

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Reaching People

PART

1

TITLE

Seeing People

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 9:35-38



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So part of what it means to be alive and to be human is to experience weakness. And one of the weaknesses that we all share is that when we perceive an excess or surplus of something, we fail to see it. We assume, but instead of see. And so, people around the world who live in places where there's a perceived surplus of things such as clean water to drink, or food to eat, or opportunities, or wealth, it's interesting is the way if you experience that and you perceive you have that surplus, you begin to assume those things instead of seeing those things.

There are places in the world when they turn that tap on, they wonder if clean water is going to come out. And so they look, they don't assume. There are homes in the world where people have two pieces of food left in the entire house. And so, it's only natural, instead of assuming where all the food is, to see that food because it's limited. If we see that there's an enormous surplus, what happens is we begin to not be able to see, which is why each one of us in 2020 looked at the aisle that contains toilet paper in ways that we've never looked at that aisle before in our whole life. Up until that time, we always assumed that it was going to be there. But now all of a sudden, there was not a perceived surplus.

And the same can be true of people. You see, when there's hundreds of people in the room, right now, there's thousands of people in our city. There's millions of people in our state. There's billions of people in the world. It's really easy in the perception of surplus not to be able to see those people. And this is really significant and it creates an enormous problem, in particular for those of us who are followers of Jesus Christ, who have received a commission to go and make disciples, because Jesus told us to follow his examples specifically and extending ourselves if necessary to the point of discomfort in order to reach people, but this we know, we simply will not be able to reach people that we fail to see.

Many of us in the room right now, we know what it feels like to be unseen. Some of us, even though there's all these people, and maybe somebody even looked at you, they looked towards your way, maybe you feel totally unseen. That maybe loneliness is prevailing in your life. You come into groups like this and you leave groups like this, and you think, "Nobody actually saw me." It's difficult to live a life that's unseen. And yet, inherent to every single one of us is all the ingredients that's necessary not to see people.

And so, if you have a Bible, if you want to look with me to Matthew chapter nine. We're going to start a series today. It's simply called Reaching People. What we want to do is to look at how Jesus reached people, is to look at what was his example of how he won people's heart, how he gained trust, how he shared the truth of his kingdom and of the gospel, and what he had done for them and how he won their trust eventually, to where people like you and I, for those of us who are followers of Christ, we've trusted him. How did he reach us? That's what we want to look at.

Before we look at his words, we want to ask him to help us look at his words, okay? So would you pray with me? Father in heaven, as we come to your word, we deeply need to hear from you. And I ask that you would speak through weakness and that you would pour your spirit out upon us, that we would be most impressed

with Christ as we walk out of this room. I pray for those who are here, who do not feel like anyone sees them, that you would remind them and show them maybe for the first time, that you see them through and through, that you love them. But God, would you move in their life in such a way to alleviate that feeling maybe in someone else. So we look to you in faith and we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

So Matthew chapter nine, if you have a Bible. This is what he says, starting at verse 35. He says, “Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”

Now, Matthew, as a gospel, this first book of the New Testament of the Bible, it is pertinent to every single person in the world, but its original readers were Jewish people. Matthew was writing his own countrymen in order to prove to them by use of the Old Testament, that Jesus, that’s his name, that was his human name. I’m Brian. My parents gave me the name Brian. They gave his name Jesus. That means savior, that he was the Christ and Christ wasn’t his last name. Christ was his title. Christ means Messiah or Promised One.

In other words, what Matthew is trying to do is to say to people who have been looking and reading the Old Testament, their Bible, literally for hundreds and thousands of years, who’ve been waiting for the one that the Old Testament says is coming, who will restore us back into a right relationship with God, Matthew is saying, “Jesus is the Christ.” And he’s trying to prove it in what he’s writing. And so, we have all these clues in the Old Testament about where he would be born and some of the nature about who he would be.

And so, if you have ever looked at Matthew, you find when you just begin, is there’s a genealogy. He wants to show us the ancestry of Jesus and the reason is because the Old Testament says that this Christ would come from the line of and tribe of Judah. And he would be a son of David. And so, in chapter one, he shows us; this is precisely what Jesus was and what he did.

