

What If It Were You Without the Gospel?

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[0 : 00] We're going to be looking at just a few verses at the end of Matthew chapter 9. And the Lord is speaking here. And we're going to start reading in verse number 36.

Matthew chapter 9. And we'll begin reading in verse 36 to the end of the chapter. And again, Jesus is speaking. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them.

Because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep, having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labors are few.

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labors into the harvest. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, this morning we come to you and we ask, dear God, that you would speak to each and every heart.

Father, we are sometimes guilty of when we come to church, we just kind of go through the motions of clocking in. And we sometimes leave our brain at the door and we're not really paying attention as we should.

[1 : 15] Dear God, would you awaken us and alert us to this message? May we hang on every word that you would have us to hear and speak to our hearts in a special way today.

God, I ask that you use me as your instrument, as your voice to us today. I pray, Lord, that we would not just be hearers, but doers of the word.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. And so when Jesus is looking and he sees the multitudes, it affects his heart.

And sometimes we have to ask ourselves this question, when was the last time that it affected our heart when we saw the masses and realized they're lost? I mean, sometimes when I, I don't watch a lot of sports.

I, a little back story. When I was younger, I was into sports. Sports was my life. I did everything that you could, if you could be on the team at school, except for the girls' sports.

[2 : 22] If there was a, you know, now I grew up in England too, so you need to understand. I grew up playing cricket, rugby, and football, the real kind.

Not the stuff that you call soccer, you know, but football where we use our feet. What you call football and use your hands with, we call rugby, okay?

So I grew up with that stuff there. And if I, you know, I was on just about every team. In fact, my folks had to limit me at times because I was just, that was just my life. And growing up playing football in England, I came to the States when I was 16 for, we had a furlough that year.

And I was 16 and we were in Indianapolis there. And we had a soccer team there and I played there. And I was being picked for the Indiana under 19 squad.

But I had to make a decision. Because it was my dream to be a professional footballer. That was my goal in life. But I had to decide then, am I going to play football and miss church on Sunday?

[3 : 46] Or am I going to go to church? Now, I'd like to say as a Christian being born in a Christian home with parents. Now, I knew that if my parents had anything to do with it, there'd be no chance for that.

But I had to make that decision. And I had to say, no, I know that's wrong. I have to be in church. But I asked God then, I said, God, this is too much of a passion for me.

You've got to take that passion away. And he did. I don't care for any sports these days. Now, when the World Cup comes up every four years, then I kind of give myself a little bit to that there.

But I hardly watch. How many of you like watching your sports there? Okay. I understand. Those who do. And, you know, some of us can balance it. For me, I couldn't, you know.

So I had a big, it came to a big decision. By the way, I need to backtrack a little bit. Can I tell you my story? There. My story begins with my grandmother. Her goal in life.

[4 : 47] Now, I know you know me. I might even told this story to you here. But some of you don't know me. My story begins with my grandmother. Her goal in life was to raise her three sons to be bartenders.

She failed miserably. All three of them became Baptist preachers. Now, what really messed up her plans was actually something that happened to her. At her business, a preacher showed up one day.

And for the first time in her life, she let someone open the Bible and explain it. And she realized, oh, my goodness, I'm going to hell. And I deserve it.

I deserve hell. But that preacher didn't stop with the bad news. He also explained that God had a rescue plan for her. And she got gloriously saved that evening.

Now, when you get truly saved, you cannot help but realize I've got friends that need to know this, too. I mean, as of yesterday, I was heading to hell.

[5 : 48] Today, I'm heading to heaven. But I've got family and friends that need to know this, too. So she began writing letters and sending tracts. And now, my dad was in the Navy at the time.

Two of her sons were in the Navy, dad and Uncle Jim. So she began writing letters and sending tracts and also sending cassette tapes of the sermons of the preacher. Now, some of you of the generation that don't know what a cassette tape is, talk to some of us that have lost our hair or has turned gray.

