

# READY FOR THE HARVEST

## Scripture:

Matthew 9:35-10:1 *“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. <sup>36</sup>But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then He said to His disciples, **“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. <sup>38</sup>Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”** And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.”*

## Introduction:

Every Christian has a responsibility to the ministry of the gospel of the Kingdom. It's unfortunate that the majority of ministry is entrusted into the hands of a small percentage of the believers in any local church. This is a situation that breaks the Father's heart. Oftentimes we don't know what we can do or how we can make a difference. I heard it said that the best way we can make a difference in our world is “one person at a time”. That means that someone, you or I, or one of our friends is going to have to step up to the plate and see what can be done to reach the world with God's message of love. “Each one reach one should be our goal.

Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear full responsibility for the next one; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities.

-- Billy Graham.

Understanding that workers are needed, let's examine how we're going to find them. There's more to it than just saying that we all ought to get about this business of sharing Christ with those around us. Let's see what Christ had to say about this matter.

## I. Christ had compassion

- A. He saw that the people were without divine leadership, being harassed by the devil.
- B. The devil's main activity is to destroy the lives of people.

John 10:7-10 *“Then Jesus said to them again, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup>I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”**”*

- 1. Christ is here saying that there are people who are waiting in earnest to hear the voice of the Lord spoken.

A little girl was sent on an errand by her mother. She took much too long in coming back. Mother, therefore, demanded an explanation when she finally did return. The little girl explained that on her way she had met a little friend who was crying because she had broken her doll. "Oh," said the Mother, "then you stopped to help her fix her doll?" "Oh, no," replied the little girl. "I stopped to help her cry."

- 2. As the word of the Lord is shared, their lives take on meaning (find pasture) and release from that which oppresses them will take place.
- 3. The choice is before every person, life or death, blessing or cursing, but they must have ministry that they may make an intelligent choice.

A true story: A flight from Denver to Wichita was boarding. On an ambulance litter an attendant carried a 225-pound man as the last traveler to board. As they cradled him into a seat in front of us, it was evident he was totally paralyzed from his shoulders down. He was strapped in tightly, but as the pilot taxied to the runway the centrifugal force lunged him to the right causing him to fall toward the next seat. The stewardess again propped him up in an upright position. Hastily, we were airborne. Beverages were served, then a meal. As I finished the meal, I looked up to see the paralyzed gentleman, probably twenty-seven years old, with the meal before him with no one to feed him. My eyes filled with tears. The hostesses were busy serving food to all passengers, but here was a person traveling alone who could only look at the meal. It was beautifully prepared, tasty, and far above average for airline food.

Before I could wipe the tears from my eyes, I slipped from my seat to his side and inquired if the stewardess would be helping him eat. He did not know. I asked if I might help him. He responded with, "Oh, thank you, I would be so grateful for your help." As I cut the meal into bite sizes and placed them in his mouth, I felt awkward, conspicuous, but much needed. Before long I was coordinating bites as well as if they were entering my own mouth. He told me of his unfortunate accident, his lonesomeness, his joys, his struggles, his faith, his hope. His name was Bill. Our spirits blended--we experienced sacrament! Upon returning to my seat, my spirit was humbled as I thought of all the people who have had the Good News of the gospel set before them. It's available but no one to feed them, crippled with spiritual and psychological paralysis--and no one to feed them. My spirit flowed to the words Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Jesus responded, "Feed my sheep."

## II. Christ remarked that the harvest of souls was already at hand.

- A. We must not make the mistake of thinking that we have time to get ready for the harvest tomorrow. Today's harvest will then be lost.
  - 1. Today's farmers work many month's for a harvest, but when it arrives, all other considerations are put aside.
  - 2. They get up early, stay out late in the field, even working at night for the 2-3 weeks that they have to bring in the harvest.
  - 3. One day's delay can mean the difference in a profitable or unprofitable year.
- B. Laborers are sorely needed to get the work done in this hour.
  - 1. That's why God is raising up the cell ministry in this day.
  - 2. That's why God is anointing ordinary men, women, boys and girls with a message to the saved and unsaved alike.

Luke 4:18-21 *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; <sup>19</sup>To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." <sup>20</sup>Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. <sup>21</sup>And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

## III. Christ called 12 to be with Him in order to prepare them to do the work of ministry.

- A. Our first mandate is to be with Jesus or we will never be qualified to be His instrument of salvation in the earth today.
- B. When Peter and John healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, it was because they had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13-14 *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had*

been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup>And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.”

- C. The obvious result of having been with Jesus is that He anoints us to go out with His message.

Matthew 28:18-20 “*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.”*

1. Every believer has a responsibility to reproduce himself in the life of another.
2. We are not finished with our work until those who accept Christ become disciples, not just believers.
3. Suddenly we realize the important work that cell ministry is accomplishing. Not only are people being won to Christ, but they are being taught to be a disciple in order that they may also reproduce themselves in another.
4. Every one of us needs a small group to share the life of Christ that’s within us in order to grow and to help others grow.
5. If you can’t find a cell group that fits you, then maybe, God is telling you to begin one yourself.

**IV. The most important aspect of this kingdom work is the ministry of prayer.**

- A. We need prayer for the harvest that it will be gathered in a timely fashion.
- B. We need prayer for the workers that they will respond to the call to service.

An intercessor means one who is in such vital contact with God and with his fellowmen that he is like a live wire closing the gap between the saving power of God and the sinful men who have been cut off from that power.

Hannah Hurnard (1905-1990)

- C. We need prayer for the cell leaders that they will be able to equip their cell member to come to maturity and become cell leaders themselves.
- D. Prayer brings the resources of God into our ministry so that His power is released.
- E. Intercessors are needed for every Pastor, Ministry Leader and Cell Leader as well as for the work that they are commissioned to do.
  1. Our primary task now should be the appointment of intercessors.
  2. Intercessors act as watchmen to protect the city from the work of the enemy.

**V. Are you ready?**

- A. Are you ready to give your life to Christ so that He can make your life blessed profitable and abundant?
- B. Are you ready to become a disciple? (Join yourself to a mentor in a Cell Group.)
- C. Are you ready to become a mentor? (Be trained to be a Cell Leader)
- D. Are you ready to become an appointed intercessor? (Assigned to a Ministry Leader or Cell Group)