

Matthew 9:35-38 NIV

“Why non-farmers should join this harvest”

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching 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.’”

This text evokes three questions:

- Why did Jesus compare people to sheep?
- What is kingdom good news?
- Why did Jesus want additional harvesters?

Consider the first matter:

1. Why did Jesus compare people to sheep?

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

The variations in translation help explain Jesus’ comparison.

- **KJV: “Fainted and were scattered abroad.**
- **TEV: “Worried and helpless.”**
- **JB Philips – “Bewildered and miserable.”**
- **The Living Bible – “Didn’t know what to do or where to go for help.”**



People resemble sheep without shepherds.

The golfer stood over his tee shot for what seemed like an eternity, looking up, looking down, measuring the distance, figuring wind direction and speed—he was driving his partner nuts.

The exasperated partner finally said,

“What the heck is taking so long? Hit the ball!”

“My wife is up there watching me from the clubhouse,” the guy answered, “and I want to make this a perfect shot.”

His partner pondered this for a moment and then replied:

“Forget it, man; you’ll never hit her from here.”¹



¹ From *Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader*, p - 25

Jesus correctly assessed most people’s feelings:

Angry and frustrated;

Worried and helpless;

Wanting to join the latest movement;

Searching, but never finding.

Thinking the right political leader will bring happiness, but he/she never does.

In the 1970s, EST, a way to “intimidate others and get your way” became trendy in California.

Watching news reports of recent protestors and rioters, makes me think many people learned intimidation and bullying somewhere.

Do you find irony in the fact that a few years ago, the very media and leaders who denounced bullying now ferociously intimidate folks while advancing causes they think important?

Leaders have long used and abused the masses.

In chapter 7 of his Gospel, John wrote of an attempt by the Jewish leaders to silence Jesus.

Jesus went to Jerusalem for a festival.

People fascinated with Jesus talked about him as some currently speak of celebrities.

The leaders sent agents out into the crowds to assess what the people were saying.

As politicians today poll to find what people think, the leaders wanted information concerning what people said about Jesus.

They heard folks whisper such things as:

“Jesus might be the Christ?”

“Can anyone equal the miracles he performs?”

The leaders felt threatened by Jesus and sent the Temple guards to seize him.

Those authorities claimed grounds for arresting Jesus and sent the guards to bring him.

The common people might felt in a quandary, but the guards seem perceptive.

They saw something extraordinary in Jesus.

They found nothing deserving of his arrest.

Imagine the quandary for those guards.

Their bosses told them to arrest a guy they considered an imposter.

The guards discovered the “real deal.”

“Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, ‘Why didn't you bring him in?’

(46) ‘No one ever spoke the way this man does,’ the guards declared.



“(47) ‘You mean he has deceived you also?’ the Pharisees retorted. (48) ‘Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? (49) No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law--there is a curse on them.”²

The leaders disdained common people. Elite leaders often deride ordinary folks.

The truth is: most folks are lost and confused, faint and bewildered.

Norma and I received a note from a woman who once attended the Hollywood church. She is sincere, and we think wanted to be a good mother, but some of her choices weren’t the best.

For one, she went through several husbands. Most of her six children had different fathers. Second, she always thought she’d find happiness somewhere else. She’s lived in several different states repeatedly moving back and forth.

One of her sons was convicted of a serious crime and is now in prison. This woman’s wrote:

“So sad him being there. I didn’t think my older years would be so much pain.”

Thoreau said that most folks live, “lives of quiet desperation.”³



Many today need stuff to perk them up during the day and other stuff to help them sleep at night.

People have always resembled shepherd-less sheep.

2) What is the good news of the kingdom?

The Good News features three superb parts.

A) Jesus forgave our sins and mistakes.

