

The Lord of the Harvest

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[0 : 0 0] Now, with the Lord's help, if we could turn back to the portion of Scripture that we read. In the Gospel according to Matthew in chapter 9. And if we read again from verse 35.

Matthew chapter 9 at verse 35. 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.

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 laborers are few.

Pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. Amen. Amen. This Gospel, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to Matthew, is said to be the single most important document of the Christian faith.

And that's not to belittle any of the other Gospels, or to think anything less of any other New Testament writing. But it was in the early church that the Gospel of Matthew was the most widely read and the most frequently quoted section of Scripture in the New Testament.

[1 : 2 4] And some have even described this Gospel as the bridge that leads us out of the Old Testament and into the New Testament. Because what Matthew had in mind when writing his Gospel was to show clearly to all his Jewish readers and all that would read.

It would be pointing to all the signposts of the Old Testament and all the promises concerning the Messiah and all the prophetic messages that spoke of one who would be wounded and bruised for the transgressions of his people.

And it all pointed to Jesus, who is the Christ and indeed the promised Messiah. And this Messiah is the King of Glory, who came to tell us that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

And each of the four Gospels, they have their own emphasis with regard to Jesus' person and work. Mark gives us the Gospel of the servant.

Luke portrays the Gospel of the Son of Man. John proclaims to us the Gospel of the Son of God. But Matthew, he presents to us the Gospel of the King.

[2 : 3 4] And in this Gospel of the King, Matthew describes Jesus as one who does. He does things. And as one who teaches people. And Matthew recorded at least 20 miracles that Jesus did.

And on different occasions. And where Jesus taught to people through all his different sermons. Like the Sermon on the Mount. Or through all the parables that were so relevant to the people at that day and at that time.

That in Matthew's eyes, Jesus did things. Jesus did things and Jesus taught people like a teacher. And that is seen so clearly in the section that we have just been reading together.

Where we have recorded for us four miracles involving five people. And where there was a broken home. This devout Jewish leader had just lost his dying daughter.

Jairus had come to seek the help of Jesus. To save his precious daughter from dying. Maybe to restore her to life. But Jesus was delayed by this woman with a broken hope.

[3 : 42] And this unnamed woman had tried everything. She had tried all the physicians. All the things she could do to help her. Spending everything she had. But to no avail of what she was doing.

None could help her. Her discouragement overwhelmed her. She was seen as ceremonially unclean and an outcast. And while Jairus had had 12 years of happiness with his daughter.

This woman had had 12 years of despair with her condition. But now at the same time, Jairus had a broken home.

And this woman a broken hope. That was until they met with Christ. Jairus' faith brought Jesus to his daughter. The woman's faith brought her to Jesus.

And for them what once seemed like a hopeless end. It soon turned into an endless hope. And in these short verses we see a broken home. A broken hope.

[4 : 45] And even broken bodies. There were also two blind men that followed Jesus. Obviously they followed him with aid. But with this earnest desire to be healed.

But they followed Jesus crying and saying. Thou son of David have mercy on us. And it was their faith in Jesus that made them whole again. And another man who was dumb.

And he was possessed by a devil. And Jesus came and he cast out this devil. And the devil was. He was delivered from this devil. And the power of darkness. And in all these problems of death.

Of disease. Of blindness. And of pain. This Matthew shows to us that there is only one person to bring them to. There is only one person who could help them in their condition.

There is only one person who could raise the dead. Who could heal the sick. Who could restore to the blind their sight. And cast out demons. And that person is Jesus Christ.

[5 : 43] No one else could do it. No one else could do it. It was never so seen in Israel. But after these great events of Jesus performing miracles.

And he then speaks to his disciples. And he commands them to consider the harvest field. And to pray to the Lord of the harvest. To send out more laborers.

And everything Jesus says is about himself. It all belongs to him. And he is the Lord of the harvest. They are his laborers in his harvest.

It is all about his harvest. It's all about him. It's all about Christ. And about his kingdom. For it cannot be about anyone else.

