

Underneath your seat is a button - will you press it?

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: 19 February 2023

[0:00] So Matthew chapter 9 verse 35 it says, And Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

And he moved with compassion on them because they fainted and they were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. And then saying now to his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few.

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

A multitude were before him. Can you picture the scene? A multitude. And he says, Behold the harvest. Do we see the harvest through his eyes?

Do we see as he would see the harvest fields? John 4 we see a light account where we see the harvest is spoken of.

[1:26] And yet many seem unconcerned. They do not seem concerned about the harvest. John 4.35 he says, Say not ye, there are yet four months and then cometh harvest.

Behold I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are white already to harvest. Lift up your eyes, look on the fields, they are already white to harvest.

They are already ripe. And brothers and sisters here tonight, people here tonight, the harvest is abundant. It's plentiful, it's plenteous, it's ready.

The fields are ripe. The harvest is ready. The harvest is waiting. And we need workers for the harvest. We still need workers.

We are 2,000 years later about. And the fields are still ripe. The harvest is still waiting. And those fields still aren't going to harvest themselves.

[2:36] Amen. The fields are not going to harvest themselves. The workers have to go and bring it in. The harvest is great as many are without Christ. Now look around us.

Look at where we live. Look at this city of Adelaide, of the northern suburbs, of this Smithfield, Elizabeth, Salisbury. These areas all around us, they're ripe.

You know, I know that's Shane's heart. That we feel that burden. We feel that burden. You feel that burden. That's why we want to be in a church that's active and reaching out.

That cares about the soul. That cares about the harvest. The problem is the laborers are few. They still are few.

We're called to pray. We're called to pray. He commands us to pray. He says, pray ye. He commands you to pray. He commands me to pray.

[3:34] That God will send forth laborers. Send forth laborers. Now this word send has a forcible sense to it. It's a violent word.

You know, the basis for the word in our Bibles here is where we have the English word ballistic. You know? Ballistic, it talks about force. You know, shooting something with force is like a ballistic missile.

It's sent with force. And that's the sense of it here. That God wants us to pray that God will send forth laborers with a ballistic force, if you like.

With a kind of power. The power of God. It's a violent word. A forcible word. That's the sense of it here. And our Lord says to us, the Lord of the harvest is looking for workers.

He's looking for workers. And brothers and sisters, look, if you're unemployed tonight, I can tell you where there's some vacancies. You know, I used to work in an employment agency.

[4:37] And I used to love the satisfaction of helping people get a job. I love that. There's something great about that. Seeing someone, and we're glad that some people we pray for have got a job lately.

That's a blessing, isn't it? It's a blessing to have a job. And friends, there's vacancies tonight.

There's vacancies in God's workforce.

Amen? Amen. Vacancies in God's workforce today. And you can apply. Isn't that great? And the eligibility criteria is wide open.

You know, you just have to say, I volunteer. Here are my Lord's and me. That's what you have to say, isn't it? Brother, you can apply.

Sister, you can apply. There's vacancies in God's workforce today because there are not sufficient workers. There's a wide open opportunity to serve.

[5:32] And God wants laborers. Laborers. Now that speaks of hard yakka, doesn't it? Laborers. You know, I used to be a laborer. I'm a bit of an office boy now.

But I used to be a laborer. You know, I used to do some hard work once. I still work hard. Don't worry. But there's something about being a laborer. Exerting those muscles and a bit of sweat. You know, you get a free workout. You know, there's something about being a laborer. There's something good about being a laborer. God says being a laborer is a good thing. Amen? And I know there's folk that I've spoken to.

They've worked in factories. And they've got the same fulfillment working in a factory as they do in some kind of more clean kind of job. And I used to work rotating shifts at Bridgestone Factory. Cleaning. And, well, my first job there was rotating the big rubber things and laying out the bits of tire and putting it all together as part of the production line.

[6:31] That was hard work. Then I said, oh, I want to get some, I want to work day shifts. So I worked as a cleaner. And that was a blessing too. So every kind of job has a value to it.

