15-19)?

For those who have put their faith in Christ, what should be their desire and response toward those who are without God (Matthew 9:31-32)?

As we look upon the lost, how should it affect us and what then should be our response (Matthew 9:36-38)?

Prayer:

- Pray for lost souls that their hearts and minds would be opened by the gospel of Christ (Matthew 9:36; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6).
- Pray to remember that your life maybe the only form of God's Word that someone reads. Pray that your life would demonstrate the change Christ has done in your heart (2 Corinthians 3:1-6).
- Pray that you wouldn't be ashamed of the gospel. Pray that God's love and the gospel's power to change lives would motivate you to bring others to Christ (Romans 1:16; Matthew 9:29-31).