Then all of a sudden, you get to his arrival, his birth on the Earth. And there, he actually quotes two different places. He says, “Just like Micah said, ‘He would be born in Bethlehem,’ Jesus was born in Bethlehem. And just like Isaiah said that he would be born of a Virgin. Mary was a Virgin.” These are the realities of what he’s seeking to do. And so, he keeps moving and he says, “And in the Old Testament, there is a man who is supposed to come before the man. His name was John the Baptist.” And so, we find in Matthew’s gospel, it says that John came in order to prepare the way for the Christ who would be coming. And so, he introduces us to John the Baptist, who happens to be one of Jesus’ cousin.

And then all of a sudden, we get to a place, to where the Old Testament says in Psalm chapter two, that there would be divine affirmation, that there would be divine approval given over this one, to say, “This is God.

This is my son.” And so we have an account of his baptism, where as he’s baptized, there was a voice that was born from heaven. It says, “This is my son with whom I’m well pleased.” The Old Testament said that Christ would be sinless, that he would be tempted just as you and I are. And yet, he would never give way. And therefore, he would be, and live a life of perfect righteousness.

And so, in Matthew chapter four, we find that Jesus is tempted. And yet, he prevails over that temptation. And there’s no sin in his life. Well, then you get up to the first of two bookends, okay? It’s in Matthew chapter four and it’s in verse 23. And this is what it says there, it says that, “Jesus went throughout all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.”

Now, that may sound familiar. If it does, it’s because you were listening when I read the passage to you. Because in Matthew chapter nine, if you notice what it says in verse 35, “He went throughout,” instead of all Galilee, the second bookend, it says he went through all the cities and villages and then he says the exact same three things of what he did; he taught in the synagogues, he proclaimed the kingdom and he healed people. And so, what we have here, this is really important, after these signs that attest to the fact that Jesus is the promised Christ, he says... Now, this is what he did.

And he gives us two bookends. And in between those two bookend, he says he’s teaching, he’s proclaiming and he’s healing. Guess what Matthew chapter five through Matthew chapter nine is all about; the first three chapters are the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus is teaching, he’s proclaiming, he’s explaining the Old Testament. He’s explaining who he is. He’s explaining that there’s a kingdom who’s coming and we have to repent in order to join that kingdom, to be sons and daughters of the king. And not only that, then there’s two more chapters; Matthew eight and Matthew nine, where he simply gives us all of these examples of how Jesus is healing people of their different infirmities and afflictions.

In other words, what’s happening here is he’s saying, “This is the embodiment. This is the scope of his ministry. He had power in his words. He had power in his hands. He had authority in everything that he did.” And then, what he says to us here though is really important. He said, “No, if you and I were to be in Galilee or in these villages and cities, we could’ve expected to have seen one of three things.” He says, “The first thing that he did, if we would’ve been observing his life,” he says that we would be hearing him teach in the synagogues.

Now the word synagogue, it simply means gathering place, assembly hall, where people would gather three times a week in order to worship, open the Bible and read and have somebody explain it to them. And for years, and years, and years, and years, decades, and centuries, the temple was that centralized gathering place. But in 586 BC Israel was overrun and they went into exile and they were scattered and dispersed all over the place and therefore that centralized gathering place, the temple, it actually moved to the place to where all these Jewish people, wherever they were scattered, they built these synagogues, these decentralized gathering places wherever people were at.

And one of the central features that was very prevalent, not only in Jesus' days, but even in Paul's days, is that any traveling rabbi, if they arrived on the day when people would come and gather, is that they would be given the opportunity to read and to explain what the Bible said. And Jesus took full advantage of this in a good way, so did Paul. I don't know if you remember that Paul, it says that all through Acts, he would head to the city, he'd go to the synagogue. It's because he was a traveling teacher.

