

When Jesus Complains (Matthew 9:35-10:4)

Do you ever wonder why there aren't more Christians?

- The Good News is really good
 - It is also offensive (sinner; repent; forsake; judgment; exclusivity)
 - There are real objections (is that the problem?) (or is it belief? {like in the resurrection})
- Jesus tells us that is not the problem (**the harvest is plentiful... the workers are few**)
 - ☹ that people ☹ willing to become Christians, its that Christians ☹ willing to become **workers**
 - Define **workers**... (mission) (doing what Jesus does---everywhere)

Why does any of this matter? Why is there a mission anyway?

- **When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.** (verse 36)

Why is there mission (work to be done)?

- Because Jesus' heart goes out to people
 - **Compassion** = "**to feel in the guts**" in Greek
 - **Compassion** = "**to suffer with**" in Latin
 - Answers the question: **Does God care?**
- There is Christian mission (in part) because **Jesus feels humanity's pain** (cares because He loves)
 - He sees (and feels deeply) our **oppression, depression and suppression**

Notice, **it is not motivated by disgust because we are sinners, but by compassion because we are sufferers**

- It is true that humanity is bad—that we are sinners who deserve the judgment of God
- Christian work is not first an endeavor to show the world how bad they are, but rather to show the world how loved they are (Cf. **John 3:16**; **God is love** ☹ God is mad)
- So our approach is not one of judgment first, but compassionate (**harassed & helpless** ☹ dirty rotten)
 - **Luke 19:10**, NIV and **Mark 10:45**, NIV and **John 3:17**, NIV
- Sin is not the source of mission; God's love and compassion is
 - The text teaches us that when the Savior looks on the world it is first of all people's **harassed helplessness** that He sees
 - **... because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd** (verse 36)
 - What we need most is a truly Good Shepherd
 - So the **work** is bringing people to Jesus the Good Shepherd

How are we **harassed and helpless**?

- There sin enters (offense against holiness and holy intent of flourishing)
- The effects of sin (against which we feel helpless—death, disease, destruction) (the devil)
- Sin is Satan's realm (**harasser** from whom we need a Savior—we are **helpless**)
 - Sin is a problem—God will judge—but Jesus came to save us (driven by love and **compassion**)
 - **Christ's compassion is the cause of mission**

Jesus is the only one who can rescue and save us from our **harassed and helpless** state

- But, here is something quite interesting
- Though Jesus has power and authority as God to do anything (Cf. Chapters 8 and 9)...
- ... He apparently He has chosen to do something about humanity's plight through His people
- So His **compassion** opens the opportunity for His **complaint**
 - **The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few** (verse 37)
 - Christ's love and compassion has created mission work—His love also creates workers
 - He does not need us—He has chosen us (**1 Peter 2:9**, NIV)
 - Because of love, God has chosen to work through us rather than independent of us
 - This is awesome—why are there **so few workers**?
 - **Comfort; Demas; Fear; Apathy; Pleasure; Self-Absorption?**

Christ's complaint is the occasion for an invitation

- In the invitation we discover the secret to overcoming all our objections to working
- **Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field** (verse 38)

Pay attention: I want you to see this delicate theological interplay...

- Jesus has just invited us to do something. What has Jesus just invited us to do? (pray)
 - Our first step into **the waters of His work** is **prayer**
- When we pray, we are confessing that we need God to accomplish something
 - It is not that Jesus said the workers are few and so all is lost—He can do nothing
 - Rather, He invites us to do something
 - But that something is an expression of full dependence upon Him (prayer)
 - Whose harvest (mission) is it? **the Lord of the harvest -- into His harvest field**
 - **He has asked us to do something, which is to ask Him to do something**
 - You get the feeling He is up to something here... He is

Why doesn't He just do it? God has chosen to work through us rather than independent of us

Prayer is God's way of **exposing** us to, and **involving** us in, His [com]passion

- **Exposing** requires an opening of our eyes and hearts to people (the way He sees them)
- **Involving** requires the shaping and redirecting of our passions (what He is passionate about)
 - **Do we see and do we care?** (Christ's complaint tells us we don't)
 - There is no indication that the disciples saw like Jesus or cared like Jesus
 - I imagine there must have been a growing sense of needing to see and wanting to care
 - The pathway to **vision** and **compassion** is **prayer**

Here is the hard part

- The very reason we do not pray is because we do not see or care (if we did, we would pray)
 - **Honestly:** Think about why you do not pray (Meetings like for the nations or London)
 - The only remedy is prayer (the very thing you do not really care to do)
- At some point you have to (1) hear Jesus' compassion and complaint, and (2) obey His call to pray
 - At some point, you have to decide that His agenda is more important than yours
- You can live your whole Christian life and never really get there (maybe? Issue of Lordship?)
 - But that will be a lesser life

Look very carefully at what happened next (10:1-8)

- Two things I want you to take note of:
 - 1. Jesus made these men the answer to their own prayers (sneaky sneaky)
 - 2. These men were living more full lives than they ever had before
 - Which do you think was more fun?
 - Fishing on the Galilee? (you know they never caught fish without Jesus)
 - **Proclaiming the message, healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, driving out demons?** (duh!!)
 - They were now doing the very things that Jesus had been doing (**gifted** and **commissioned**)
- We are convinced that if we obey Jesus and pray, and He pulls a fast one on us and we become the answer to our own prayers, that life will be less...
 - There is a satanic lie if I ever heard one (Cf. the Garden and God slandered as a taker)
 - We tend to live for lesser things and lesser good
 - But we have been invited into the ultimate thing (can be given gifts and authority)!

We need to do what Jesus is asking us to do here (pray for workers) [in groups or as an individual]

- Three possibilities to consider for prayer (pray for 1 or all)
 - 1. An individual or group of individuals [e.g. co-worker(s); family member(s)]
 - 2. A subculture [e.g. soccer moms; surfers; politicians]
 - 3. A nation or people group

Maybe you are feeling called as a **worker**... or maybe you are the **harassed** and **helpless** one (Shepherd)