We'll be glad to explain what that is. And we'll also tell you why we needed a pencil sometimes with a cassette tape. But so she began sending all this stuff to them.

Dad called her up one day and told her. I'm sure he had different words there than what I'm going to tell you. But he told her, knock it off. Stop sending me all this junk. And I promise if you stop sending me all this, when I come home on leave, I'll go to your church.

Now, he'd never been to church before in his life. And the first weekend he was there, he was drunk. And so he got, you know, got out of it. The second weekend, she cornered him. She got him into church.

[6 : 56] There at the Indianapolis Baptist Temple, Dr. Dixon was preaching. And he said, I just felt like he was dangling me over hell all Sunday morning.

Well, praise God, they had church Sunday night because he was under conviction. He went back Sunday night and got saved. Not long after that, he got out of the Navy and was in Bible college. So when I came along, my daddy was already a preacher.

Now, being born in a preacher's home doesn't save you any more than being born at McDonald's makes you a Big Mac. But it does expose you to the gospel. Now, I remember I had a Sunday school teacher who used to dangle little Tommy over hell every Sunday morning.

And even though as a five-year-old boy, I hadn't done many sins, but I knew I was a sinner. Now, I knew I was going to get a spanking with God. But praise the Lord, Jesus took my spanking for me so I wouldn't have to.

I trusted in Jesus, what he did on the cross to pay the debt of my sins. He got saved. Not long after that, we went to the mission field. So I grew up overseas and spent 29 years of my life overseas.

[8 : 09] Of course, I came back for college and met my wife, Natalie. By the way, she was this close to coming this time. This close. And not long after we were getting ready to come, we got some news that she'd have to stay behind there.

I have a sister who's mentally handicapped there. And so she's giving aid there. And she's also going into dementia now and other things. And so, but, so anyhow, we, so I met my wife, Natalie, and we got married.

Well, we fell in love and then got married. And then went to England as missionaries. And we're over there for a number of years. And there's where we got acquainted with Islam.

A lot of Muslims are living in England today. You think they're all coming here to Lincoln, Nebraska, too. But all these immigrants are pouring in.

And so I tell you that story because I want you to know, God can transform lives. He can take lives.

[9 : 16] My uncle said, he said, before we got saved, the things our family did, you go to jail for. He said, it wasn't a pretty, you know, there's only one word to define our family, dysfunctional.

My dad's real dad was murdered in a bar fight in Chicago. Apparently it wasn't a pretty thing to see. But God can transform lives.

He can change them. And this book is powerful. And Jesus sees the multitude and he sees them as sheep having no shepherd and they need guidance. And unless they hear about the message of salvation, they're heading for hell.

When was the last time that you and I looked at the masses and it affected our hearts? We realize unless these people turn to Christ, they're heading for damnation.

When we look at the nations of the world, when we look at flags, when we put up flags in our missions conferences, those flags represent nations and those nations represent people.

[10 : 25] And those people all have souls that are bound for an eternal place. And unless we get the gospel to their address, unless the good news reaches them, they're going to slip off into eternity and slip into hell.

Let me ask you a question. Aren't you glad the gospel came to your address? That someone brought the gospel to your address? Maybe if someone brought it to your parents.

Maybe if someone who brought it to your grandparents. Or maybe if someone who brought the gospel to a neighbor. Or to a colleague at work. And they brought the gospel to you. Or maybe a preacher knocked on your door.

Or maybe someone came to your place and said, Hey, come to VBS. Or whatever it was. Somehow the gospel came to your address. Amen? Praise God for that.

But let's be honest. That that was kind of likely because you live in America. Is that true? I mean, because we have churches and the word of God here.

[11 : 29] And the preaching of the gospel on the radio and on TV and in other ways there. We have the gospel rich and flowing here.

And the chances of it reaching your address is much higher than it would be someone, say, in Saudi Arabia. And you see, the gospel reached my address because I was fortunate to be born in Indiana.

But what if I was born in India? And instead into a Christian home, into a preacher's home, what if I was born into an imam's home? Where they taught me the Koran rather than the blessed word of God.