Well, Jesus, he did this. He taught in the synagogues. And it's interesting that when he talks about teaching in the synagogues, what he's doing is he's teaching the Old Testament specifically. And so, what he's doing is he's reaching back and he's saying, "You see the things that have been said, and I want you to know that they've been fulfilled in me." That's what he kept doing. And so in Luke chapter four, if you remember, Jesus goes into his own hometown, he goes to the synagogue and it's time for someone to read Isaiah 61. There was a lectionary that actually told people what to read each time that they gathered. And that day, it just so happened to be Isaiah 61. And Isaiah's 61 is an Old Testament description of the ministry of the Christ, what he would do, what he would be like.

Jesus stands up and he reads Isaiah 61. He sits down, because rabbis taught from sitting down. Everyone else would stand up. It's the opposite of this. You work, I get to rest, opposite now. You sit, I talk or I stand. He sits down and it says that everybody has their eyes peeled. Like, "What is he going to say about this?" And what does he say? He said "Today, this passage has been fulfilled in your midst. I am he." And so, when it says teaching in the synagogue, he's looking backwards. And he's saying that, "Everything that God has done, the fulfillment is in me."

Well, the second thing that we would've seen him do is actually moving forward. And that is that he claim the gospel of the kingdom. He didn't do this in the synagogue. He did this on beaches and in boats and mountains, and he did it in homes and wherever he gathered. He would talk about the coming kingdom, his coming kingdom, that it was at hand and that we had to repent of our sin and our belief that we could save ourself. And if we did, and we believed in him, the king, then we would become citizens of that kingdom.

And one of the ways he loved to do this was talk about parables. A parable was a story with intent. It was the story that sort of generated intrigue in the hearts of people. But then, there was a spiritual purpose. And so, most of his parables, they began, "The kingdom of heaven is like a net. The kingdom of heaven is like a pearl of great price. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure that's hidden in a field. The kingdom of heaven is like a banquet that's prepared for all, but very few came." The kingdom of heaven. And so, he opened his mouth and he taught.

But the third thing that we would've seen him do is heal. Healing every disease in order to show his love for people, his authority, his power, but also the coming restoration of his kingdom. You see, one of the things that miracles were intended to do is not simply to suspend the natural laws.

The purpose of the miracles is to point to the day when all natural laws would be restored. In other words, where everybody's eyes worked, where there's no sickness, that there was no sin, that there was no binding over us of evil. And so, these miracles, they were intended to display tremendous personal love for people. They're intended to verify his own authority and power over all things. But they're also meant to say, "This kingdom that I'm talking about, it's not just this kingdom that's impersonal to you. It's going to change you forever." So you can imagine how many people wanted to gather in order to experience and see, and hear what Jesus was doing.

Well, this passage, our passage, these four little verses, they actually come at a part of Matthew that serves as a transition in the book. The first nine chapters is what I just described, proves that he is the Christ, him teaching and him doing miracles.

But then notice what happens in chapter 10. He says now, "This is my ministry, but now I'm sending you out as my disciples with authority and power, in order for you to be able to go and reach people. In order for you to be able to talk about the kingdom that I've talked about." And he gave them even remarkable power to be able to do things such as heal and cast out demons.

It's a remarkable thing what he does, but this is the point, in these few verses, what Matthew does is he shows us what are some of just the introductory principles that are critical for each one of us as we seek to fulfill the commission, to reach people for Christ. In other words, over the next four weeks, we're simply going to look at different things that Jesus did in order to reach people, but all the things Jesus did to reach people, they all began with the two things I want to show you today.

The first is this; reaching people requires that we see people. I know that seems totally unimportant, inconsequential, maybe even a little tedious, "Of course, we have to see people." The problem is we don't. And so, we should talk about it. It is not tedious. You see in verse 36, it says, "When he saw the crowds..." This is more significant than you and I are ever going to understand, unless you happen to be one, just like Hagar, who feels unseen. And when God comes and he moves in your life and you say, "He is a God who sees me." We all want to be seen and we all want God to see. And what we find here is that Jesus sees, he sees, he sees you, he sees me.

You see, one of the most remarkable things, if you ever just read through the gospels, just pay attention to this. Most of us, we just read right over like we don't ever even see it. But nearly all stories of Jesus, they begin with, "He saw a man. He saw a woman." This is what we find throughout the life of Jesus Christ in his ministry. His disciples kept looking into Jesus' eyes, but they didn't stop there. They kept tracing his eyes to what he was looking at.