Every kind of job. Don't think if you've got a laboring job that you're any less important than any other kind of job. Because every kind of job is important. And it's the same in the kingdom of God. Isn't it?

Every person has an important part to play. And there's many parables in God's word. The Lord Jesus spoke about the value of laboring.

Of active service. Actively serving God. And it speaks about being laborers in a vineyard. You know, I've done a bit of grape picking. I think I lasted one day.

You know, that's hard work, isn't it? Being fruit picking. Who's ever done that? Yeah? That's hard yakka, isn't it? You've lost it the same as me. So, you know, God's looking for laborers in the vineyard.

[7:27] You know, that's hard work. That's a bit of, whew. That's a bit of hurting your hands and getting some blisters. And that's a good thing to have. It's a good thing to have that. And our Lord says in Matthew 20, tells a parable how there was the Lord or Master of the vineyard.

And the Lord of the vineyard, he went out looking for some workers. He was a bit short. And he was looking for some people to join the team down at the vineyard. Because there was work to do. And it says as he was looking for workers, the Lord of the harvest, the Lord of the vineyard, in Matthew 20, verse 3, it says that he went out and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. You know, there's some people there, you know, could be kicking a can or, you know, just sort of shooting the breeze or, you know, just some small talk, yawning around, just lounging around, just sort of passing the time of day.

They were standing idle in the marketplace. In other words, they were unemployed. They were not employed. They were not engaged. They were inactive. They were idle in the marketplace.

[8:33] They were ready to work, but there wasn't a job for them. And he says, hey, he says, go ye into the vineyard. He says, go ye into the vineyard.

Isn't that great? He offered them a job. The Lord of the vineyard, the Master of the vineyard, offered these ones who are idle in the marketplace. He says, there's work to do. Come and join in this work that I have for you to do.

And he pictured that. The Lord Jesus pictured that, how the Lord Jesus, the Master, the Lord of the vineyard, the Lord of the harvest, says, come and work for me. Go and work for me.

God wants laborers. He wants laborers. He really does. He wants laborers still. And you are eligible to apply. If you're a believer in Christ, if you're a Christian here tonight, you're in the workforce already.

And he's got a job for you to do. Every one of you. Every one of us. It says that God has a work for each of us to do. We were created for work. We can look in Ephesians 2 for that.

[9:37] Ephesians 2 verse 10. The Bible says much about work and it's an honorable thing. It's an honorable thing. It's part of God's purpose and design for us.

In Ephesians 2 verse 10 it says, For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are his workmanship. It's got a beautiful sound to it, hasn't it? When I think of workmanship.

What do you think of when you think of workmanship?

And maybe a master craftsman with a beautifully sculptured word or other materials and something beautifully formed and designed and purposefully created and shaped by the master's hand, by his design.

You are his workmanship. Isn't that something great? It's precious, isn't it? And his workmanship, why? Created unto good works that he's ordained that we should walk in them.

[10:39] So he has designed us to work. He's created us for work. Some other scriptures about work. About working for God. Because that is the ultimate and absolute fulfillment for your life.

I think as a preacher, this isn't a job for me. This is my recreation. This is my enjoyment.

I get enjoyment out of serving God. It's not a drudgery. It's not something irksome or heavy for me. It's a privilege and a pleasure. And it is for every one of us.

Whether it's serving in practical ways, around the technology or around the manufacturing of DVDs or serving the communion or cleaning the place or welcoming people at the door or giving a smile at the end to someone and maybe offering to pray for someone.

It's a privilege to serve God. It's a privilege to work for him. And in Nehemiah 4 verse 6, there's a story about a job that had to be done. A construction project.

[11:46] A wall had to be built. And Nehemiah was, I guess, the leading hand, the organiser of the project. And in Nehemiah 4 verse 6, he got the people all together and they built the wall.

They built the wall. In Nehemiah 4 verse 6, it said, We built the wall. All the wall was joined together for the people had a mind to work. The people had a mind to work.

But I've been a Christian a long time and a preacher a long time too. And sometimes you think, sometimes I get frustrated.

