



Sunday, May 23, 2021

Rev. Jeffrey W. Campbell, Youth Minister

“Examining the Harvest”

Matthew 9:35-38

(King James Version)

Good morning! I’ve had several people say to me “I’ve come expecting something!” Psalm 5:3 says “My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee and will look up.” Expect that God will hear, answer, and move when we talk and pray to Him.

In Acts 18:9-10 we read: “⁹Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, **Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace:** ¹⁰**For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.**” Here is your challenge: First, look at yourself; second, turn your eyes away from yourself and look to the city and the harvest. So many times in our spiritual walk we’re worried about me, me, me—God, what can you do for me? This is not a sales pitch, not bargaining with God but what can you do for God. It means taking the focus off self and looking at the fields ready for harvest. From this passage, God only left Paul there for one-and-a-half years. One of the hardest questions I ever had to answer was when I interviewed for the Youth Pastor position here; I was a young twenty-something. The committee asked me “Where do you see yourself in five years?” They were looking for a commitment that I would be here for more than a year or two if they chose me. Thirteen years later, I’m still here! Sometimes I’ve felt like I’ve been spinning my wheels and not going anywhere. Perhaps some of you feel like that in your spiritual walk; you’ve been here two, three, fifty years and ponder—what have I done? That question challenged me to look ahead and look out at what God has planned. I don’t know what tomorrow will bring. As long as God will allow me, I’m going to be here, serve here, and serve beside you! I don’t want to be the only one serving. I hope this church knows I’m more than a Youth Pastor; I want to be a co-laborer with you in the field of harvest.

Today, are you ready for a challenge? Because God has challenged with these four verses from Matthew today, I’m asking everyone to stand, if you’re able. We’re going to read a very holy calling for every one of our lives, and in reverence and thanksgiving to God, we stand. “³⁵And 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. ³⁶But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. ³⁷Then saith he unto his disciples, **The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few;** ³⁸**Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.**” Let us Pray: Father God, as we read Your holy word today press upon our hearts the need outside these doors. The harvest is ready and waiting on every person to put their hands to the plow. My God, I call You to stir our spirits and move through your Holy Spirit in our lives that will call us into the work of the harvest. Bless us now as we look to Your word and Your leading in all things. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

I’m going to give you five points from today’s passage. **(1)** From verse 35, the example is Jesus. The primary example of your spiritual life should be Jesus. Understand this, the measuring stick is not a pastor

or a person—it's God Himself. When I compare myself to the measuring stick, I fall short. I could stand here and tell you all the things I've done but also all the things I have not done. When comparing myself to Jesus, I fall short. Jesus was always about His Father's business. In verse 35 are three primary ways Jesus ministered: Teaching, preaching, healing. You may say Pastor Jeffrey I don't teach, preach, or heal—what is there for me to do? Oh, there's work to be done! Are you always about your Father's business? Are you trying to see what church can do for you? So many people come in church Sunday mornings and want that “feel good” feeling. God is more than a feeling! He wants to lead your life, and He's the measuring stick on which we should look to see how we're doing. Every day His measuring stick makes me push myself harder and makes me get better. My prayer today as we see Jesus' example as He teaches, preaches, and heals is that we'll go into the cities, villages, and synagogues and be ready at any opportunity to give an account for Christ. Your synagogue could be your work place; that happens to be my biggest mission field. Do you see yourself there where Jesus is calling? You're never too old or too young to work in the mission field. Amen?! When Christ resides in your heart, there should be a passion and compassion for the mission field. Understand the healings Jesus did that are mentioned in Matthew 9—a paralyzed man, Jairus' daughter, a woman with an issue of blood, two blind men, and a man possessed by demons. I could ask all of you in this sanctuary today about the healings Jesus has done in your lives. That is a testimony for your Lord.

(2) From verse 36. The harvest is lost; this is not judgmental—I mean this in love. The majority of the world outside of Christ is lost and see it slowing down as Jesus surveys the thousands of people going about their normal day. He understands they need Him...“he was moved with compassion on them...” This was a one hundred percent human feeling. When you see and know the harvest is lost, does that stir compassion, love, and a need for Jesus in your soul? When you think about people, they were being misled by the religious leaders of the day who said Jesus is not the Messiah. Caution, if someone misleads you—be careful. As we understand and know the harvest is lost, it puts a feeling in our hearts and minds that we must go—“I must be the one.” I look at my family and how blessed beyond measure I am. Even in my good family, Jesus is needed. I look at my job; I'm surrounded by good people but even there, God is needed. Here is Jeffrey's thought: If I don't tell them, who will? Jesus sees these people with compassion, and I believe it is with that same feeling He walks willingly to the cross on Cavalry's hill. It was that compassion that He laid down His life. I, Jeffrey, was once a sheep lost and scattered. I'm thankful for the people who came, served, said yes, and taught my Sunday School which led me to the Lord. The harvest is lost—does that stir compassion in you or concern you? My prayer is that it does.

(3) From verse 37. Jesus says to His disciples and the people surrounding that the harvest is ready for you to get to work. The Lord is saying “are you ready?” The harvest is ready, but you must be ready to go. Is there anyone here today who knows what a “zerk” is? A couple of folks know. If I told you a zerk is important to the harvest, you may or may not believe me. Growing up and being around my grandparents' farm, I was often asked to look for a zerk when it was time to cut hay. A zerk is a little grease fitting on a tractor or other equipment. Without greasing it and maintaining it, the harvest could be jeopardized. My grandfather told me to find all of them—don't miss one. So, are you ready for the harvest? Jesus says it's ready, and outside these doors it is ready. Are you primed, “greased up,” and prepared to share with the Gospel with the world that waits? Many people ask “what can church do for me?” They care about their

own needs instead of others. I'm guilty of this; I live my life by a calendar. If something's not on there, it doesn't exist! I have to be careful—Christ never lived by a calendar. He went wherever God led Him and ministered to those people. My challenge to you today is open up space in your calendars for people who need you. Certainly, your parents, children, and family need you. Your job needs you. But listen, your church needs you! It needs you more than Sunday morning at 11 a.m. or Wednesday night. The church needs you more than one hour a week, not because Pastor Jeffrey says so, but because the harvest is ready. If I'm not ready, if I'm not getting fed, and not a part of it I'm no good to the harvest. I feel so many Sundays and Wednesday nights I get greased and ready to go to the harvest. The harvest is plentiful and ready—are you?