You know what the Koran teaches? The Koran teaches people that Jesus is a prophet of God. You know how the devil is? The devil is so sneaky, he knows how to tell lies real well.

And you know how to tell a good lie. Believe it or not, you're going to hear from a preacher how to tell the best lie. Are you ready for it? I'm going to tell you. Write it down. No, don't write this down.

[12 : 36] The best way to tell a lie is to cover it with truth. That the deception is hidden amongst the truth. That it looks believable, sounds believable, but the lie and the deception is hidden within.

And it will snare you. How many of you are fishermen? What do you do? What do you do with your hook? You put a snare on it. You cover it to look like something enticing and good and desirable and yummy.

To a fish, that is. But deceive, deception is weaved therein. You get my gist? So the devil has created one of the greatest deceptions in the world, and it's the doctrines of Islam.

And in the Koran, it tells Muslims that Jesus, well, first of all, it tells them that there's only one God, and God created heaven and earth.

God created Adam and Eve, and all of us would say, we agree. A lot of truth there. But then the deception is weaved therein.

[13 : 50] And in it, it teaches that Jesus, although a prophet of God, Jesus is not God. So, lie number one, Jesus is not God.

Lie number two, Jesus did not die on the cross. Let me quote out of the Koran to you today. For Allah could see that Isa was in trouble. Isa is the Arabic name for Jesus.

Allah saw that Isa was in trouble. So he rescued him into heaven. Not before lifting his image and putting it on another. And he went to the cross to fool everyone to think that Isa died, but he did not.

So the Koran teaches Jesus didn't die. He was taken into heaven. But his image was put on someone else. Maybe Judas, because he's the disciple that died around that time.

And so he was wearing the image of Jesus, pretending to be Jesus. And he died in the place of Jesus, so it wasn't Jesus. And so if Jesus didn't die on the cross, then you don't have his resurrection.

[14 : 53] They teach that the disciples stole the body to create the hoax that Jesus rose from the grave. Folks, if Jesus isn't God, and if he didn't die on the cross, there's no remission of sins

because there's no shedding of his blood.

And if there's no resurrection, if you don't have those three things, you do not have the gospel. Those are the three things to believe in to be saved.

And if you believe in them and confess them, you can be saved today. Amen? But the devil has sold those lies to keep people from the truth, to keep people from heaven, because he hates God's creation.

You know, we were created in the image of God. Every time the devil sees us, he sees God. And he knows God loves us. And he hates God.

He hates what God loves. And he wants to destroy it. So this deception. So if the gospel came to your address, it's likely because you were born in America. But what if you were born somewhere else?

[16:07] What if? Here, look at our passage. Now, growing up in England, we have sheep.

In fact, I am told that this is not true, but I'm not sure about it. I believe in England there's more sheep than people. Now, they tell me that's not true.

But I have a hard time believing that. There's just sheep everywhere. And one thing about those stupid... Can I say stupid in church? I hope I can.

One thing about those stupid creatures is that you have a field full of lush green grass. Plenty of it. Abundance.

But no, are they there? Nay, nay, nay. Where are they? They've hipped over, jumped over the hedge, squeezed through somehow. And they're down by the roadside, nibbling on pieces of grass and junk there, where cars are whizzing by at 60 miles an hour.

[17:19] Stupid creatures. And he says, They are like sheep having no shepherd. No one to care for them. No one to keep them from danger, from harm.

Now he goes to his disciples and he gives them kind of a picture to have in their mind. He says, Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

I don't know. Do we have any farmers here? Do we have anyone who's driven by a farm? Anyone ever sung Old MacDonald had a farm? Okay. You know what I mean by a farm, right?

If you're a farmer and you get the news that the harvest is truly plenteous, that's good news. Now I'm not a farmer, but we've got a little bit of land now, and we've done some gardening and that kind of stuff there.