I've got to make a confession here tonight. I'll make a confession here tonight that sometimes I find it hard to motivate people. You know? Have you ever felt that practice here tonight?

Hard to motivate people. And, but really and truly, I've learnt this. I've learnt, really, I can't motivate you. It's got to come from within.

[12:49] It's got to come from within. You've got to have a mind to work. You've got to have that mindset. You've got to have that attitude. I want to serve God. Amen. I want to live for Him.

I want to please and honour Him with my life. I want to make my life count. And you, only you can motivate yourself by God's help. I can't motivate you.

And I've tried and tried, prodding and pushing and calling people and mailing people and running myself ragged trying to motivate people to come to church, to be the church, to be an active Christian.

And some people I know are just the same as they were 10, 15 years ago. They're not changed. And they've still got the same hang-ups. They've still got the same lack of commitment and lack of Christian devotion.

And they're just the same as they always were. They're just as slack, let's face it, as they always were. Friends, brothers and sisters here tonight. If you're a fair dinkum, dinky-dye Aussie Christian, then get a mind to work.

[13:55] Ask God to give you that mind. I want to work for God. I want to be sold out. So you can be amongst the number of Nehemiah 4 that people had a mind to work and they got things done. They had a mind, a heart, an attitude to serve God.

So ask God. Pray for God to give you that mindset, that attitude, that heart, that love, that desire to work. How does God want us to work?

How does God want us to work? God calls us to work hard. In Romans 12 verse 11 it says, not slothful in business. In other words, not lazy, not slothful in business, but rather the opposite.

Fervent in spirit. Fervent in spirit. Serving the Lord. God wants you and me, Christian men and women here today, to be fervent in spirit.

Serving the Lord. It's harvest time. Shouldn't we be fervent? Shouldn't we? Yes. Are you with me? We should be fervent because it's harvest time.

[15:00] This is not the season to sleep, but it's work. It says that in Proverbs 10 verse 5. Proverbs 10 verse 5. It says it's a shameful thing when someone sleeps in harvest.

Jesus says, look on the fields, they're ready. They're ready. Are you ready? They're ready. Are you ready? Pray the Lord will send forth labourers into the harvest. He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.

This is the season not to sleep, but to work. How should we work? We should work hard. We should work with zeal and enthusiasm. In Colossians 3 verse 23 it says, Whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men.

Now we can sometimes have the attitude, a kind of careless attitude. And you know sometimes preachers can be like that.

Oh there's not many here tonight. I'm not going to put so much effort in. Whatever it be. But it's not about the numbers. What we do, we do unto the Lord. It's not to men. We do it heartily.

[16:10] We want to give our utmost, our best, our absolute for Him. We can all get busy in other things, but let's get busy for the kingdom of God. All of us, Christian men and women here tonight, let's get busy for the kingdom of God with zeal and enthusiasm.

So whatever you do, do it heartily. Don't do it half-heartedly. Do it heartily for the Lord. And then we are called to be workers together with God. Workers together with God.

1 Corinthians 3 verse 9, here's some good news for you. You're not on your own. Isn't that good? When God calls you, when God sends you, He'll equip you and He'll stand right with you.

And He'll give you the strength that you need, sister. He'll give you the strength that you need, brother, to do the work. He's called us to work together with Him. He works alongside you.

You're not on your own. And we're called to be co-workers with God. 1 Corinthians 3 verse 9, it says, For we are labourers together with God. That's good news, isn't it?

[17:12] And He beckons you to join Him. He harnesses together with us. He works with us. You know, I love that scripture where it says, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly in heart. For you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

There is a yoke. You know, the yokes for these big wooden kind of contractions around the necks of the oxen and such like to drive a team of animals together.

And it's a picture of how the yoke is on Christ's neck and on our neck. And the yoke that He gives, He makes for us is easy. Because He carries the heavy part of it.

He'll help you with whatever ministry, whatever service He puts on your heart to do. He'll give you the strength and He'll help you carry it. God works in us.

[18:15] It says that we should work out our own salvation. This is Philippians 2, verse 12, 13. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Isn't that good news? God works in us. He works in us.

