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THE HARVESTER'S PLAN FOR WORLD EVANGELISM PART ONE

“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” (Matthew 9:36).

I want to have the same passion, burden, and vision that gripped my Seeking Savior. He saw the multitudes generally and individual faces specifically. As they scurried about their daily duties, disguised with smiles, He saw through all of that, to the very heart of the matter. He peered deep into their souls. They were confused, scattered, troubled, tired, distressed, hurting, helpless, hopeless, perishing, lost sheep needing someone to guide them into the protective fold. The verse closes with sad, convicting words: “having no shepherd.”

He saw: He considered their plight. He had a vision for their destiny. I want to see souls as Jesus sees them. He readily identified the spiritual needs of those He encountered.

He was moved: I want to be moved, stirred, and captivated by the very things that move, stir, and captivate the heart and mind of God.

His heart broke: I want my heart to be broken with the things that break the heart of God. Sounds simple but it is inevitably heart-wrenching.

He was moved with compassion: He felt what they felt. He had a deep awareness of their

suffering. He was interconnected with them. He took action to help. His bowels yearned. His compassion was birthed deep within. I want to feel compassion for the lost in two ways: from His point-of-view and from theirs. How long has it been since you put yourself in their place? Imagine the feelings of being lost, hopeless, or drowning. Surely, such compassion will lead to incite, inspire, and invigorate an enthusiastic, whole-hearted, genuine, lively, fiery, deep, passion. It's okay to get emotional about hurled, hungry humanity.

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Matthew 9:37).

We've heard that dozens of times. The harvest is plenteous. The laborers are few. Contained in those words is a gigantic opportunity: the big harvest. The problem is He needs workers. Because there are lots of lost and only a few seekers a strategy for world evangelism is paramount.

PRAY

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:38).

This is one of the only prayer requests Jesus ever gave. Pray for workers. Prayer positions and prepares us to receive or hear the call to the mission. Prayer plows through hardened hearts. He didn't tell us to go hunt laborers. The laborers are there. They are sitting on our pews and studying in our classrooms. They need to

be sent. We need only petition, beseech, beg, God to send them forth. But, beware! Prayer also softens one's own heart to hear the voice of God. Through prayer one gets closer to the heart of God, hears His heartbeat, feels the need, and becomes a prime candidate for the worker He wants to send.

Nehemiah faced similar situations in his day. The people were scattered, shamed, and in a serious snag. When he heard of and recognized their helpless condition he sat down and wept. He fasted and prayed. It wasn't a simple little onetime prayer. He prayed constantly day and night. He stormed heaven for something to be done. Heaven responded. Nehemiah was the answered prayer to his own heavenly appeal. He left the comfort zone of the king's palace with a burden for those scattered among the nations. He rebuilt the walls of strength and protection that had been ripped down. He refused to allow anyone or anything to stop him in accomplishing his vision. The Lord strengthened his hands for the good work.

A call into the ripened, abundant harvest is birthed in an atmosphere of prayer. It was in such an environment of corporate prayer and fasting, by the church at Antioch, that Barnabas and Saul were separated "for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). It was after they had "had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:3); and they were "sent forth by the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13:4)

As we present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, which is our reasonable service, we also make a commitment not to follow the pattern of this world. As He renews our mind in prayer, fasting, and study of His Word, we are able to discern and "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). In such a mode of prayer and sacrifice we are challenged to give our lives to the Lord much like a blank contract. We allow Him to fill in the details and to work out His will for us. Prayer also deepens our love for Jesus Christ as we spend time communicating with Him, and getting to know Him better. Andrew Murray in

his book *The Key to the Missionary Problem*, said that the lack of love for Jesus Christ was why the Church was failing to fulfill the Great Commission. In another book entitled *The Great Omission*, by Robert McQuilkin, he writes, "Let us give ourselves to prayer til He ignites us with the flame of His love and scatters us as firebrands throughout the darkness of a lost world." Loving God and keeping His commandments go hand-in-hand. Unfortunately everyday that the Church fails at mobilization, opportunities are lost, and the number of lost humanity grows larger.

God is looking for a few good men and women? Can He count you in? Can He send you forth? The question is not, is He calling? The question is many times, are you listening?

We are to pray that He will "send forth laborers into his harvest." Because it is "his harvest" you can be assured He is more than willing to do that. In checking the intention of the original Greek used in "send forth" it was enlightening to note that it refers to bring forth, drive out, expel, pull, take, thrust out, and put forth. The workers are there. They necessitate being expelled or forced free from what they are presently doing. They need to be motivated. We cannot hold them back. Sensitivity is needed. I want to have a sensitive spirit and a listening life. I don't want Him to recruit prayer warriors so that I will be expelled, driven, pulled, and thrust out of my comfort zone into a scattered world. I'll go wherever you want me to go, dear Lord!

Since we have reached the close of the chapter it is easy to assume that the topic is finished. Not really. First of all, chapter divisions did not appear in the original. They were added later by men to facilitate easy reading and understanding. Regardless of that, one chapter closes, but the next chapter picks up with the same topic and further expounds the harvester's plan for world evangelism. That will be the subject of our next *Global Connection* in the first quarter of 2012, Lord willing.