

Harvest 2025 - The Workers are Few

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 October 2025

Preacher: Kate Dommett

[0 : 0 0] It's really lovely to be with you this morning and as Alex was saying it's interesting isn't it harvest just in I love thinking about churches all across the UK all across the world when it's their celebration of harvest what that looks like and for us this morning it looks like hearts being stirred and provoked to respond to the need in our community to bring for the food bank and for Andrew House that's where our harvest collection goes and I know that some of you I was having a bit of a chat with Kim on the way up and Kim said oh I've left the food at home she's got this whole pile I know it'll be bags as well at home and then she said oh I can just take it to Lidl and I can put it in the food bank collection point and today we're thinking about this idea of our hearts being stirred we're going to be thinking about our hearts a lot oh I'm probably going to do that that's going to annoy everybody isn't it do that quite a lot um yeah I remember years ago Tom was tiny 2010 and a friend and I we had a conversation about Clevedon and there's a lot of hidden need there's a lot of stuff hidden isn't there always and we went to look at a couple of food banks one in Bristol it was amazing it was like in a cafe definitely stirred my heart for spaces like the pub that Pete and I now have in community and another one in Western Lighthouse Project and from that we gathered and gathered a team that emerged at the Baptist Church from churches all together across Clevedon and the food bank was started

I don't have any slides I don't have any statistics but we know that that food bank has made a difference to so many people in our community and continues to do that today so just a thank you to everyone who's brought something or shares in other ways and has supported the food bank over the many years well today we are with Jesus obviously today we are with Jesus in Matthew in these words that Margaret just read us I wonder what he wants to say to you and I today through these words what's he going to get us noticing through his Holy Spirit this morning so let's just pray as we start Lord I do pray that that you would help us through your spirit to notice what you want to say to us through your word today in your name Jesus amen so it says that he went through all the towns and villages teaching in all the synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and healing every disease and sickness and I noticed that when I read it I thought I just need to pause there he's out and about doing all these incredible things healing disease and healing sickness he was on the move reminds me of Chronicles of Narnia Aslan was on the move I love that anticipation

Jesus was on the move Jesus was on the move he's meeting people just like you and I where they are out in their communities in ordinary places and it says that when he saw the crowds and there were crowds Russ a few weeks ago was talking about the crowds that surrounded and followed Jesus it would have been hard to get close to him when he saw the crowds he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd he sees the crowds there's this sense of a deep sense of seeing in the Greek compassion is a gut-wrenching feeling so there's a feeling inside a churning in the stomach Jesus isn't remote here he feels the pain of those around him and he has empathy and the description of them has harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd it's really honest real language very real in that that time that context these are people who are overwhelmed battered by life and lacking in direction

Jesus looks at the crowd and his heart breaks it's not pity it's a fierce and active love that Jesus carries so I wonder where are we in this scene as you picture this where are you well I certainly can identify with the harassed and helpless sheep without a shepherd scenario I was thinking about that and thinking that's actually quite a good summary of my inner life and external but very much my inner life before I came to faith in Jesus that experience of coming to faith in my early 20s was life changing and the song that we just sang the goodness of God

I realised at that point that even before that God was faithful he was there he was on the journey brings me such peace as I trust our children to him and him with them on their journey but this idea of being harassed and helpless actually I recognise that even today in my everyday particularly those days where Jesus hasn't been first in my day where I haven't just said to the Lord at the beginning of the day here I am Lord fill me with your spirit lead me be my shepherd life can be persistently hard it can be a battle I think it is a battle it can often feel overwhelming and our most natural human response is to harden our hearts pull away a bit become more emotionally numb a bit shut down so we can cope just be able to control what we control and this results in very little capacity for other people to notice others but God's way is different his way is always different we have the Holy Spirit with us to help us keep our hearts soft soft towards ourselves and soft towards others he will give us what we need for each day if we ask the missionary Jackie Pullinger who did a lot of work in Hong Kong once said

[8 : 05] God wants us to have soft hearts and tough feet I love that Emma's nodding yes Emma soft hearts and tough feet my dad was born in Africa and he spring would arrive and he would always take his shoes off and he'd be in the business of toughening up his feet for the summer ahead you can imagine what his feet looked like but in order for his feet to get tough he had to have his shoes off be walking rougher ground and my dad had the softest of hearts soft hearts give us compassion they enable us to have sympathy they enable us to have empathy see the pain of others ah who's this describing they give us an openness and a willingness to just live from a place of God's love vulnerable before God and they help keep us sensitive a soft heart heart helps us with emotional awareness and that prevents us from hardening our hearts in response to emotional wounds or difficult challenging things and tough feet well they help us persevere don't they keep going when things are difficult equip us to go to places of need actively working against injustice and suffering that we see the world around us is like and they help us endure keep us going for the long haul not just those short term efforts soft hearts and tough feet but fear really can cause us to close our hearts down and as I was sharing what I was going to be sharing today with Alex he told me this very amazing story and I wanted him just to share it better than

I would I heard the testimony from a Christian in London and she was describing the challenge intense challenge of her young child having leukaemia and in the treatment they were kept in a sort of tented area to keep germs out in the hospital for months through the treatment because they were so vulnerable to infection and she felt you know really all the range of possible emotions you can imagine but the clincher of the story was this that as she was feeling sorry for herself and feeling like has God left her alone one of the only other people that could come into that tent area was a cleaner who came in regularly to keep that environment clean and as she started talking to him she realised he faced all sorts of challenges had come from Ghana was working under all sorts of pressures almost no money difficult circumstances in life and as she talked to him and met with him and they talked and started to pray together she noticed as she did this that the fear around her child left her and then she read in perfect love cast out all fear and she could see that really as she gave love it cast out the fear in her thanks Alex yeah this invitation for us to show