And I'm here to tell you, it's hard work. And just because you put in a lot of hard work there to break up the ground and put the seed in there and get it watered and all that kind of stuff, it doesn't guarantee a harvest.

[18:37] I can guarantee you that. I mean, everything. I think we were born with black thumbs. I tell you, everything we do is a disaster. You know, I've had more success out of my compost pile than I have out of my garden.

We threw stuff in the compost pile and some beautiful tomatoes and peppers were growing and stuff there. And it's like, man, I just got to throw stuff in the trash and we'll do better.

But the harvest truly is plenteous. So, man, we've got great news. So the Lord's saying, hey, the harvest truly is plenteous. And, man, that might drive some excitement.

What is he saying? He's saying, hey, there's an abundance of souls that need Christ. There's a harvest out there.

But then he gives them the bad news. The harvest truly is plenteous. But what? What? The laborers are few. See, one thing about the harvest.

[19:40] Now, you know, we lived in Washington State. We got apple trees everywhere. Well, not everywhere, but in the valleys and stuff there. And beautiful abundance of orchards and apples.

And one thing you can't say to the apples, hang on. We'll get to you next year. Doesn't work that way, does it? What's the rule?

If you don't get it in, what happens? You lose it. If you don't get it, you lose it. The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

So now he instructs them with what to do. What's the instruction, verse number 38? First word, pray. Pray what?

Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he'll send forth laborers into the harvest. Now, when I was in Bible college, the world population was 5 billion.

[20 : 43] We are, that was 30, almost 40, about 40 years ago. In 40, I mean, it took from the beginning of, well, not the beginning of the world, at least we know when there was eight people, the flood, to get to 5 billion.

That was 40 years ago. 40 years later, we're almost up to 8 billion. World is just exploding with masses of people.

I mean, it'd be one thing if we could have pulled the brakes and said, okay, no more babies back when it was 5 billion. No more! If you're pregnant, don't sneeze.

It's a, just hold on. Let's just deal with what we've got. But we can't do that, can we? It's gonna continue to go and continue to grow. And as the numbers grow, the need grows.

And the need is greater today than it ever was before. Pray you there for the Lord of the harvest.

Now, wouldn't it go to reason that God would be calling more people to missions, to taking the gospel to the world than what we had 30, 40 years ago when I was in college?

[22 : 03] Wouldn't it go to reason if our number, if our populations are growing, we'd be seeing more and more missionaries going? You know what the fact is? Because we have less today going to the mission field at over 7 billion people than what we had when there was only 5 billion people in the world.

Less. There's something wrong here. Why is that? Is it that God doesn't care? That God is getting tired?

God's concern is waning? No. The need is still great today and God's salvation is still as abundant today as it was then.

The need is great. Salvation is still there. But fewer are going. Could it be that we're not listening?

Could it be that we're not listening? So what's the solution? Pray ye there for the Lord of the harvest. Now, I believe this. I believe, in principle, that sounds like an easy solution.

[23 : 09] How many think that's something that we could do? Pray. I mean, that's all we've got to do. It didn't say give. It said pray. Pray the Lord of the harvest and that's the solution.

The harvest is plentiful, but the labors are few. These people need Christ. They need salvation.

They need people to go and to take the word of God into the world and to take it to these creatures.

And we need more people to go, but we don't have them. Here's the solution. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he'll send forth labors. If we will start praying, God will start calling more.

That sounds like a pretty easy solution. How many think we need to be doing this? I mean, really?

How many think we need to be doing this? So we all think we need to be doing it, but there's a reason why we're not, and let me tell you why.

And let me warn you. I'm going to pull the layers away because this looks easy, but it's not easy.

And let me explain why. Do it. Do it for a week, but do it passionately.

[24 : 18] Pray as if it were you that needed someone to come. Pray as if it was you in some distant nation that we could get missionaries there. By the way, did you know we can get missionaries into Turkey?

We can get missionaries into Lebanon. We can get missionaries into Egypt. We can get missionaries into many Muslim countries that allow churches already.