But him and him alone. So this morning. I would like us to consider this text under three headings. Learn from him. Preach about him.

[6 : 42] Pray for him. Learn from him. Preach about him. Pray for him. We look firstly at learn from him. Look at verse 36.

But when he saw the multitudes. He was moved with compassion on them. Because they fainted and were scattered abroad. As a sheep. As sheep. Having no shepherd.

And having dealt with the broken home of Jairus. The broken hope of the woman with the issue of blood. And these broken men who were blind. And another one demon possessed.

And having dealt with such trying situations. We have to ask the question. What made Jesus do it? What made him do what he did?

He went about all the cities and villages. Healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But what made him do it? He didn't have to do anything for them. That was their providence you could say.

- [7 : 41] And their circumstance at that time. He didn't have to intervene. He wasn't obligated to step in and help them. He wasn't bound to them in any way to do anything for them.
- He didn't owe them anything. They didn't deserve anything from him. They didn't deserve anything from his own precious hand. But what made him do it?
- What made him help the helpless? But when he saw the multitudes. He was moved with compassion. He was moved with compassion towards these people.
- Something in Christ drew him to them. And they saw something in him that drew them to him. He was moved with compassion.
- And I've often wondered why Jesus performed miracles. Why did he do them? And sometimes when he did them, even in verse 30, he told that person not to tell them of this great work.
- [8 : 43] And at other times he performed these miracles openly in front of everyone. But could you say that there was something in Christ that compelled him to perform miracles?
- Was there something in him that constrained him to do it? Was he so moved with compassion as he looked at his own creation? What he had made by the word of his power.
- What he had made by the word of his power from the dust of the ground stood before him marred by sin. And what he had made in its original state. In all its perfection and holiness and beauty.
- It now came to him with all the effects of sin. With disease and with blindness and demon possession. And even with the last enemy, death.
- Was there something that constrained the Lord to restore the chaos that sin had brought into his perfect creation? Jesus may have looked at his creation and seen that it wasn't the way he made Adam.
- [9 : 48] He didn't make a world of pain and disease and a world of heartache and sorrow. He made it perfect. He had seen it in all its beauty and said that it was all very good.
- But the first Adam he had brought in death and all its effects. But the last Adam that stood before them came to restore the great. This breach that sin had caused and is still causing to this very day.
- But it wasn't just physical healing that Jesus came for. It was to heal spiritually. To destroy the power of death. To conquer the grave and all its effects. To restore the great chasm between God and men.
- Through and only through the man Christ Jesus. He was moved with compassion. And just a few months before my next door neighbor died.
- I went to see her on this occasion. And we ended up talking about her favorite word in the Bible. Her favorite word. And it was this word. Compassion.
- [10 : 55] A word that says so much. It's a word that is so beautiful. And yet a word that speaks. And yet its actions may still be silent.
- And there are so many times in the Gospels. Where the writers say that Jesus showed compassion. And it would be a great exercise for us all. To spend our Sabbath afternoon studying the scriptures.
- Trying to find all the occasions in Jesus' ministry. Where he showed compassion. Where Jesus saw people. And where he was moved with compassion.
- There are about ten incidents in which it is said that Jesus moved with compassion. And everyone is different. Every person is dealt with differently. Every problem is different.
- But every response is the same. Because compassion is shown. For I will have compassion. Upon whom I will have compassion.