God's love willingly and as we find the courage to do that noticing that our fear reduces perfect love casts out fear so just before we think about kind of the next part of this I wonder if we might pause and just notice what's stirring in us as we think about this theme of soft hearts tough feet just take a moment so the next bit of

Matthew Jesus says to his disciples the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few ask the Lord of the harvest therefore to send out workers into his harvest field the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few ask the Lord of the harvest therefore to send out workers into his field and I wonder what you notice here well I notice two words ask and send Jesus is talking to ordinary people just like you and I what equipped them for this invitation into the mission was their awareness of his power and their vision to reach all the people so all people would be able to hear about Jesus and find relationship with him he's clear the harvest is ready he is seeing clearly this world that is hungry for hope for meaning for love a world hungry for hope a world hungry for meaning a world hungry for love the issue isn't with the world it's there it's with the number of people being willing to go out into the world and be

Jesus and prayer always precedes mission prayer always precedes that action ask the Lord of the harvest pray ask we begin not with our own effort but we begin with prayer a rhythm of faithful prayer an action will follow a move of the Holy Spirit will follow when we pray God answers our

prayers enabling us to show his love to others we are called to follow and live a life of love fierce compassion and active love are the work of the Holy Spirit and prayer is the engine room of fueling this energy that is fierce compassion and active love Pete Greg who was the guy who set up the 24-7 prayer movement he once described prayer a bit like this imagine a train hurtling across the countryside a steam train and everyone is in the carriages they are enjoying the view maybe some of them are having some food they are looking out the windows chatting to one another oblivious to the fact that in order for this journey to happen there is one guy in the engine room sweating and toiling and feeding the fire and he used that analogy as our prayers we are in the business of praying to the

[16 : 02] Lord the maker of heaven and earth and he calls us and intercedes by his spirit when we don't know what to pray we are the engine room and then we are his hands and feet on earth he moves us to act it's in and through our prayers that the spirit works making us brave enough encouraging us that word encourage actually means to kind of get courage to have courage and Alex told me this morning that the word courage is related to the word in French heart to equip our hearts with courage to act literally gives us courage the refiner's fire think about that engine room what happens when we pray and the spirit moves the refiner's fire takes away our apathy it takes away that voice that says to us you can't make a difference you don't matter just think about yourself you're too busy someone else will do it

I can't do that I'm too self-conscious stuff that who cares what anyone thinks of us what about Jesus what about the call on our lives to wake up for his mission we need the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit there are loads of ways we see the Holy Spirit in the Bible of course in scripture and in tradition that help us grasp this meaning of what is the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament we see the Holy Spirit the breath of God hovering over the sea in the New Testament the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary literally giving God's life into Mary when Jesus was baptised the dove that came out descended upon him actually and empowered him for mission and on the day of Pentecost a rush of wind flames of fire transforming fear and uncertainty into faith and conviction but did you know I didn't love sharing a fact in the Celtic tradition the Holy Spirit is representing not as a peaceful dove but as does anybody know a wild goose wild geese the wild goose reveals a spirit which is passionate noisy and courageous a symbol that reminds us that God's spirit cannot be tamed or contained let's pray persistently with soft hearts for God to harden our feet for the mission that he has called each one of us to and it looks different for each one of us every one of us every part of the body no one matters more every part everyone no one gets left behind remember the analogy a couple of weeks ago if you were here if not I'd encourage you to listen to Russ's talk at the end he talked about a pump like one of those old fashioned pumps and it was incredible because the day before

Alex and myself had met with Tim Simpson for a coffee in fawn that's where it was and afterwards Tim sent us a picture of a pump so then when Russ mentioned it the next day like Russ had no clue about that Tim had no clue Russ was going to be preaching on that we were like it's incredible but these old fashioned pumps that need a little bit of water put in a little bit of something given first before then the water will flow I was thinking about that again what is it that we can bring to that pump that is the Holy Spirit flowing through our lives and I was reminded of the words it's in a Christmas carol isn't it and there's a prayer as well but what can I bring what have I got the shepherd my heart I can bring my heart and that little bit that I bring will release the Holy Spirit release in us the power of God's Spirit it's his promise to us he is with us always never will he leave us and so then we can notice the harassed and helpless and we can respond with soft hearts not out of our own strength the joy of the Lord will become our strength and we will be able to respond he will give us enough for each day and as I kind of came towards the end of this preparation the picture I had was every one of us lining up at the pump to bring our hearts and to do a little bit of the joining in if we each do our part then the experience in our community of God's love is extraordinary so to conclude it's a short passage but it really challenged me not just to feel but to act not just to talk about compassion but to walk in the world with courage and love

[22 : 06] I want to come again before the Lord and ask what does that look like God for me examine my heart and show me Jesus sees and feels he doesn't just see the crowds he's got this gut compassion noticing other noticing people that others just overlook and he sends Jesus sends us he doesn't keep that compassion to himself he asks us to go into the world and be the answer to our own prayers so we're going to just pause and just ponder this last question where are the

crowds in our lives today who do we see with compassion and how can we be sent who are the crowds in your life today who do you see with compassion and how can you be sent and I would encourage all of us to not jump to a conclusion or make an assumption that what our being sent looks like will look like the same as someone else's being sent sometimes it might be a big wow thing sometimes it might be a few steps on a

Sunday morning to just have a conversation with one person because God's spirit has prompted us Lord help us to see you and help us to see as you see to feel as you feel and to go as you send us amen you Thank you.