In other words, if I spent this entire sermon and I kept looking right over here and gasping and ooohing and awing, eventually you would be thinking, "I wonder what he's looking at." And you would begin, even though

right now you may be looking into my eyes or on that video screen of my eyes, you would start to think, “I wonder what he’s looking at over there.” And this is precisely what the disciples do over and over and over again, is while they’re recording what they saw Jesus do, his life, his death, his resurrection, how he treated people, they kept recording what Jesus was looking at. They kept saying, “What’s he seeing right now that’s moving him to behave this way?”

Let me give you just a few examples of this. In Matthew 9:9, we find that there’s this paralyzed man who’s healed. And so, there is this fury, there’s all this energy. Everyone’s so excited that they’ve seen a paralyzed man actually stand up and walk. And all of a sudden, it says that there’s this man, his name is Matthew. He’s a tax collector. He’s over by his booth. No one ever wants to look at him because he steals from the people in a legalized way. He gets to rip people off. No one wanted to see him. Jesus could have not seen him. And yet, what we’re told is this, it says that as he passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth.

Now, I want you to think about this. Had Jesus not seen him, he wouldn’t have gone over to him. Had he not gone over to him, he wouldn’t have said, “Follow me.” Had he not said, follow me, he wouldn’t gone over to his house to eat lunch. And had he not, we wouldn’t to have a gospel named Matthew, same guy. Why? It’s because Jesus saw him.

You move on, and what we find is that Jesus, he hears news that John the Baptist, his cousin, had lost his head, not got discouraged, but was murdered. And his heart is so sorrowful. And so, it says that he wanted to withdraw to a desolate place, just to be able to grieve and pray and be quiet, just to get away from all the people. And guess what happens? He gets there. And when he went ashore, he saw a great crowd and he had compassion on them.

Fast forward a little bit more. And he walks upon a man. And there’s a man who’s been crippled for 38 years. No one never sees him anymore because he’s been there for 38 years. Jesus sees him and it says that he saw him lying there and he had compassion on him. He says he saw him lying there and he knew that he had already been there a long time.

Five days before Jesus went to the cross, he entered Jerusalem. And Luke 19 says that he drew near and he saw the city. He stopped. All of his disciples, they looked back, “What are you looking at? Oh, he’s looking at the city.” And what happens? He says he begins to cry.

He’s like, “Oh, he must really like the bricks, the mortar.” No. Then he tells us why he’s so moved. He begins talking and he says, “Would you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace.” What he’s saying is this, “I’m about to go into a city of people who reject me, is the only provision that God has given in order to reconcile them. They do not know what makes with peace with God, because if they did, they would trust me, but they’re about to kill me. They’re about to crucify me because they don’t believe in me.”



He gets on the cross.

One of the most remarkable things, there's a man named John. He writes the fourth gospel. His name is John. And John was one of his disciples in the garden who flees, just like all the other disciples. And yet to his everlasting credit, he returns and he's standing at the foot of the cross. And he is near Mary, Jesus' mother. And they were told that John is looking up at the cross at Jesus. And he looks into his eyes and he notices that Jesus is looking at something. And so, he traces his eyes and he looks, and he sees his mom. He sees Jesus seeing his mom. And then suddenly, while he's still looking in Jesus' eyes, Jesus' eyes shift a little bit. And now, all of a sudden he sees Jesus looking at him. He remembers that. And, "The disciple whom he loved." He's talking about himself. He remembers. Just imagine that moment. You looking at the crucified Christ while he is on the cross looking at you. His eyes staring right at you. And then he says, "I want you to take care of my mom."

Jesus tells a parable in Luke 15. It's one of the most well known parables. We're going to look at it next week. The content of the parable is basically, if I can summarize it this way, it's Jesus saying, "Let me tell you what it's like to be God in a relationship with man." He says, "There was a dad. He had two sons, and one of his sons comes to him." This is a paraphrase by the way. And he says, "Dad, I wish you were dead, but you're not dead so let's just act like you are. Give me my inheritance so that I can go and enjoy it without you." And so, he receives his inheritance. He goes off and he squanders all of it, and you think, "Oh, that's terrible." And he comes to his own senses and he's overwhelmed with his own guilt and his grief and shame and he knows, "Can I go home? I probably can't but I must go home."

