

## **Let's Not Miss The Harvest!** **Matthew 9 – Part 2**

### **Introduction:**

1. Did you know that religious people can be very mean and cold-hearted? People who are religious, but aren't truly walking with God can be some of the nastiest people you've ever met.
2. In Jesus' day, this group was called the Pharisees. They were worried about real important things like what kind of seat they would have in the synagogue, how pots were washed, how often people washed their hands, how impressive their clothes were to others, etc.
3. Jesus, on the other hand, was not concerned about any of the Pharisees' traditions. Jesus taught that there is a harvest to reach. vs. 36-38
4. Jesus was too concerned about the souls of people to get distracted with minor, unimportant matters.
5. Unfortunately many Christians and churches love to major on minors. If we aren't focused on Christ, we can become self-absorbed and inwardly focused like the Pharisees, and we'll miss the harvest.
6. In fact, not only will we NOT reach the harvest of lost souls, we'll turn people off from the gospel of Christ.
7. We can't afford to let this happen. Why? Last week we began examining all the different people that Jesus reached in this chapter.
8. Let's continue to examine the people Jesus reached out to in this chapter. What do we learn? This should motivate us greatly.

### **First, people are desperate. vs. 1-8**

### **Second, people are sick. vs. 9-13**

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

### **Fourth, people are blind. vs. 27-31**

1. Two men follow after Christ, and they are completely blind. Christ does for them what no man had ever been able to do – He opened their blind eyes.
2. But there is more than one form of blindness. Jesus told the Pharisees, "*Thou fools and blind...*" Matthew 23:17, 19, 24, 26

3. They could see physically, but were blind to spiritual truth. The number one strategy of Satan is to keep people blind to Jesus. He wants to keep people walking in darkness. 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 4:18
4. This is where the church comes in. We know where Light is to be found! What kind of church are we if we don't share that Light?
  - **Illustration:** Imagine being in this auditorium when it is pitch black. You are scared to death, stumbling around. You are right by the lights, but won't turn them on.
5. Our mission is to shine the light of Jesus Christ. I am not talking about me getting up for an hour on Sunday morning and preaching. This isn't where the light needs to shine. The light needs to shine where there is darkness, for the souls in darkness.
6. The church is the people, and our mission is to leave these four walls and shine for Christ in all the different places that we go.
  - **Illustration:** "My workplace is so evil and dark." Great! The greater the darkness, the more noticeable even the tiniest of lights.
7. We are to carry on the mission that Christ gave to Paul (Acts 26:16, 18). Let's not miss the harvest.

### **Fifth, people are bound. vs. 32-34**

1. This man could not speak because he was completely in bondage to Satan.
2. He had to have help outside of himself. Jesus loved him and set him free.
3. Acts 26:18 tells us that our mission is to turn people "*from the power of Satan unto God.*"
4. Again, where does this happen? Look at the beginning of verse 32: "*As they went out...*" Jesus went out where the sick people were. He ministered to the needy on their own turf. This is God's plan for the church.
5. Each of us will rub shoulders this week with people that are in spiritual bondage, but they will never come to church (until they get saved). It is the individual Christian's responsibility to go out and be a witness for Christ.
6. Do you know God's plan for the church? 1 Thessalonians 1:8

7. Almost every person in the Bible that had their life changed by the gospel – it was because somebody took the gospel out **to** them. Whether it was Jesus, the twelve, or Paul, they went **to** them.
- Jesus said, “*Go ye therefore...*” Not, “Sit and wait for them to come to you.” Did you notice in our text that Jesus did not instruct the disciples to pray for the harvest of lost souls to come to them? He told them to pray for laborers to go out **into His harvest field**.
  - Don’t pray, “Lord, bring lost souls to church Sunday and save them.” Instead pray, “Lord, give me somebody to witness to this week about you and help me to lead them to you?” This is a more biblical prayer that embraces the heart of Christ.

### **Sixth, people are lost. vs. 35-38**

1. Jesus’ heart ached, because as He looked at the crowd of people, He saw them as sheep having no shepherd. They say you can lead a sheep to the same water hole 99 times, but if the shepherd doesn’t lead, they will wander off the 100<sup>th</sup> time and end up lost. Sheep need direction.
2. So many people lack any type of direction in their life. So many think they know the way, and, in reality, they are heading down a dead-end street.
3. When you know Jesus Christ, He is the Good Shepherd. He gives true direction, purpose, and meaning to this life. And He is the Great Shepherd that leads us to eternal life. He gave His life for the sheep.
4. But the idea of Scripture is that we, as sheep, leave this building and look to our Shepherd to give us daily direction, so we can be witnesses to others and show them this Good Shepherd.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. There is no problem with the harvest. There are people we meet every day that are desperate, sick, blind, dead, bound, and lost.
2. People in this condition may never come to church. They are lost, blind, dead, bound – they don’t see the need. They simply aren’t motivated to spend their day off in church. They must be reached right where they are.
3. The harvest is there, but it’s outside these four walls. Jesus said He simply needs workers – people sharing Christ with people! There is a

harvest to reap. Will you be a witness for Christ? Let's not miss the harvest!