

Many vs. Few
Matthew 9:35-38
Home Missions Fair (4/30/2023)

Last year we had a mission's fair that emphasized our international ministries. Today we are highlighting our local and national ministries. Jesus in the parable of the tares said **"the field is the world"**, **Matthew 13:38**. Missions are the mission of the church whether locally, nationally or internationally. This follows the pattern that Jesus gave in **Acts 1:8**.

The Ministry of Jesus (35)

Jesus was moving about the towns in Galilee in the north of Israel. The Jewish historian Josephus records that there were about two hundred towns and villages in this area in the time of Jesus. This would have been about three million people in that area.

➤ **Jesus was teaching.**

The religious leaders were already rejecting Jesus (32-34). Jesus went directly to the people. His teaching focused **"in the synagogues."** It was a place for the reading and instruction in the Law of Moses. Jesus went where He knew the people would be. The importance of teaching the Word of God carries on in the church, **Colossians 3:16**.

➤ **Jesus was preaching.**

The word translated as **"preaching"** means to herald, to proclaim. Jesus was heralding **"the gospel of the kingdom."** This is the good news message of repentance and redemption offered by God to all who will receive Jesus as Savior and Lord. It is often asked what if any is the distinction between preaching and teaching? Sometimes they blend together so that some would claim that there is no difference. However there is a distinction, **1 Timothy 2:7**. **2 Timothy 4:2**.

➤ **Jesus was healing.**

Jesus was in essence eliminating sickness and disease from that area of the world. He was **"healing every sickness and every disease among the people."** Note the emphasis through repetition of the word **"every."** Jesus' true identity and His message were confirmed by His miracles. These people had no excuse for not recognizing that Jesus was the true Messiah.

The Motivation of Jesus (36)

This was a troubled part of the world in the 1st Century. He would have seen suffering and need all around Him. The people were oppressed by Roman taxation. Women would have been mistreated. Children were often seen as a nuisance. One does not need to go back into history or travel to another part of the world to see hurt and need.

➤ **Jesus felt deeply the pain of others.**

The word translated **"compassion"** suggests strong emotion, to feel deep sympathy. It literally refers to the intestines or bowels.

We know how when we are upset it triggers heartburn or an upset stomach. Jesus in His humanity experienced all of the emotions that we do. He was fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messiah, **Matthew 8:16-17**. Jesus suffered physically and emotionally with those who came to Him for healing and deliverance.

➤ **Jesus felt deeply their sense of abandonment.**

The NIV translates it as **"harassed and helpless."** Jesus saw them as lost sheep. Their religious leaders were self-righteous hypocrites for the most part. Jesus was also moved by His rejection by His own people Israel. Matthew records the moment Jesus saw Jerusalem for the last time in His incarnation. **Matthew 23:37-38**. Jesus would also have seen greater need than just physical and emotional. He saw deep spiritual blindness.

The Method of Jesus (37-38)

Jesus now changes His metaphor from sheep and shepherds to fields and laborers. There is no lacking of people who need Jesus we need but look. The woman at the well in **John 4** went into the city of Sychar and told the men about her encounter with Jesus. As the men were coming out of the city to see Jesus He told His disciples **"lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"** **John 4:35**. The harvest is many but the laborers are few. While there are many who need to hear the Gospel there are relatively few to share the Gospel. Jesus surprisingly doesn't tell His disciples to immediately try to enlist volunteers. He tells His disciples to pray. **"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

➤ **Jesus is the Lord of the harvest.**

We need to remember that the field is His, the laborers are His, the harvest is His and the glory is His. Whatever field we labor in we must undergird everything by prayer. We need to pray for the Lord to send workers. As we earnestly pray at times we will be the worker Jesus will send. Jesus gives further explanation of how to accomplish this great task. **(10:1)** Jesus gave the Apostles amazing authority to do what He was doing. Paul told the Corinthians **"Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds"**, **2 Corinthians 12:12**. There are no Apostles today they were foundational to the church, **Ephesians 2:20**.

➤ **Jesus has given His laborers the authority of the Gospel.**

Romans 1:16 - We can tell people on the authority of God' Word that forgiveness for their sins was accomplished by Christ upon the cross through His suffering, death and resurrection. **2 Corinthians 5:21**, **"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."**

I would encourage each of us to consider how we can labor in God's field outside the walls of this church. There are multiple ministries and multiple opportunities on display this morning. Pray that the Lord of the harvest would send some workers even this morning.