

The 3rd Sunday after Pentecost
“The Christian’s fervent prayer for willing and
compassionate laborers in God’s harvest” Matthew 9:35-38
June 14, 2026
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 3rd Sunday after Pentecost is from
our Gospel reading, Matthew 9:35-38.

“35 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. 36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

So far our text:

What did Jesus see with His own eyes as He went from village to village, city to city? He saw wearied people. Were they complaining that the price of gas was too high, or that the cost of living was too difficult? No, they were wearied by greater needs than that. There was a lot of sickness and disease. But, most serious of all their needs, their souls were wearied, like sheep without a shepherd.

And what did Jesus do? Did He simply say, “Oh, these poor people...what a mess they have gotten themselves into... shake His head and move on?” No, Jesus was moved by compassion for them! Felt compassion for them and acted with compassion for them! He was moved to heal them. For Jesus is God and man, who uses His power as He moved among us, to physically heal every disease! Yes! Jesus didn’t just heal a few and call it a day. Our text tells us that He healed every sickness and every disease among the people.

Out of love, Jesus sees the consequences of what sin has brought upon humanity, the suffering of every sickness and disease, and He rights what is wrong...He cures immediately. He makes things the way they should be in this world...no sickness, pain, or suffering.

But, of course, where there is still sin, there will continue to be sicknesses. And those sicknesses will eventually lead to death. Sin has to be dealt with in order to rid mankind of the cause of all suffering.

Yes, our epistle reading from Romans 5 tells us how thoroughly expansive is sin...how it has infected every person in this world, you and me included. It just took one man to cause all the grief we have.

“12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—”

We stop for a second to acknowledge this truth...that death has spread to all because of sin. No one is exempt. And even those who lived before the Law was given by Moses as our Old Testament reading tells us about, those people also died, even though they had no law to accuse them of their sins. Why? Because of the original sin that they inherited.

“13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

And then the second truth is introduced. The glorious second truth. There is a 2nd Adam. But not like the first...the antitype of the type. It is very different. Listen to what Paul says:

“15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.”

The One Man, Jesus Christ gives the gift that the world needed and it abounds to all as we hear in verse 18.

“18 Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”

And this is the cure for sin! This is the only cure for sin. The righteous act of the God-Man Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection that is the free gift for all, and results in the justification of life!

This is the Gospel! This is the pure Gospel! This is what Jesus with eyes of compassion saw that the people needed to know. He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom to sick souls and cured them of the disease of sin! Jesus not only cured their poor bodies but most importantly cured their souls!

And why were they like sheep scattered without a shepherd? Why were the souls of these people not being cared for and being given the Good News of the Gospel? Because the teachers of the people, were not teaching them God's truths. These Pharisees were teaching the people works righteousness! Try to be as good as us and maybe, just maybe you will be saved...though that's pretty unlikely as these smug teachers lorded over the people with the Law!

Yes, the Law condemns, but the Gospel justifies. The Gospel sets all things right. The Gospel reconciles what is evil and calls it good! How? How can you call the evil creation infected by sin good?

Listen to our epistle:

“6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

Completely unable, completely ineffective to save ourselves, Christ died for who? The ungodly, you and me included! And because we are justified by His shed blood, made right, just as if I'd never sinned, we will not face the wrath of God for our sins. We're saved from it! This is the Gospel! This is the compassion of Christ who willingly received the wrath for our sins, and died for them.

Tell me more about this great gift! Paul goes on...**“10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”**

Reconciled! This is objective justification. 100% God's work. Enemies reconciled by the death of His Son. And much more! Because Jesus rose from the dead, we are saved by His life! We have life. Eternal life!

This reconciliation was finished on the cross and the empty grave proved that there is now peace, and forgiveness with God. The gift of reconciliation has been made for all people.

What's left to do? Give this gift to the people! Give it to the people through faith, which God Himself creates by the hearing of this Good News!!

“11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

This reconciliation is received through faith. And we rejoice! And as we rejoice, God does something amazing in us. He give us His eyes of compassion for others! He makes us to see scattered sheep in desperate need of hearing this Gospel. And He invites us as His redeemed people, priests of God, as we know from 1 Peter 2:9, holy people of God, then to raise our prayers to the God of the harvest for more laborers.

God invited the Old Testament people to hear Moses' words that He had given them, believe His Word, and His priests and Holy people. Not all people did as they were tested in the desert for 40 years.

God makes this invitation to all of us who now know of His compassion and grace in Jesus Christ, to pray and serve God as His holy people. He hears our prayers for Jesus' sake. And He wants all people to know of His love for them. That can only happen through the preaching of His Word. So Jesus called and sent His 12 apostles to do just this. Preach that the Kingdom of God is near. Jesus the Savior has come! He came to reconcile the world to Himself. And He did!

“18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

For this ministry we pray. That God would raise more workers to tell of His great work of love in Jesus Christ for all people! That God would send willing and compassionate workers to the lost scattered sheep. And He does. He sends you and me and others! Each according to the gifts that God has given.

“11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”

This is God’s compassion! This is God’s healing! Eternal healing by His Gospel!

So our Psalm 67 that we heard earlier says:

“Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth.”

Amen

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)