People say, well, we can't go into these countries. There's only a very few of them that are closed to Christians and missionaries. Many of them, even Muslim countries, are open for missionaries, but a lot of people aren't aware of that.

But let's say it's not even a Muslim country. There's still many masses of people that need Christ.

Europe has become a post-Christian nation, continent. And so the need for missions is growing and growing and growing.

But pray as if it were you over there that needed someone to come. Pray it with passion and pray like, you know, oh God, Lord, these people need someone to go.

[25 : 24] They need a church. They need a preacher. They need a missionary to go into their community and to open the word of God. Send someone and start praying for God to call people into the harvest.

And here's what's going to happen. When you start doing that and you pray it passionately for a week, you're going to start imagining people in your church that would be good to go. You'll start praying, oh God, Pete would be a great missionary.

Lord, he loves you and he knows the word and he's desiring to get that. Oh God, he would be a great missionary. Would you call him? And then you think of someone else and then, you know,

John, John would be a good missionary too, Lord.

He's just got a good family and loves the Lord and, you know, and then Joe, Joe too, in fact, actually things would be better if Joe would go somewhere. I don't know. Do we have a Joe here? Uh-oh.

Uh-oh. My bad. But you start praying that and then you're going to start imagining people will come to your mind that you'll say, you know, this person would be a wonderful person.

[26 : 29] Lord, would you work in their heart? Now, here's the thing. When something like, and by the way, I, you know, I know this is a mission church and I, I imagine somewhere in the history of this church, maybe someone has already called someone amongst you to go and be a missionary.

I don't know. If you've not had that privilege, every church should pray that they have that privilege. Maybe one of their own would be called to go, oh, well, we're not a big, mighty church.

You know, let me tell you the truth. God often calls from the smaller churches. They're the ones that are feeding the mission field. Really are. But you start praying that way and you start imagining how others could be used of, of the Lord in missionary work and then you start praying and then something dawns on you.

Lord, send them, but, but, but not me. Send them, but, but, but, but not my kids. Send them, but, not my grandkids.

And then you realize you're quick to volunteer everyone else, but not you. And then that kind of makes you feel bad because that kind of makes you look like a hypocrite.

[27 : 54] Nobody likes that. So we step back and we stop praying because we ourselves are not willing to go. And we don't want to volunteer someone to do something that we're not willing to do.

so we stop praying. We've got to start praying. Souls are dying and we're not praying.

And it's not that, listen, you know, God might move and work. He may be even moving and working in this service. My prayer is every church I go to that's going on in Saudi Arabia, I pray, God, would you call someone out of that church?

I've been praying that this morning for here. And God may one day call someone to be a missionary, to leave their home and to leave their family and to pick up everything that they've got and everything that they know and love and depart from it there and to go to a people that they don't know in hopes that God might use them to take the gospel to people who are still yet to hear. And we might have a service where God begins to move and to minister and speak to someone here. Maybe during the invitation they have the courage to obey.

[29 : 19] Say, oh God, I don't know how my wife's going to like this. Lord, I believe you're calling me. Now first, can I say something there? There's a difference between being surrendered and being called.

Let's make that clear. Being surrendered is, I believe, honestly, you probably will want to disagree with me, but trust me, I'm right and you're wrong.

I believe every Christian ought to get to the point where they say to God and say it seriously, God, I don't know if you'd want me to be a missionary, but if you do, if you do, I want you to know the answer will be yes.

I'm just putting it out there in advance, Lord. I'm just saying, God, in other words, I'm saying, here's a blank check to do whatever you want with my life.

I'm surrendering it to you. That's being surrendered. Now you say, hold on a minute. If I surrender my life, he might take me up on that.

[30 : 37] What if he does? Now that moves us to the next part, being called. Being called is saying, now God has, and by the way, he's going to work with those who will be surrendered.

Now, he may be working on you, preparing to call you, but you're not yet surrendered. You're not yet surrendered. And he's working with you.