So, young person here tonight, older person, God is working in you, in you, in you, in each of us. He's working in us in His own personal, special way, His own individual way with you.

We're all at different stages in our Christian growth, in our capacities to do things. God will work in you. But let Him, let God work in you. Let God work in you as you work out your own salvation.

We're called to be workers unashamed and approved. 2 Timothy 2, it says, Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

[19:30] So, God wants us to be workmen, workwomen, who are not ashamed.

You know, there's a lot of people that are ashamed of the Christian message.

Now, they go quiet. But we should not be ashamed. We want to be a workman that's approved unto God. We need to study His word. Study it. Take it to heart.

Learn it. I know there's folk here that put it in their memory. The Bible tells us to do that. It commands us to memorize God's word. Meditate upon it. Study it. Learn it.

So you'll be a workman that's rightly equipped. And workers that are empowered by God. In Ephesians 3, it tells us, It says, You know, there's a power beyond our own power.

If it was about our own power, we'd all fall flat on our faces. But there's a power that works in us.

The power of God. The power of God. When you're saved, you have God resides within you.

[20:51] And we can be filled and filled and filled with His power. Ever more filled. Ever more filled with His power. Ever more filled and abundantly and abounding in His power. That we'll be abounding according to the power that works in us.

His power is given to us. Not so we get some goosebumps. But so we can be His witnesses. Amen. That's why He gives us His power. You know, when they waited in Acts. And God blessed them with a tangible power.

The power of the Holy Spirit. So that they could be witnesses. It was so there could be workers in the harvest. We're empowered according to the power.

And it works in us. His power is not inactive. His power is active. Actively working in us. And just another scripture here is 1 Corinthians 15. Again about this theme of working.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, always abounding, in the work of the Lord.

Steadfast, unmovable, always abounding, in the work of the Lord.

[21:57] For as much as you know that, your labour is not in vain in the Lord. So it's telling us here that the labour is always abounding in the work of the Lord.

It's not in vain in the Lord. It's for His glory. It's for His praise. So I urge you tonight. Friends, every one of us has something we can do.

There's something you can do that I can't do. You know, I was talking this morning about different gifts and abilities and the different responsibilities. Every Christian has something they can give and be and do for the glory of God.

Every one of us. And your gifts and callings and abilities are different from mine. It's about the experiences we have. It's about the spiritual gifts that we have. It's about the human abilities.

It's about all those learnings through life and those things that we can give. God gives us these things so each one of us can be a useful Christian. So roll up your sleeves and find something you can do for God.

[23:02] Whatever it is. Now some workers will be slow and steady. Some will be more active and energetic. It takes all types. You don't all have to be preachers. You don't all have to be, you know, a big mouth evangelist.

You know, we've all got different callings and abilities, amen? Every one of us. You might be a quiet achiever. We need some quiet achievers, don't we? We need those people who'll just quietly get on with the job.

And they'll do things without any praise or any recognition. Usually people are coming after hours and clean up the place. And they just help tidy up things.

And, you know, they do those behind-the-scenes things. I know people who, they send greeting cards to people when they miss church. Oh, so-and-so wasn't here today. Maybe I can send them a card. But they're the kind of people that God treasures people like that. They're quiet achievers. Quiet achievers.

[24:02] And, you know, sometimes it's the people that don't get any thanks, they're going to get thanks later. So, you know, and the thanks later are more important than the thanks now.

It's like the Lord said to the Pharisees, you know, you've got your praise of men here. But, you know, sometimes better. Those things that we might feel, well, I've laboured and laboured and no one ever thanked me or appreciated me or said well done or patted me on the back.

But one day, he will say well done. He will say well done. And that will count far more then. So we have a role to play, a duty to fulfil.

And at the end of Earth's day, at the end of Earth's day, he will say well done. Well done. Every man's work will be assessed.

Now, who likes exams? You know? Oh, you're a glove. If you need your exams done, this is the lady you can talk to. Every man's work will be assessed.

[25:04] There's going to be an assessment time. There's going to be a test. 1 Corinthians 3, verse 13, it says, Every man's work shall be made manifest. Every man's work will be revealed.