Decades ago, Norma’s now deceased brother-in-law sent me the following:

"THE PILGRIM"

**I happened on a man one day,
while walking down the road;
Upon his back, there stood a sack,
he swayed beneath the load.**

**As I passed by, I asked him
why he carried such a weight;
And his reply as to just why,
is what I shall relate.**

**“I too was young,” he said to me,
“And straight then was my back:
But then this load which I now hold,
was just an empty sack.**

² John 7:45-49 NIV

³ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, Economy*

**And then one day, I made a vow
that for each wrong I'd do,
I'd haul a stone that would atone,
and start on life anew.**

**The stones were small, less than an ounce,
they hardly weighed at all;
The years passed by, how they did fly,
but still my pouch was small.**

**As time went by, I kept my vow,
and added stone to stone;
Until the weight became so great,
it's crushing every bone.**

**So, standing here, you see a man
whose sins are plain to see;
They are my cross, my Albatross,
they will not let me be."**

**With that the stranger turned to go,
still bent beneath his load;
I stood there dazed, and quite amazed
as he staggered down the road.**

**I too have sinned, I told myself,
a fact I can't refuse;
I realize that I'm no prize,
but stones I dare not use!**

**My sins all lay at Calvary,
and there I'll leave them be;
And haul a stone? It won't atone,
for Christ has set me free.**

Whether Del wrote this poem or adapted it, he found the good news that Jesus forgave every sin.

B) Jesus brings other profound news.



My files include a note I received at Christmas time, 1986 from a very pleasant, influential Hollywood lady. The Church women invited her to their annual holiday party. She sent a "Thank You" note in which she also asked that we pray for her. She mentioned her artificial heart valve, designed to last ten years, but was then 16 ½ years old.

She closed her note by writing that she’d be checking into the VA hospital and:

“I hope for God to spare me.”

Our lovely friend died eight days later.

Each day all over the planet, similar sadness repeats itself thousands of times.

A like day eventually arrives for all of us.

God’s kingdom Good News includes the fact that through his resurrection, Jesus dealt death a mortal blow.

The New Testament not only provides dependable reports of Jesus’ life and teachings.

The NT also carefully authenticates and validates the truth of Jesus’ resurrection.

He now lives eternally in heaven.

As Philippians 3:20 & 21 state:

“Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

Here’s the third exciting part of the Good News.

The Kingdom refers to God’s life-management.

If we as adults let anyone manage our lives, other than God through His word, disappointment awaits us.

He created us and he knows what’s best for us.

The ever louder, so-called, experts don’t realize the outcome of their pride.

The further people pull away from God’s rule, the greater chaos they create.



We overcome the pride-caused chaos by trusting and honoring God, and following Jesus.

We believe that Jesus already defeated death, and He’ll soon banish the devil

3) Why does he want us to pray for more harvesters?

Because everyone should hear the Good News.

Regardless of background, age, language, color, or nationality, all suffer chaos apart from God, and all die.

**All need the Good News of God’s kingdom.
That’s why Jesus called for more harvesters.**

We also need more harvesters because some workers seek power, popularity, and profit.

Not all tell the message as they should.

J. Hamilton told the following:

In China decades ago, Christians from all over the world gathered to discuss:

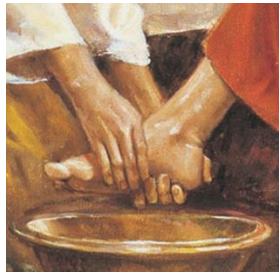
“What was it in Christ that appealed to them most and won them to him?”

One respondent said:

It wasn’t Jesus’ miracles or the Sermon on the Mount.

In faltering, choking voice he said,

“It was Jesus washing his disciples’ feet and then humbling himself even to the death on the cross.”



A manufacturer from India told the group:

“Do you know why I have come? Years ago when I was a boy, we heckled a missionary preacher in a bazaar (public market place). We threw tomatoes at him. He wiped tomato

juice from his face and later took us to a sweet shop and bought us candy.”



The Lord wants more harvesters like that missionary.

Pray that the Lord of harvest will send more harvesters.

Pray that you will boldly, mightily help in the harvest, too.

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