- [11 : 57] He casts no one out. Or anyone who comes to him will be shown compassion. He has compassion. No, as the psalmist says. He is full of compassion.
- And gracious. Long-suffering. And plenteous in mercy and truth. And he will show compassion to all people. Who seek him. To the poor and to the needy.
- To the rich and to the famous. To the alcoholic. To the drug addict. To the prostitute. To the widow. To the widower. To the sick and to the suffering. To the housebound.
- To the homeless. He will show compassion to them all. If they just come to him. And we are to learn from him. But are we too cold as Christians to learn.
- And to show compassion. To help the helpless. To love the unlovable. To care for those who aren't cared for.
- [12 : 57] To help them. To show compassion. Not to be like the priest and the Levite. Who just pass by. Pass by without any care. But to stop and show compassion.
- Because of what Christ has done for you. And don't you just love the fact. That when you read. Even the epistles of Peter. And you see that. He was a man who made so many mistakes.
- A man just like us. But he learned so much from. From all his mistakes. Even what he said in his epistle. In chapter 3. 1 Peter chapter 3. He said.
- Finally. Be ye all of one mind. Having compassion. One of another. Love us brethren. Be pitiful.
- Be courteous. You see. Peter learned in the school of Christ. And so must we. We must learn from him. And it's an example for us.
- [13 : 55] He is. Jesus is an example for us. And a helper to us. To us. And is it any wonder to us then. That Peter said. To whom shall we go. Those the words of eternal life.
- Well my friend. If people only knew. Who this Jesus was and is. If they only knew. By the way we live. And by what we say. Many people would come. If he were to draw them.
- If people only knew. How compassionate. This Christ is. But how shall they hear. Without a preacher. We must preach about him.
- The harvest. Truly is plenteous. But the laborers are few. And the priority in Christ's ministry. Was not. Healing every disease.
- And every sickness. But to send people out. To preach the good news. Of the kingdom. Because. There are many. Out. Who are out with. The covenant of grace.
- [14 : 55] And who are in this world. Wondering namelessly. As sheep. Having no shepherd. And the great commission. Of the Christian church. Is to go and make disciples. Not.
- To make converts. Who just change their lifestyle. But disciples. Who spread this news. Disciples. Who submit. To Jesus. In every area. Of their lives. Their will.
- Their intellect. Their behavior. Everything. So that they will come. And sit. At the feet of Jesus. And make him. Their master. By grace. By the grace of God alone.
- And mission is needed. More than ever. Because people. Aren't submitting. To Jesus. As their Lord and master. But we cannot just sit. And wait. For people to come.
- We cannot just sit. Waiting about. Because. They won't come. Why should they bother. Coming. If they don't know. About Jesus. Do sheep.
- [15 : 50] Just wonder. Aimlessly. Into a croft. And find a shepherd. And just. Wait there. To be fed. By him. And looked. After him. Do they. Just wonder. Aimlessly in.
- Or does the shepherd. Go out. And draw in. The lost sheep. Does he go out. Because we must go out. And bring people. In. That's what the New Testament.

Church. Is all about. Not conforming. To the world. To draw people. In. Not changing the bride. To draw people in. But she must go out.

And bring people. To her. Is that not what the apostle. Said in his letter. To the Romans. In Romans chapter 10. He said. For whosoever.

Shall call upon the name. Of the Lord. Shall be saved. How then. Shall they call on him. In whom they have not believed. And how shall they believe. In whom. Of whom they have not heard.

[16 : 45] And how shall they hear. Without a preacher. And how shall they preach. Except they be sent. As it is written. How beautiful. In the feet of them. That preach the gospel. Of peace.

And bring glad tidings. Of good things. But they have not. All obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says. Who has believed. A report. For faith. Cometh by hearing.

And hearing. And hearing. By the word of God. The harvest. Is plentiful. And the laborers. Are few. And this is the call. To preach the gospel.

And there is much need. In our day. For not only preachers. And missionaries. But all types of callings. To serve the Lord. Even as we heard. On Wednesday evening. Of the work of road.

To recovery. It's a ministry in itself. Not everyone is called. But everyone has a part. To play. Not everyone is to be a preacher. Or a missionary.

[17 : 40] Or a youth worker. Or an adult worker. Or helping people. But we all have a part. To play. We all have a calling. To serve in some way. Whether it's in pulpit. Or in pew.

We have a work. And we accept that. And I believe that. Every single Christian. Should always ask the Lord. What he wants them to be.

And what he wants them to do. In his harvest field. And what they should be doing. And expect an answer. That you might not want. And an answer.