It will be exposed. Everyone will see what it is. It says, The day shall declare it because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

So whatever you do, whatever work you do, one day it will be exposed for what it is. And the context that talks about work, pay, stubble, things that will just get burnt up, there'll be nothing to show for it, and it'll show on the other side, gold, silver, precious stones.

Maybe those things you want to thank for. Maybe those quiet, achieving things. Maybe those words of witness, of fellowship, of love, of care, those gifts that you gave. Maybe those will be those things that will be recognised on that day.

And it will be worth it all. When we see His face. When we hear His voice, when He says, Well done. When we see the gladness in His face, we'll see the acknowledgement then. Not that our salvation is by works, but as a Christian, our service will be rewarded.

[26:16] Our service will be rewarded. So, friends, for the meantime, delight to do His will. We should delight to do His will. It's not a drudgery. You shouldn't have to have someone badger you, you know, have your preacher come and say, Oh, can you do this for me or that?

You should say, I want to volunteer. I want to be one of the workers in the kingdom of God. I want to volunteer for God's glory in God's kingdom. And I want to be an active Christian for God's praise. I challenge you to this today. I delight to do Thy will. Find a work to do for God and do it. And do it with all thy might. It tells us of that, that we should do what we should do.

We should do it with all our might. Do it mightily. Work for the welfare of man and work for the glory of God. You know, there's opportunities to serve even in secular occupations where you can work for the welfare of man and you can work for the glory of God.

So many opportunities to serve God in workplaces, in occupations, in professions. Find those places where you can serve God in practical ways. Work, don't shirk.

[27:22] Now, just to wrap up, God is still at work in me. Believe it or not, I'm not a finished product. As much as I might seem so perfectly designed and achieving, God is still at work in me and He's still at work in you.

Don't give up. You might think, well, preacher, I know I've failed. I know I'm not really working for God. It's just too hard. Just take one step. Take a simple step of faith and say, whatever it be, find something you can do and say, I want to do something for God.

Ask your preacher, me or Shane or whoever, I want to learn how to do this or do that. I want to be trained. Come to the training sessions. Come to the study meetings.

Come to where you can learn and grow as a Christian so you can thrive in His service. God is still at work. He's working on me. He's working through me. He's working in me. And friends, tonight, I urge you, do business with God tonight.

Do business with God tonight. Maybe God's been speaking to you, wow, I know I've been a bit of a, kind of going, sort of coasting along with my Christian life. I've just kind of been taking a back seat and just taking the easy ride on the glory train.

[28:39] And yeah, you can do that. You don't have to work for your salvation. But your salvation should be working for you. Your salvation should be working, God should be working in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Your faith should be active it should be living and there should be something to show for it. It should be evident. So do business with God tonight.

And the work that matters most is the work of faith. People came to the Lord Jesus in John 6 and they said, what shall we do that we might work the works of God?

Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God that you believe on Him whom He hath sent. This is the starting point. I'll be preaching really to Christians here tonight.

I'm not taking for granted that you're a Christian. This is the work of God that you believe on Jesus Christ. That is where it starts. That's the starting point.

[29:38] God cannot use you unless you're saved. Saved tonight. Friends, I urge you to trust Him. Trust Him now for time and eternity. Just to quickly recap, pray.

Pray that the Lord of the harvest shall send forth violently if He has to send forth labourers into His harvest. Maybe He needs to send you. Maybe God's giving you a push as it were tonight to be a labourer in the harvest.

God is looking for labourers. Speaks of work. Speaks of sweat. Man is standing idle in the marketplace. He says, go ye. Go ye. Everyone has something they can do.

We were created for work. From the garden He gave man work to do. It was something honourable and good. Let's have a mind to work as the people of Nehemiah's day.

Let's work hard. Don't shy away from work that is hard. And work heartily. And most importantly, work together with God. Yoke together with Christ.

[30:42] God works in us. Be a workman of the Word. Let this be your work. The Word. A workman of the Word. A workwoman of the Word. Be empowered by His Spirit.

Let us pray. Let us pray.