

"Is The Harvest All That Plentiful Today?"

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Preacher: David Bena

[0:00] So, let us pray. Lord, guide us as we crack open your word and look at what seems to be very confusing. Guide us to know what you would have for us.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. So, Mom and Dad were sitting on the couch reading the Bible, and four-year-old Thelma came up and said, What are you doing?

And Mom said, We're having our devotions. Well, later that night, Mom went in to say goodnight to Thelma, and little four-year-old Thelma was sitting there with a book, of course, upside down looking at it.

And Mom said, What are you doing, Thelma? And she said, I'm having my emotions. You know, we're all kind of four years old in many ways.

And when we look at a scripture like the Gospel, we wonder how could that possibly pertain to us. But we've got to go through our emotions, and we're going to do that now.

[1:02] So, the subject of this sermon, Is the harvest all that plentiful? Jesus said, The harvest is plentiful.

Isn't it all that plentiful? You know, they did a... Gallup does really good polls, that company. 2022, they asked this question, Do you believe in God?

80% of the respondents said, Yes. So maybe the harvest... Everybody believes in God. Maybe the harvest is really not necessary, right?

Well, if we look a little deeper, We find out, Of those 80%, The question is, Are you a member of a church?

47% of those 80% said, Yes, we are. Okay, so, alright, That could be a problem. But maybe they just go to church, And they don't join, right?

[2:05] The next question is, Have you been to a place of worship lately? 37% said, Yes.

That tells me there's a harvest out there. Jesus knew that then, And He knows that now. And you've already experienced this In your family and friends.

People have a vague belief in God, But it doesn't seem to translate. Into loving God, And worshipping Him, And being a member.

So, there is a harvest. Here's the question. Are we up to being the laborers in the harvest?

Are we up to bringing people into faith in Christ? Are we up to even inviting people to church? We're going to talk about that today, As we look at that gospel lesson, That I read from Luke.

[3:08] A very confusing lesson. But if you look at those 12 verses, Or 20 verses, They kind of shake up into a three-act play.

Now when I say play, That doesn't mean it didn't happen. It shakes together in three acts. The first act has to do with the commissioning of the twelve.

That's a lengthy portion. Twelve verses. Verses 1 through 12. It not only commissions the people, But it gives them details on how to live their life while they're on mission.

The second part of the passage is verses 13 through 16. Maybe 12 through 16. Jesus warns people who don't respond positively to the message.

And then the last portion, 17 through 20, Is the after action report As the 72 return from their mission. So, are you ready to go?

[4:10] Let's go. Alright. 1 through 12. Jesus commissions the 72. Have you ever been commissioned for something? When I was 21 years old, I was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps.

And it was quite a ceremony. And the speaker, Who was a grizzled old Marine of about age 35, Stood up there, And said, Alright, Now you're going to be officers of men.

You have the choice. Are you going to be arrogant? Or are you going to be humble in your leadership? He said, You can't be humbly arrogant. And you can't be arrogantly humble. You've got to be humble in your self-assurance. And I thought, You know, That guides me for life. That's a pretty good guide when it comes to leadership. What about those 72? Were they super troopers? Were they... I lost my internet. So here we go. And it came back. See? [5:19] Oh great. Those 72, As far as we can gather, Were people who were following Jesus. They were not superstars.

You know, We always think of Jesus walking around with 12 followers. Well, He had 12 people He called apostles. But He had a whole slew of folks that sort of wandered in and out following Him. He had enough that He could choose 72 of those people to carry on a mission that He wanted. Not super troopers. Just folks.

And so, What was He doing? Why did He do it? I think there's something that we could gather from that evangelist named Franklin Graham.

Some of you remember he came through here a couple of years ago. What we don't often think about is He didn't just show up. He sent people ahead of Him to get things ready.

[6:28] And a lot of us were commissioned as counselors for His... What do you call that? Crusade. For the crusade. And we got training in how to counsel people, etc., etc.

There were advertisements everywhere. Where His forward team really made the crusade happen. Well, this is what was going on with Jesus.

He was heading toward Jerusalem. He was sharing from town to town the mission. What He had to say. And so, He set out these 72.

Two by two. There is definitely strength in numbers. Two by two. Each assigned to a town. To share that the Messiah is coming. And so, He sent them out.

He was very careful how He sent them out. He said, Don't spend a lot of time on the road greeting people. In those days, you didn't just say, Hey. You had to talk about how your family is doing.

[7:34] You know, how the house is falling down. All kinds of things. Is a proper greeting. Well, He said, You're on mission. You don't have time to do that.

You're called to do three things. We'll talk about that in a minute. But as they were doing the three things, He also... Jesus was very practical. Don't go from house to house.

Takes a lot of time. A lot more greetings. Go into one house that opens their door to you. Stay there. They didn't have Marriott hotels back then.

They had a few inns. Basically, He stayed with people. Stay with those people. Eat what's put before you. Whether it's kosher or not.

Just eat what they give you. He told them exactly what... But what were those three things He commissioned them to do? Heal the sick.

[8:32] Say the kingdom of God is near. That means the Messiah is coming. And if the message is rejected, Move on. Don't quit.

How many of you have wanted to quit When you've been rejected? No, we all raise our hands. Don't quit. It was a simple commission then.

Guess what? It's a simple commission today. It's the same commission He gives us. That first one, Heal the sick. We are asked To pray aloud if possible, Silently if not, For healing for people.

Healing is the way God is Giving His message in the 21st century. We're called, number one, To pray for healing. Number two, To share our faith in Jesus When the occasion presents itself.