And so, he prepares a whole speech of what he's going to say. And in Jesus' parable, he select... This isn't a true story. This is a parable that talks about all of us. He could have picked anything he wanted as an ingredient in his story. And do you know what he said? He goes, "Let me tell you what it's like to be God when people repent and come home." He says, "While he was still a long way off, his Father saw him." Imagine, he put that in there. He could have said his father felt compassion, but he didn't. He said he saw him and felt compassion, "And ran and embraced him."

My point in all of this is so simple and it's this, is that Jesus never lost sight of what was eternally valuable. And people who develop a lifestyle of reaching people with the gospel on behalf of Jesus Christ. What you find in them is they live in a constant awareness that the only things that will remain in this life that will last and will go into the next life in heaven or hell are the word of God and the souls of man.

I know you're paying all kinds of attention to your house and to what's in your bank account or what you're accumulating. And I want you to know, none of it's going to last, none of it. The Bible says this, that all the stuff that we're accumulating, it's like grass that withers and falls. And he says, "But the word of God will remain forever." And not only that, he says that the souls of humanity, because we're creating the image of God, we're therefore eternal. We, our soul will live not only on earth, but it will live in the next world as well. If this was the case, just imagine for a moment how clarifying it would be to each one of us in how we lived



our life. If we had the ability to see the world in black and white, but the souls of man, just like these flowers, always appeared in blue.

This is what I mean. You walk in, different skin color, different clothes, different lights, there's all kinds of stuff happening in this room. There's motion, movements, everything, lots of things to distract us. But just imagine for a moment, if you blinked, open your eyes and the next time you open your eyes everything you saw was gray, except for the souls of man, and they appeared in blue. You blink again and it goes back to normal. How would that change?

You go to the fair, you go to the fair and someone hands you a turkey leg, and you enjoy it because the Bible says that God made everything and therefore we're supposed to enjoy it with Thanksgiving. But we blink and all of a sudden we open our eyes and everybody, everything at the fair, all of a sudden it's black and white. That turkey leg is black and white. And yet, the person who handed us that turkey leg and everybody else, we see them now in blue. How would that affect the way that we would begin seeing people and treating people differently? You think about your neighborhood. You think about your workplace, think about a ball game.

You go to the ball game, you see all these people. We care so much about those lights that give us numbers. That gives the score. What if instead of that, just from a moment we blinked and instead of looking at the score and having animosity in our heart, or fear in our heart, or happiness in our heart, or contentment in our heart, or whatever in our heart, all of a sudden we looked at all of those people and what we saw were souls. All the souls, they all appeared in a different color. Just for that moment, just for the sake of this illustration, just imagine the power that would have. What would happen if instead of seeing the externals like status and means and perceived goodness of other people, relative goodness, in comparison to other people, we saw souls, souls of people that were valuable in eternal and fearful, and waiting to stand account, stand in judgment and give account to God.

One of the greatest challenges that we have as people is we don't see people. We see the inconveniences that are associated with people. We see the burdens of our life, where other people are sort of scurrying about in our midst. And yet you look at all these people, and what we find from Jesus is this, is that we will not be able to reach people until we first are able to see them.

And that gets to the second thing I want you to see. And that is that reaching people requires that we feel compassion for people. The result of Jesus, when he saw people and he felt compassion, to me, is one of the most startling things in these verses. And for some of you, you think, "Well, we see this all the time." And he saw the crowds and he had compassion for them.

Some of your Bible translations, instead of the word had, it says felt. And that's because that's how you know what compassion is. You feel it. You say, "Well, why is this so startling to you?" And this is why. Compassion, we use the word compassion and we should because the alternative is a little embarrassing. The word

compassion, it literally means the movement of our bowels or intestines because of severe pity.

