

How To Keep From Missing The Harvest

Matthew 9

Part 2

Introduction:

1. There is a harvest of people with spiritual needs. They need Jesus Christ. I am sure that you know people that need Christ in their life. You desire for them to know Jesus and the life and peace He brings.
2. You may think, “I wish they would ask me about Jesus. I wish they would come to church to hear Pastor Dan preach and teach the Bible.”
3. I want you to consider this. 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.
4. There is a harvest that God wants you to reap. How can you keep from missing it?

First, begin close to home.

Second, be a friend to the lost.

1. A farmer cannot reap the harvest in his fields if he spends all his time in town at the stores and restaurants or in the comfort of his easy chair. He has to go where the crops are (the fields). He has to go **to** the harvest!
2. What we are doing in here this morning is important and is a vital part of the **Christian** life (small groups are too), but this isn't where the harvest is.
 - If you want to know where the harvest is, drive through your neighborhood and look at all the cars parked in driveways. Go to the parks, go to the beach, go to the mall and Pavilion, etc. Go to the nightclubs tonight (no, don't do that).
3. My point is very simple. If all I ever do is talk to and hang out with believers, how many people am I going to lead to Christ? You have to befriend those who are lost and need Christ.
4. This is what Jesus did. Let's look in our text. Jesus changes Matthew's (the tax collector's) life (vs. 9). What does Matthew do (vs. 10)? He is so excited that he invites all of his friends and co-workers to his house for a dinner with Jesus.
 - Jesus did not decline the invitation. He gladly accepted it and rubbed shoulders with this rather rough and undesirable crowd.

5. Was He criticized? Absolutely – in fact, Jesus was sarcastically called a “friend of sinners.” I think Jesus smiled when He heard this. What if we had hundreds of people at CrossRoads that were known as “friends of sinners”? Can you imagine the difference we could make in this community?
6. I know it is fun to get together with the LIFE group (and that is important and wonderful), but have you ever thought of having a “Matthew party”? Have some friends that you know that need Christ over to your house, or everybody in your LIFE Group could bring one unchurched person to the next activity.
 - **Illustration:** Adam Wainwright leading Skip Schumaker to Christ.

Third, get your eyes on the harvest.

1. All through this chapter, there was a group that continually missed the harvest – it was the scribes and the Pharisees. They would resemble a lot of church-going people today. vs. 3, 11, 34
 - The Pharisees were a very inwardly focused bunch – worried about their positions, their traditions, their preferences, the running of their religious system, what seat they had, etc.
2. It is so easy for believers to take on the inwardly focused attitude of the Pharisees. We become consumed with what happens within these four walls and forget that the harvest fields are outside these four walls. The fulfilling of our mission happens out there.
3. We think that when we meet here at church, this is game time and that this is when we reap the harvest of lost souls. We think that all during the week is practice, and this is game time.
4. Just the opposite is true. **This** is practice. This is where we come together as a team for coaching and instruction. This is where we learn and develop our knowledge of the playbook. This is where we get encouraged, inspired, and prepared to go out and play against our opponent (Satan and his world system).
5. Game time is when we leave this building (go to work tomorrow). It is then that we enter the harvest where all the lost sheep are. It is then that we really battle the enemy.
6. Did you know that most of the people in this chapter were not reached in the synagogue? They were reached in their homes, in their places of business, and in the streets of the city. Jesus **taught** in the synagogues, but when he reached people, it mostly happened outside of the synagogue.

7. Notice in verse 35 that He taught in the synagogue, but His personal work with souls happened “*among the people.*” Notice the next verse: “*But when he saw...*” **vs. 36a**
8. We have to get our eyes on the harvest. We have to get our eyes off of ourselves and onto the harvest.

In Conclusion:

1. For a long time I have prayed, “Lord, save souls this Sunday in church.” God has really convicted me about this. This is so vague and abstract.
2. Think about it. I’m praying for people I don’t know – praying that they will just somehow make their way through the door of the church, and then have a desire to walk in front of tons of people that they don’t know, go up to a guy that they don’t know, and admit that they are not going to heaven.
 - And all the while I’m praying, I may not have invited one person to the church the week before or shared Christ with one person.
3. Now I have started praying, “Lord, give me opportunities to witness for you this week. Lord, help those that I invite to church to come and hear the gospel and be convicted of their need of You.” This kind of prayer makes me more conscious of my responsibility to be a personal witness for Christ, and it reminds me of where the harvest is.
4. Our prayer should be, “Lord, help us not to miss the harvest.” Because the harvest is right next door and in our own backyard!