

"Help Wanted"

Matthew 9:35-38

Overview



We spend a huge part of our lives working. In many ways, our work can define who we are and what we value. Our work may be compensated or freely given. It may be how we provide for our loved ones and/or how we contribute to society.

It's no secret that for many work is nothing more than drudgery. A lot of people just see work as a necessary evil. It's simply a means to an end – a way to put food on the table (and certainly not something to be valued beyond that).

But when Christ issued a call for laborers, His vision was to call people to something much more profound – a task that would not only provide meaning in life but which could also potentially change the future of people for an eternity!

Getting Started

Nose to the Grindstone.....



1. What was the first job you ever worked at? What did you like about it? What was not so great?
 2. Describe your dream job (what kind of work is it, where are you doing it, who are you doing it with, etc.).
 3. What aspect of building the Kingdom do you think you are gifted to do? Are you engaged in that work right now? In what way?
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The Text



³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:35-38 (NIV)

The Video (optional) “Help Wanted” – Matthew 9:35-38 – by Kyle Corbin, Nov. 21/21
(view at www.immanuelonline.ca).



NOTES: _____

Understanding



1. After performing the miracles described in Matthew 8 and 9, where does Jesus go and what does He do there (vs. 35)? How hard would it have been to do this? What is the “good news of the kingdom”?
2. What emotion does Jesus feel as He looks upon the crowds (vs. 36)? Why is Jesus moved to feel this way? NB: The word used here for “compassion” is a strong word which includes the notion of compassion, pity, and sympathy. Note Matthew’s other uses of the word in 14:14, 15:32, 18:27, 20:24. What more (besides feelings) does Jesus’ response include in each of these instances (including the current passage)?
3. What does Jesus comment on next (vs. 37)? Which harvest is He referring to? What is true of that harvest? Why would the sight of the crowds prompt Him to speak about that harvest?
4. What does Jesus say is true about those who will work the harvest? What need is He calling His followers to understand?
5. How are Jesus’ followers instructed to address the harvest’s need (vs. 38)?
6. What can you tell about the harvest from this passage (i.e. whose harvest is it?, how big is the harvest?, when will the harvest be ready?, etc.)?

Applying



1. Where specifically in the cities and villages does Jesus do His teaching at this point (vs. 35)? Why do you suppose He is choosing to teach there? What might this suggest about our own evangelistic strategy today?
2. What exactly is the “good news of the kingdom” (vs. 35) Is it simply the way of salvation (or is it something more)? What is included in “good news” (and what should we be including)?
3. In this passage, the proclamation of the kingdom seems to go hand in hand with healing (vs. 35). How necessary do you think healing is to an effective proclamation? Is this a part of our proclamation today (and if not, why not)?
4. In what specific ways do you imagine the people of Jesus’ day were “harassed” (vs. 36)? How about “helpless”? What about “like sheep without a shepherd” (for this one, see also Num. 27:17-18, Ezek. 34:1-16)? Would you say people in our culture are in a similar situation? Are each of these descriptions more true of people today, or less? Defend your answer.
5. It is remarkable how much compassion Jesus has for people (and for us) (vs. 36). How compassionate are you towards the “crowds”? What has contributed to your current level of compassion? How might you be more like Jesus in this regard?
6. Would you say the harvest is “plentiful” in our culture today (vs. 37)? Was it more plentiful in Jesus’ time? Are we “post-harvest” in North America? How do you account for what seems like a poor rate of conversion in our society?
7. Would you say the workers for the harvest are plentiful today? If not, how do you explain the fact that the “workers” remain few despite almost 2000 years of Christian history since Jesus time?
8. Jesus’ instruction for addressing the labor shortage for the harvest is to “pray earnestly” (vs. 38, ESV). How does one pray in this manner? What more could / should we do to follow this instruction from Jesus?
9. What, if anything, do you feel the Lord prompting you to do in the coming week as a result of reading this portion of God’s Word?

Memory Verse(s)



- ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.
³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Matthew 9:37-38 (NIV)

Extra Resources



- ❖ “*Help Wanted*” – *Matthew 9:35-38* – by Kyle Corbin, Nov. 21/21 (sermon, view at www.immanuelonline.ca). Pastor Kyle highlights the work that Jesus calls us to as labourers in God’s harvest.
- ❖ “*You’ll Never Wish You Did Less*” – by Andrew Knight (article at www.desiringgod.org, July 28, 2018). One church leader reflects on the necessity for believers to be aware of the plight of unreached people.
- ❖ “*The Harvest and the Laborers*” – by John MacArthur (sermon at www.gty.org, Mar. 22, 1981). MacArthur provides a detailed examination of Jesus’ ministry, motives and methods from this passage in Matt. 9.