

HIS HARVEST

MATTHEW 9:35-38

Text: Matt 9:38

Introduction:

The *Barna Research Group* has been involved in gathering and analyzing information concerning the church since 1984. Many of their findings are startling and eye-opening. They have found *that 33% of Americans are unchurched; they have no church affiliation whatsoever.* While it found that *20% of those who have church membership believe that living a good life will gain them a place in heaven.* Given those two statistics alone, that tells us that *53% of Americans are lost and on their way to hell.* This does not take into account the people who are atheists, or are involved in occult forms of worship. Over half of everyone you run into is lost. And it is a growing population. More and more people each year are added to this category. And if we were to throw all the false professors that do go to church into the mix it would probably be *75% or possibly much higher,* which, by the way, is the percentage Jesus referred to in the parable of the soils.

As Jesus looked at the multitudes around Him, He was moved with compassion for them. This word literally means *“to be moved in the heart.”* He saw the reality of

the need of the people all around Him. He saw them as they were and He sought to share this insight with His disciples. He still wants to share this insight with you and me this evening! He wants us to see the plight of humanity as He does. He wants us to see people as they really are. He wants us to be moved in the heart just as He was. He wants us to be able to see the harvest through His eyes.

1. HE SAW THE PITY OF THE HARVEST (VS. 36)

Matthew 9:36

³⁶ 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.

When Jesus looked at the lost people around Him, He saw them as they really were. He was able to look beyond the facades of self-sufficiency, self-righteousness and self-confidence. He saw the pain, the loneliness and the misery they felt in their hearts!

Jesus saw a people who “*fainted*”, that is “*grew weary*” under the load of their sins and the unrealistic expectations forced upon them by their religious leaders.

He saw a people who were “*scattered*”. Literally, “*to be cast down or thrown out.*” People who were wandering aimlessly through life with no direction and planned

destination, people who lived life with no shepherd for their souls.

He saw a people who were utterly and hopelessly lost.

2. HE SAW THE POTENTIAL OF THE HARVEST (vs. 37)

Matthew 9:37

³⁷ Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few;

Jesus looked at the crowds around Him and He saw a “*plentiful*” harvest. I am sure all the disciples saw were people pushing and shoving to get close to the Lord.

But, Jesus saw more! He saw men who needed to be saved by grace. He saw a harvest that was ripe for the picking! He looked beyond their condition and their destination and He saw a people that could be delivered, changed and saved!

He did not see the problems, only the potential!

Do we see people as they are, or do we see them as the Lord could make them if they came to Him?

3. HE SAW THE PROBLEM OF THE HARVEST (vs. 37)

Matthew 9:37

³⁷ Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few;

As Jesus looked at the harvest, He acknowledged that fact that it was plentiful and that it was pitiful. But as He saw lost men all around, He also recognized a problem: *there were few laborers working in the Father's field!*

Those of you who farm know that the harvest doesn't just gather itself. You've got to get out there, get down where it is and do the dirty work of harvesting it.

Wouldn't it be nice if the green beans picked themselves and piled themselves on your porch? What if the okra, the squash and the corn plucked themselves and came to where you were?

Well, it doesn't work like that! To harvest you garden, you have to go to where the harvest is. The same is true in bringing men to Jesus.

We can sit in the church, but we won't see a harvest until we go where the lost men are living.

4. HE SAW THE POWER OF THE HARVEST (vs. 38)

Matthew 9:38

³⁸ Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

As Jesus spoke about the harvest and the needs associated with it, He told His men what to do first:
Pray!

Why pray?

Because seeing the harvest brought into the barn is God's work! He must till the soil of the heart.

He must water the seed of the Word that is planted and He must cast the sunshine of grace upon the lost heart, or there will never be a harvest!

You see, the new birth is a miracle! It is the work of God in a human heart!

Only He can do it and we must pray over the harvest.

Notice that Jesus told them to pray that the Lord of the harvest (God) would send forth laborers into the harvest. As we develop a burden for the lost and begin to pray for them as we should, the Lord will develop a compassion for them within our own heart. If we pray as we should, the Lord will work within us so that a

desire will be born within us to go into the field and work for the harvest.

Isaiah 6:1-9

¹ In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. ⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. ⁶ Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: ⁷ And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. ⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me. ⁹ And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Close:

I close with a record of something God did 130 years ago in New York City.

It illustrates how God has started every harvest time in history, through the concerted prayer of his people.

Toward the middle of the last century the glow of earlier religious awakenings had faded. America was

prosperous and felt little need to call on God.

But in the 1850s ... Secular and religious conditions combined to bring about a crash. The third great panic in American history swept the giddy structure of speculative wealth away.

Thousands of merchants were forced to the wall as banks failed, and railroads went into bankruptcy.

Factories were shut down and vast numbers thrown out of employment. New York City alone had 30,000 unemployed, idle men.

In October 1857, the hearts of people were thoroughly weaned from speculation and uncertain gain, while hunger and despair stared them in the face.

On 1st July, 1857, a quiet and zealous businessman named Jeremiah Lanphier took up an appointment as a City Missionary in downtown New York.

Lanphier was appointed by the North Church of the Dutch Reformed denomination. This church was suffering from depletion of membership due to the removal of the population from the downtown to the better residential quarters, and the new City Missionary was engaged to make diligent visitation in the immediate neighborhood with a view to enlisting church attendance among the floating population of

the lower city. The church felt that it had appointed an ideal layman for the task in hand, and so it was.

Burdened so by the need, Jeremiah Lanphier decided to invite others to join him in a noonday prayer meeting, to be held on Wednesdays once a week.

At twelve noon, September 23rd, 1857 the door was opened and the faithful Lanphier took his seat to await the response to his invitation Five minutes went by. No one appeared. The missionary paced the room in a conflict of fear and faith. Ten minutes elapsed. Still no one came. Fifteen minutes passed. Lanphier was yet alone. Twenty minutes; twenty-five; thirty; and then at 12.30 p.m., a step was heard on the stairs, and the first person appeared, then another, and another, and another, until six people were present and the prayer meeting began. On the following Wednesday, October 7th, there were forty present for prayer.

Thus in the first week of October 1857, it was decided to hold a meeting daily instead of weekly.

Within six months, ten thousand business men were gathering daily for prayer in New York, and within two years, a million converts were added to the American churches.

Undoubtedly the greatest revival in New York's colorful history was sweeping the city, and it was of such an

order to make the whole nation curious. There was no fanaticism, no hysteria, simply an incredible movement of the people to pray.

Before it was over, 1 out of every 5 persons in America had been saved by the grace of God!

That is what God can do when people begin to see the harvest through His eyes.

Can you see?

God help us to get a vision of what He can do!