(4) The rest of verse 37 concerns the “laborers are few.” Harvest day should be a day of celebration—thankful for what God has done and we're ready to bring in the harvest. I looked at my cherry tree this week and said that's ready—I just have to get to it before the birds! What ruins a harvest celebration? When you're looking at the harvest, and you can't get it to the barn. You know it's ready, but you can't get it to where it needs to be. When we look at the harvest and the people who need Christ, one of the greatest joys would be people come and receive Him and be excited and thankful for what He's done. But we're moving towards a way that leaves the harvest alone. You'll find an announcement in today's bulletin that says “We Need You.” I believe every person in the church should serve on the Nominating Committee one time. I believe when someone joins the church their name should go on that Committee. They have to beg, beg, beg, make phone call after phone call for the work of the church. In an ideal world, people would be lined up saying “Where do you need me; here's what I can do and what I'm gifted at.” If I asked you here today if you want to the hands and feet of Jesus, I almost bet every hand would be raised. Then the call comes, we need you to meet here or be there—oh sorry, my schedule, job, family, etc. won't allow me. Then the church is left with twenty percent who say yes to everything. The Bible says the laborers were few in Jesus' day, and there are few today. Will you be one of the few? Will you be one of the few who says “Yes, I'll serve You Lord. Put me where I'm needed so I can be about the work of the Lord.”

(5) From verse 38. The call now is to pray for the harvest and pray for compassion. Here's how I work: I'll ask you to help one time, and then I'll go do it myself. I'm not begging anyone to serve with me in serving the Lord. I want to work hand-in-hand with you! I'll ask you one time; if you neglect me, I'm going on my own. You can give me a schedule and excuses, but God doesn't buy your excuse when the harvest is ready! Pray for compassion. Pray for the eyes to see the harvest. When you look at your co-workers, your family, and others in their daily actions, pray for God to give you the eyes to see the need. Pray for people to interact in your path. I do that—Lord, put people in my path who need you. As you pray for the harvest, be very careful because here's what God wants to do: He wants to send you. Pray, knowing that God is calling you to serve and He will use you. The challenge today is The Harvest Is Ready. When you leave through these doors and go into the world, note there a few words printed near the ceiling: “You Are Now Entering the Mission Field.” Friends, today, pray for the harvest and pray God will use you in that harvest. This is not a plea for new members, not a plea for come join my church—it's a plea to join me in the work of the Lord.

Often, I give my teenagers homework—here’s yours! Read Matthew 10—today! What you will find is this: Jesus meets with His disciples and begins to send them out. He calls them to do the same thing He did—teach, preach, heal. He gave them the power to do all three. You’ll see that in verses 6-8. In verse 14, you’ll read that not all people will accept what you say. “If they don’t receive it, knock the dust off and keep on moving.” Verse 16 says you’ll be sent as sheep among wolves. In verse 18 God will give you an opportunity to testify to Jesus. Verse 22 says you’ll be hated because you stand for Him. In verse 28 don’t fear what kills the body but what kills the soul. Verse 38 says he who doesn’t take the cross and follow is not worthy. Verse 42 says a simple cold cup of water in the name of Jesus will minister to the harvest.

In closing, the harvest needs the Living Water. If you’re a believer, you have what the world needs. The very act of offering a cup of water in His name can change somebody’s life. The harvest is ready. How will you minister, serve, work for it? Two types of needs are represented here today: (1) If you’re here and Jesus lives in your heart, you need to be a laborer. You need to be working for Him. (2) The need to be harvested. As you think about your spiritual walk, where does your need lie? You may say, Pastor Jeffrey, “I’m saved and have a relationship with Christ.” Praise God! But that’s just one baby step, just the first step of what He wants to do in your life. There’s a need for laborers. Clifford Baptist Church—I ask you today how will you answer that call?

If you do not know Christ as your Savior, think of His compassion in going to the cross with you in mind, with me in mind. He went there to forgive sin, to develop a relationship with each of us. If there’s a need for salvation, my urgent plea is you come. For my church family during this invitation: Don’t center on self; center on the harvest. As you stand, sing, and pray maybe God will lead you to kneel at this altar and ask Him “How can You use me?” I still don’t know how God is going to use me. Am I going to be a sixty-year-old Youth Pastor? I have no idea, but if I do I hope I’m a cool sixty-year-old Youth Pastor!! If you don’t have it all figured out, lay it down and say “God, here I am, send me, use me.”

Let Us Pray: Father God, in this moment of invitation and where we look at ourself against the measuring stick we understand the need. The need is for the harvest; the need is not about ourself. We want people to come and know before it’s too late and watch them die from a comfortable pew. God, give us the compassion for the harvest. If there’s someone today who will come to You in a spiritual way and say “God, I want to work” I pray You will honor that commitment. I pray, Lord, for that one who doesn’t know how and where he or she can serve. Give them a clear picture. I pray for the harvest knowing that today, You’re going to use me and send me. I pray that’s the prayer of our church. I pray for the one who needs You today and steps out in faith that You will begin that relationship. In Christ’s name, Amen.