That you might not like. But it's to truly seek. The Lord's guidance. Teach me thy way. Said the psalmist. And in thy truth. O Lord. Then walk will I.

Unite my heart. That I thy name. May fear continually. It's to seek. The Lord's guidance. But I cannot get away. From the fact. That this text.

[18 : 35] It's directed. At calling men. To preach the gospel. Men who have been given. The highest calling. Afforded unto man. To preach the truth. To handle. The word of God.

Not. For their own glory. But for his glory. For it is. His harvest. And it's not to go. At the right time. When it's the right time. For you. It's not to go.

When you have money. It's not. To go. When you are clever enough. To preach. It's not. To go. When you think. That you have enough. Spiritual years. On your back. To go with this gospel.

God. Doesn't call the equipped. He equips. Those whom he calls. But when God calls. You must. Go. You must go.

I mean. Look at the disciples. Look at the disciples. They sat. At their nets. And Jesus came. And said. Come. And I will make you fishers of men. And immediately.

[19 : 30] It says. They left their nets. And followed him. Look at Abraham. When he was called. To a place. That he would later receive. As an inheritance. He went.

Not knowing. Where he was. Going. But he went. And he went. By faith. And whatever happens. You will have knocks. You will have doubts. You will have fears. People will stand against you.

And hinder you. But the promise is. That no weapon. That is formed against you. Shall prosper. And every tongue. That shall rise up. Against you in judgment. Thou shall condemn.

For it is the heritage. Of the servants. Of the Lord. And their righteousness. Is of me. Saith the Lord. This gospel. This gospel. Needs preachers. It needs. Men like Noah.

Who was a preacher. Of righteousness. When the day looked bleak. It needs men like Elijah. Who will stand against. All the oppositions. And idols. Of the day. Men like Isaiah. Who preach.

[20 : 28] Faithfully. In the times. Of spiritual drought. Men like John the Baptist. Who will always point. And say. This is the Lamb of God. Who takes away. The sin. Of the world.

And even people like Paul. Who only preach Christ. And him. Crucified. For this harvest. Is plentiful. But the laborers are few. And this gospel.

It needs men. Who will preach the gospel. In season. And out of season. Whose focus. Is the cross of Christ. For a gospel. Without the cross. Is not a gospel.

At all. And this gospel. Needs to. To have the preaching. Of the resurrection. For without the resurrection. Our preaching. Is in vain. Our focus. Needs to be upon Christ.

And Christ alone. To preach the unsearchable riches. That belong to him. To proclaim his glory. To draw from his love. To delve into the depths. Of his beauty.

[21 : 22] To have him presented. To all. To us all. In his all. His perfection. And holiness. To preach from scripture alone. By faith alone. Through grace alone.

In Christ alone. To the glory. Of God. Alone. This gospel. Doesn't need gimmicks. To make it more beautiful. It doesn't need. The ideas.

Of men. It doesn't need. The fancies of men. To draw people in. All this harvest. Needs. Is faithful men. To preach the inerrant. Infallible. Naked.

Word. Of God. For nothing else. Will do. Nothing else. Will change lives. Nothing else. Will convert sinners. Nothing else. Will bring people.

To Christ. Nothing else. Will bring people. Comfort. Nothing else. My friend. Will do your soul. Any good. Apart from this. Precious.

[22 : 16] Book. This. Gospel. Needs men. And that's. Why. This harvest. Needs men. Who will labor. Faithfully. Who will preach it. In all its purity.

With all clarity. And proclaim it. In all sincerity. Men who will preach. With the authority. Of Christ. Because they are called. By him. To preach the whole counsel.

Of God. With meekness. And with humility. But at the same time. An urgency. And a constraint. For lost souls. With a fire.

In their belly. That want. That desire. To bring people. To Christ. To preach with passion. To preach with love. To preach. The holiness of God. And the need.

For separation. But not. Isolation. To preach. The truth. About what a Christian. Should be. And where a Christian. Should be. And where a Christian. Shouldn't be.

[23 : 08] To preach. About life. To preach. About death. To preach. About heaven. To preach. About hell. To preach. And to present. Everything. Before sinful man.