In other words, when something happens, we don't say, "Oh man, I was just like sick to my foot." Right? No. Why? Because it's this space right here. When the Bible uses a word to describe the initiator of emotion and relationship and motive, it's always the heart. The heart is always the initiator, "Love the Lord, your God with all your heart." And then he uses this space, our gut, the intestines, the bowls in order to describe the reactor, not the initiator, the reactor. It's that base of operations for the emotions. And the remarkable thing that we find here is that Jesus, the Son of God saw people and was so gripped by what he saw that this region of his physical body began to be gripped.

I hope you know this, so that when he sees you and you go through a difficult time, it's not just that he uses this word, oh, he has compassion for you. We think, "Oh, he taps us on the head." That's not what it means. It means that he sees the sorrow in your heart and he is gripped in his gut. He loves you that much. Now, why compassion?

A few reasons; first is because that's who he is. That's who he is. He is compassion. And if I looked at one of you and I said, "This person right here is a compassionate person." What we mean is this, is that there is this source of compassion. And this individual is displaying or reflecting what this is. This is not what we mean when the Bible talks about the attributes of Jesus. It's not that he's loving. He is love. It's not that he is compassionate, he is compassion.

When Jesus Christ took on flesh, compassion took on a body. Jesus came to the Earth and his compassion was amazing. There was a day that we actually are told in Luke chapter seven, where there's this widow who has one son, the son dies. The son is in the casket. They're carrying him to bury him. And when Jesus looks at this woman, it says, "When the Lord saw her, he had or felt compassion in his gut." He was moved right here with sorrow because of what he saw in her.

In Matthew 15, there's a huge crowd who hasn't eaten in a while. And he says, "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with now three days and have nothing to eat." There was an actual day in Matthew chapter 20 when they're walking out of a town called Jericho, and it says that there's two blind men who were sitting on the curb, and no one wanted them around. And yet, they're always there. Jesus was walking and there's this parade and there's all kinds of activity. It's all wonderful. And suddenly they go, "Hey, what's the noise? I hear something, but I can't see this. Oh, Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, he's walking by. And they start screaming, "Jesus, have mercy on us." And they're so irritated because they're ruining the great parade, that the people rebuked these two blind man.

And do you know what the Bible says? It says that Jesus walked over and in pity, in compassion, he touched their eyes to heal them. He is compassion and showed compassion and felt compassion. And the reason first of all, is because that's who he is. There's a second reason he felt compassion. And it's because of people's

present need. When he saw people, he had compassion. And the reason it says, because they were what? Harassed, helpless. They were beaten and thrown down like a sheep without a shepherd. Oh, they had shepherds, didn't they? Jesus called them hypocrites, whitewashed walls. He calls them people who neglected mercy, hirelings who cared nothing for the sheep, lovers of praise and greed.

And Jesus saw the people in this moment like sheep that were thrown down in this huddled state of fear, fragile and frightened and confused and lost, just like so many people are today. You look at the people, you look at those fair workers. Look at them through a different lens. Look at your coworkers and your neighbors through a different lens. Jesus says, "This is how I see them. Apart from a relationship with me, this is how I see them. They're literally beaten up and they're thrown down in a fetal position, insecure and fearful about tomorrow and for their kids' tomorrow." When Jesus, who is the great shepherd, sees us like sheep without a shepherd, he says, "This is why I have compassion, because I see just present need."

But then the last thing I want you to see, which is heavy, I admit, is he had compassion because of people's eternal crisis. He describes one last reality in verse 37, when he says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." And we say, "Well, what does that mean exactly?" And so, in Matthew chapter 13, if you want to follow, you can turn a few pages over, in verse 24, it's not on the screen, but I'll read it to you.

Jesus gives a little clarity and this is what he said, "Jesus put another parable before them saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also, and the servants of the master of the house came and said him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?'. And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servant said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?'. But he said, 'No, lest in the gathering the weeds, you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.'" There's our language. "And at harvest time, I will tell the reapers, 'Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

And if you're sitting here thinking, "What does that parable mean?" You're a great company. Verse 36 says, "And then he left the crowds and went into the house, and his disciples came to him saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' And he answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the son of man.'" That's him. "The field is the world. And the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest," here you go, "... is the end of the age and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The son of man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And then, the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let them hear."

