

How To Keep From Missing The Harvest

Matthew 9

Part 1

Introduction:

1. Imagine a farmer spending weeks of sweat, toil, and money to plant seeds and then forgetting to gather in the harvest of crops. The crops grow in the fields, but they all die because the farmer simply neglects to reap the harvest.
 - He got so busy and distracted by other things, he just missed the harvest.
 - You would probably say, “That farmer deserves to go bankrupt and lose his farm and his land. He’s not much of a farmer.”
2. Jesus taught that there is another great harvest – a different kind. Look at verses 35-38.
 - There is a harvest of people with spiritual needs. They need Jesus Christ. Without Him they will not know **true** life on this **earth**, and they will not know **eternal** life in **heaven**.
3. When I paint the image of a wandering lost sheep heading for destruction, you probably know somebody who fits that description (family member, neighbor, co-worker, or friend).
4. What if **your** knowledge of Christ could literally change the course of their life and of their eternal destiny? In other words, God uses **you** to point them to Jesus.
 - They are like wandering sheep heading off a cliff. God uses **you** to stop and redirect them in the way they need to go, and you lead them to the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:28 states, “*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching...*”
5. Did you know that God **can** use you and **wants** to use you? His plan is to use His children to bring in the harvest of lost souls. But how can we keep from missing that harvest?

First, begin close to home.

1. Notice verse 1 says that Jesus came “*into his own city.*” This was Capernaum. Even though Jesus was originally from Nazareth, He made Capernaum the center of His ministry – home base, if you will.
 - It was here that Jesus reached out and called Peter, Andrew, James, John, and also Matthew. He healed Peter’s mother- in-

- law. He healed crippled and paralyzed people. He healed a nobleman's son, etc.
2. What is my point? There are people next door, across the street, and in your immediate neighborhood that need Jesus Christ. Maybe in your own house or in your own extended family! There may be people living in your own house that need Christ!
 3. What did Jesus do when He came into His own city? Mark 2:2 – “...*He preached the word unto them.*” There are people who are “close to home” to you, but in their lost condition, they may never come on a Sunday morning and hear me teach the Bible. How will they hear the truth of God?
 4. You are their hope. You are their life-line. Look out your window or in your house. They are within eye-sight. The harvest is yours to reap. Don't miss it. **Illustrations:**
 - Acts 16 - When Paul led Lydia to Christ, she obviously reached her entire household because they were all baptized with her.
 - Acts 16 - The Philippian jailor was the same way.
 - Acts 18 - Who were the first people Paul led to Christ in Corinth? The people he was living with – Aquila and Priscilla.
 5. Don't get discouraged and give up. Sometimes, it can be tough trying to witness to and reach your family or close friends. Why? Because they knew you real well before you knew Christ, and they know your current struggles and weaknesses. So they may be skeptical at first.
 6. Jesus had that problem. Did you know Jesus had brothers and sisters that He grew up with? Luke 2:7 calls Jesus Mary's “*firstborn son.*” He had four brothers and at least two sisters. Matthew 13:55-56
 7. Let's cross-reference Matthew 12:46-50. Obviously, at this point, his family was not devoted followers of Christ. In fact, John 7:5 says, “*For neither did his brethren believe in him.*”
 8. Some of Jesus' own family were skeptical when He began to reveal who He was and what He came to do. But the good news is that they eventually did believe.
 - Acts 1:14 tells us that there were 120 devoted followers of Christ awaiting the arrival of the Holy Spirit. And don't you know who was there? Mary and Jesus' brethren are right there among them.
 - James would later become a leader in the church at Jerusalem, and Jude, many believe, wrote the book of Jude in the New Testament.

9. Some of you may be discouraged because you have family that show no interest in Jesus and seem cold to the gospel. I want to encourage you. Hang in there – keep praying, keep sharing Christ, and keep showing them Christ in your everyday actions. Believe and trust God for their salvation.

In Conclusion:

1. It may take some time, but think about it. You know Jesus as your Savior, and there are people in your family that don't know Jesus. What a blessing for them that you are there to share Christ with them.
2. The same can be said of your close friends and neighbors. Look out your window. There is a mission field right there for you to reap a harvest.