So that he. Or she. Will see the glory. Of the savior. It's to see him. Some people. Think that we shouldn't. Preach about hell.

We don't want. To scare the children. We don't want. To hurt people's feelings. Telling them. That without Christ. They're going to burn in hell.

Telling them. The simple gospel. I tell you. My friend. If you die. Without Christ. You will. And make no mistake.

About it. You will. Go to hell. Hell. And there is no middle ground. There is no. In between. There is no.

[24 : 05] Place. That is without. Hell. Unless you're in heaven. You're either for him. Or you're against him. And you need this Christ.

Christ. And I wish. How I wish. That you would see. Your desperate need. Of this Christ. And I don't tell you. That you're going to hell.

To scare you. Or to frighten anybody. But it should frighten you. It should terrify you. It should haunt you. Every day.

That you are without. This Christ. Still in this world. But I tell you. Because I love you. I tell you. Out of love.

I tell you. Because this Bible. Warns of a place. Without hope. Without salvation. Just hell. Just.

[25 : 01] Hell. And hell should never be preached in anger. Should always be preached in love. But it should never be ignored. For if you take away. The just judgment. Of God.

You take away. The mercy of God. And you should never take away. These things. For if you take them away. You're taking away. The glory of the gospel. And the burning question is.

Do you know this Christ today? Not. Do you know of him? Not. Do you know about him? But do you know him personally. As your Lord and Savior?

We need to learn from him. We need to preach about him. But we also need to pray. For him. To pray for him. In our last psalm.

We sang together. In Psalm 72. At verse 15. It says. Many people. Ever pray for him. And bless his name. Continually. And it was that great.

[25 : 56] Messianic psalm. That looked. To the coming of the Messiah. And of course. We are not. To pray for Christ. For how can we pray for him? He is our mediator.

Our advocate. Our intercessor. He prays. For us. And for his people. Throughout the world. But the Hebrew of Psalm 72. It could also be rendered.

Pray to him. And not pray for him. But there is. A sense in which. We must. Pray for him. Pray. To the father.

For him. We must pray. Not. For the head of the church. But for the body of the church. The body of Christ's people. Throughout the world.

To pray. For the advancement. Of the kingdom of God. The harvest. Truly is plenteous. But the laborers are few. Pray ye. Therefore. The Lord of the harvest.

[26 : 51] That he would send forth. Laborers. Into his harvest. And this word. Pray. It's an imperative. In Greek. Which means. That Jesus is not.

Suggesting to us. That we should. Think about praying. Or making a proposal. But he divinely. Asserts. That we must pray. We must pray. That he has laborers.

For his harvest. I said. Earlier. That not everyone is called. But everyone. Has a part. To play. And this is it. We must. Pray. We must.

Pray. Pray. But sometimes. I wish. I was as good as you. I wish. I was as good as you. That I didn't need. To come to church. And I wish.

I was as good. As some of you. That I didn't need. To go. To the prayer meeting. And I wish. I was as good. As good as you. That I didn't have. To make. The prayer meeting. My priority.

[27 : 45] In my life. But I can't. I can't. Stay away. For I know. That when I go there. I'm meeting. Directly. With the Lord. And the gathering.

Of his people. And I need it. And we need it. And as far as this harvest. Is concerned. It needs it. This harvest. Needs it. And I can't understand.

Why we have. A Saturday night. Prayer meeting. That lies empty. Every Saturday. Evening. Where two weeks ago. We were all there. We were all there.

And the place was full. Everybody needed a token. We all needed prayer then. But what about last week? What about last night? Where were we?

How many members do we have? Yet only 15 or 20 turn up. Where are we? What are we doing? I know many have children. Others are elderly and ill.

[28 : 40] But what about us who have no excuse? Where are we? Are we in this yangling instead? Or following the world. In all that they're doing? Or are we sitting watching the telly?

Making sure we're catching up. With Strictly Come Dancing. Or Come Dine With Me. Or X Factor. And people will say. It's only a prayer meeting. Once a week is enough.