Most don't want to hear. Most of us don't want to hear. Most of us don't want to talk about things like this, but the time is coming when all mankind will be divided between heaven and hell, not on the basis of their sin, because the Bible says that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We're all the same on that account. But on the basis of their faith response to God's provision and sending Jesus Christ to the Earth, what do people do with Christ? He came to this Earth. He lived without any sin. He died on a cross for our sin. He was buried in a grave. He rose from the dead. And then he said, "If you will put all of your trust in me and believe in me and admit that you cannot save yourself, I will forgive you of your sin. I will give you my righteousness and I will bring you into my kingdom of heaven." What do we do with that invitation is the mark that differentiates eternity in heaven or hell.

Jesus never lost sight of this, which is why he always saw people. And if we, as a congregation and as individual disciples, ever lose sight of this, then we will lose the fuel tank of missionary zeal and urgency. People must hear the gospel to believe it and be saved. So let me ask, if people gauge God's heart for people by looking at yours, would they be convinced that God loves and wants people to be saved? If people gauged God's heart for people by looking at our prayers, would they be absolutely convinced that God loves and wants people to be saved?

So let me close with just three applications for those that need something fresh, none of them begin with the word let's. First, we pray. Jesus said in response to everything that I'm saying this is what you must do, "Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest." You might say, "Well, if Jesus wants it done, why doesn't he do it? Why did he ask me to do what he wants? He's already told us what he wants to do. And the reason is because he's not only ordained the end, he's also ordained the means. And he's ordained that prayer is part of the means by which God moves in order to save people. And so, let me ask you to consider to do two things; would you come back tonight? At six o'clock we're going to pray for our heart. We're going to pray for compassion. We're going to pray for our church family. We're going to pray for laborers. That's what we're going to do tonight at six.

Whether you can come tonight or not, I want to ask you to do one other thing. I don't ask you to do stuff like this very often, but this is one that it's necessary. Would you fast one day this week, even if it's for one meal and would you pray every day this week that God would give you and us sight to see people, compassion in our heart and that he would send laborers? And it's not because fasting gets God's attention. No, the Bible says that fasting gets our attention. For when we miss a meal and suddenly we feel hungry, we think, "Why am I hungry? I need to eat something." You think, "Oh, wait a minute. I know why I'm hungry. It's because I'm praying for my heart, that it would grow in its sensitivity towards people who are far from the Lord." And so, would you pray?

Second, come. Each one of us, just like Jesus' crowd needs to come to Christ. Some of you can come to Christ today. You can admit your sin, your need. You can put your faith in Jesus Christ and confess to him as Lord. And you will become a son or daughter of the kingdom. He'll forgive you of your sin. Is there any reason why

he wouldn't come today?

And third is move. We need to be ready to be the answer to our prayers. It is disingenuous to pray for laborers and not expect that God would have us be one. It is disingenuous to pray, "Here I am, Lord, send him. Send him to my neighbor, to my coworker, or to that nation." Disciples move because Jesus moved. That's what happens when compassion wells up in our heart, it moves our feet towards need. So would you prepare to move.

What we want to do right now, I know this will be abrupt, but I want to give you a moment, right where you're sitting, to simply pray to the Lord about what you've just heard. (silence)

Father in heaven, as you have heard me pray all morning long, I again ask for a fresh supply of comfort and courage. Comfort because you know we don't like to hear these things. Comfort because it disturbs us to think about hell. It disturbs us to think about people that we know who don't know Christ. It disturbs us in so many different ways to think about personal need. And yet, if it's true, we need to hear it. And so, you tell us. Would you give us comfort in our heart? And then God, would you give us courage? Courage to pray, courage to place ourself in an open hand to say, "I'm ready to move, if you have me move." Courage to even come and put our faith and trust in you, to leave every other thing that we would be depending upon for hope and security in our future, and to place ourselves at your mercy, Jesus. Would you give us courage? And so Lord, we sing to you now and we do so with a full heart because you've made the kingdom available to us and we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.



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