And by the way, I pray you'll be miserable. I'm sorry, but I'm doing it for your own good. Amen? I mean, how many of you parents are there, you had your kids and you're praying for them, you know they're not doing right, they're not working, they're not surrendering and stuff like that, and you're praying, Lord, make them miserable because you love them and you want them to do what's right. Keep them safe, but make them miserable. But once you're surrendered, then God will one day come and visit you in a special way, saying, hey, I now have something for you.

Here's your call. Now, how do you know you've been called? I get this question a lot. How do you know God has called you? And here's my answer. Now, get ready. This might be a deflating

answer, but here it is.

[31 : 57] You'll know. You'll know. And it will scare you to death. I don't have to explain how you'll know. You'll know.

When that happens, you'll know. And now you have to decide, will you be obedient? To what you told God. I'll be surrendered.

Have you reached surrendered yet? Have you? Because if you reach surrender, then you can pray this prayer without any problem. Lord, send.

Even if it means me. Even if it means me being in your ministry. Send someone. Then you can pray that prayer without any hardship. Say, oh, but I've got my careers and we've got our plans and we've got our, we've got all these things.

I don't know how God's going to supply. Trust me, if God calls, he'll provide. If he's got a mission for you, he's got a way of providing for you. And, and, and he's got a path for you.

[33 : 00] You may not know what it is, but I, I can tell you, I've been on that journey for over 40 years. And I have no regrets. Not one regret.

If I could say, I wished I could have started sooner, I would say that. But man, I went straight from high school into Bible college and I was pastoring at 22. I don't think I could have gotten in there any earlier, any faster.

I have no regrets. No regrets. Pray you there for the Lord of the harvest that he'll send forth laborers into his harvest. What a missed opportunity it would be if we didn't take this opportunity.

I'll close with this one story. The year was 1269. The, Genghis Khan was on the throne in what we now call China, the empire over there.

This was back in the day of Marco Polo. Some of you only thought that was a game. Marco Polo had traveled from Europe and he introduced to the Khan Christianity.

[34 : 06] And the king there, the emperor said, wow, my people need to know about this God. Send word back to Europe, to your churches there that preach this wonderful news about this God to send 100 of their preachers at my expense to come and to teach my people about this wonderful God and his son Jesus.

Wow, what an opportunity. Word began to get back to Europe and began to get around into the different churches of the Christians there in Europe. 100. He's asking for 100.

Who will go? Do you know how many went? Do you know how many took the gospel that was rich in Europe and took it over to what we call China today?

Do you know how many? Only two. Only two. Only two were willing to get up and to take the message.

But you know, the story gets worse because they got to Armenia and had difficulty and turned back. No one arrived. No one arrived.

[35 : 21] We might look back and say, what a mistake. What a mistake. What a missed opportunity. How foolish was that of the Christians of Europe. Why did they not go?

They asked for 100 and only two went but they never arrived. Can you imagine what China might be today had the gospel reach that country in 1269? You know they say that.

We look there and say, that's terrible. How terrible. Why didn't they go? I wonder what they'll say of America when the door's like this is opening and we didn't go.

Father, Lord, I pray that we don't make a mistake. That we don't miss these opportunities that are about to open. And Lord, I'm asking churches to pray, to unite with me to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers.

Maybe there's a laborer here that will go. Wherever they are, Lord, they're going to come out of your churches. And I pray, Father, that you would work amongst us.

[36 : 25] Maybe there's someone here today that's been so filled with themselves and their lives. They love you, but they haven't yet surrendered. Oh God, would you speak to them today?

May they come here to an altar. May they make the chair that they're at make that an altar. May they lay their life down there as a sacrifice, a living sacrifice to you to say here, my Lord, send me.

I don't know what it would be. I don't know what you'd have me to do. But I want to say, Lord, if that's what you want, the answer is yes. Maybe there's someone here who is being called and they know it.

May they not be like Jonah. May they run to you. And be faithful. We pray you have your will and way in this service in Jesus' name. Amen.

Pastor, would you come?