Wednesday or Thursday. Is enough. Read Spurgeon's book. On only a prayer meeting. And see. And then see. How much we need. The prayer meeting. And you will ask yourself.

Maybe it isn't only. A prayer meeting. Where one commentator wrote. When commentating. On this text alone. He said. Let our prayer meetings.

Take note. Let our prayer meetings. Take note. What better way is there. To prepare our hearts. For the Lord's day. Than go to a prayer meeting. What better way is there.

[29 : 38] Than coming together. To pray. And to plead. For the cause of Christ. To plead. For all our activities. For the youth work. For the adult work. For the elderly work.

Without prayer. It's pointless. We need this prayer. Where is our urgency. With the gospel. Where are our elders. Where are our deacons. Where are the people of God.

Where are we. When prayers want to be made. This is a serious thing. My friend. Let's not take it. Half heartedly. To pray. To have this pulpit.

Quoted. In prayer. Immersed in prayer. Not only because. Mr. Martin is in it. Or Mr. McLeod is in it. Or me. Or any other preacher. But because.

The word of God is in it. To pray. And this word. That leaves this pulpit. Every week. And up and down our land. Everywhere.

[30 : 33] Where preachers are pleading. With souls. And this seed. Is being sown. We must pray. But it must be sown in tears. To be sown in tears.

For the word of God. Is the power. Of God. Unto salvation. To them. That believe. We need to pray. We must pray.

For more laborers. So many vacancies. Even in our presbytery. And our denomination. And in our land. Where Scotland needs to hear this gospel again.

The harvest is plenteous. But the laborers are few. And we have vacancies everywhere. In Sculpe. South Uist.

Barvis. Crossabust. The Free North. Maryborough. Gerlach. Tain. Dumbarton. Dumpfries. Dornach.

[31 : 33] Rasey. Wick. Rogart. Helmsdale. Brora. Fern. And Loch Inver. To name just a few. This gospel needs preachers.

This gospel needs prayer. Earnest prayer. J.C. Ryle once said. Money can pay agents. Universities can give learning.

Bishops may ordain. Congregations may elect. But the Holy Ghost alone. Can make preachers of the gospel. And raise up lay workmen. In the spiritual harvest. We need not be ashamed.

Never. Never. May we forget. That if we would do good. To the world. Our first duty. Is to pray. We must pray.

We must pray. I'm sure many of you. Have been following the news lately. With what happened. In New Zealand. And the devastating effects.

[32 : 33] Of that earthquake. And I don't want to take anything away. From the awfulness of that disaster. With the loss of lives. And homes. And families. Being torn apart.

But I couldn't get away. From what the Prime Minister. Of New Zealand said. When he was being interviewed. He said. We must build Christ Church again. We must build Christ Church again.

And in a sense. That's exactly what we must do. Build Christ Church again. Continue to labor.

Upon the foundations. The foundations. That are sure and steadfast. Praying that the Lord. Would aid our efforts. To all. All to his glory.

For even as we sang. In our opening psalm. That except the Lord. Do build the house. The builders lose their pain. Except the Lord. The city keep. The watchmen.

[33 : 32] Watch in vain. The harvest. Is plenteous. The laborers. Are few. To pray ye therefore. To the Lord of the harvest. To send forth.

Laborers. Into his harvest. Woe unto me. If I preach not the gospel. For we preach not ourselves. But Christ crucified.

But if our gospel be hid. It is hid. It is hid to them. That are lost. It is hid to them.

That are lost. Amen. Let us pray. O Lord our God. We bless thee. For thy word.

That it always challenges. Thy people. And may thy word. Not be left in this place. This day. But may we take it. In our hearts. And truly go with the gospel.

[34 : 32] To go with this great message. Of our Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ. O bless us. We pray thee. In the day that lies ahead. This Sabbath day.

May we rest in the Lord. And wait patiently upon thee. Bless us Lord. And do us good. In Jesus name. We ask it all. Amen.