What is our faith in Jesus? The Messiah is coming. The Messiah is here. This is our message. And we give our own witness About how that message has touched our lives.

[9:49] So that's number two. Number three, Leave the results to Jesus. Move on. What's the first rule That they teach you When you're selling things?

I spent some time Selling encyclopedias. I was an encyclopedia salesman. Anyway, The first rule is Don't take rejection personally.

Don't take no personally. Well, that's Jesus is just giving Good business advice. So, We leave the rejection In God's hand.

Which brings us To that second part Which does not show us A meek and mild Jesus. He does His woe thing. Woe to you.

Woe to you. It's interesting He was giving woes To those extremely religious villages. And saying Because they have not Accepted His message They're down on the pole Below Gentiles.

[10:59] Sidon and Tyre Were Gentile cities. Set them below that. That had to burn them up. They did not want to be called Lower than Gentiles.

Plus, Where his home office Was located in Capernaum. Where did he say They were going? He said, You're going to hell. Does that sound like A politically correct God to you?

Sometimes we don't want To hear the real Jesus. Okay, but the question is Why would he do that? Why would he speak So harshly To those Who would not Respond to his message?

I've thought about that And I think I've come up With the answer. Perhaps Jesus Loves people So much That it Angers him When they Reject the salvation He offers So abundantly.

We talked about Doing our emotions. I think God In his Infinite nature Has emotions. And I think He gets hacked off.

[12:10] He offers A beautiful Message To receive him And we come up With a million Reasons Why we Can't do it now.

And so Jesus says It's not Your call It's mine To deal with Those who reject. Our commission Is simply To pray for healing To share our Witness of Jesus And to move on.

We're getting We're moving right on To the end of the sermon. So we get to Point three The final Portion The final Option They come back Those 72 Did they come back Beaten down?

No. They're excited They're excited About people Actually getting Healed About people Hearing the message And responding They said Lord Even the demons Are subject To us In your name Wait What?

Somebody say Demons? In my seminary There was Kind of a Not There was not A desire To speak Of demons In fact A few Of the Professors Didn't believe There was a Satan That Satan Was just The way Humanity Deals With their Shortcomings The devil Made me Do it But if We're Biblical Christians We have To admit That There is Demonic Activity So how Do we Deal with This In the Midst Of our Mission Of our Commission Well Do you How many Ever say The Lord's Prayer Yeah Okay Well That's about 100% Alright In the Lord's Prayer It's Interesting What Happened In the Translation Jesus Says Deliver Us From Evil That's What He Taught You Know In The Greek It's Deliver

[14:11] Us From The Evil One Isn't That Something Jesus Knew And Knows We Need To Pray For Deliverance Demons Are Oppressive Beings They're Worse Than Mosquitos I Walked In The Path Yesterday And I Was Greeted By Mosquitos And I Thought This Is What Demons Are Like In Spiritual Terms So We Pray Each Day To Be Delivered From The Evil One And We Take That Seriously But Sometimes We Are Oppressed And We Recognize That Oppression Sometimes That Oppression Comes Through As We Want To Do What We Know Is Wrong Sometimes That Comes Through With I Suddenly Think The Whole Gospel Thing

Is A Bunch Of Baloney Anytime Those Kind Of Thoughts Or You Know What I I Used To Love Him But I Hate Him Now Anytime Those Thoughts Grab You You Can Bet You're Being Oppressed By The Evil One And So Deliverance Is Something We Sometimes Ask Others To Pray For In Our Lives To Like Prayer Teams After Church Every Day Come And Ask For Prayers Of Deliverance To Be Delivered From These Yucco Mosquito Demons But Before You Go Off Half Cocked On This You Need To Understand Some Basics And That Is In Our Collect For The Day We Can Do Nothing Without The Power Of God How Do We Get The Power Of God We Do The Four Steps Of Salvation Right The Four Steps God Loves You Has A Wonderful Plan For

Your Life Number Two You Fallen Out Of The Plan Through Your Sin Number Three God Loving You Wants You Back In His Plan And So He Became One Of Us Jesus Who Died In Our Place To Get Us Back In The Plan And Number Four We Get Back In The Plan By Repenting And By Inviting Jesus Into Our Lives That's Just A Very Simple Four Step Formula For Salvation It's Truly Biblical Now Once We Have Invited Jesus Into Our Life And Given The Holy Spirit Power To Take Over Management Of Our Personal Business Then It's Easy To Pray For Power To Defeat Satan You See Jesus Said I Saw Satan Fall From Heaven Satan Has No

Power Compared To The Power Of Jesus All He Can Do Is Harass You All He Can Do Is Try To Make Your Life Miserable Jesus Has The Power To Get Them Out Of Your Life So I Have A Prayer That I Say When I'm Feeling Oppressed By Demonic Activity It's A Pretty Easy Prayer Get The Behind Me Satan In Jesus Name You Got To Memorize That Get The Behind Me In Jesus Name Satan Has Got No Choice But To Flee That's The Way It Is So We Get Back To The 72 They Went Through All This They Couldn't Believe They Had Such Power Over The Demons That They Had Such Power To Bring Healing And So For Us This Is Definitely The Conclusion You Just Thought It

Was The Conclusion

And When I Said This Is The Conclusion! Us We Don't Take It Personally We Just Share The Message What Do We Do The Three Things Of Our Commissioning Pray For Healing Share Faith In Jesus If Rejected Move On Amen In Name Of The Father And Of The Son And The Holy Spirit Amen