

Introduction:

- Mt 9:35-38
- Jn 4:27-30
- There were many great things I remember about growing up on the farm. One of those great memories was harvest time. Kelly and I were home a couple of years ago during harvest time. We landed in Indianapolis and I was so excited about being home and being home during the harvest time that we took the country roads all the way home. The fields of corn were golden brown. Combines were rolling through the fields. You could smell the fields that had been freshly harvest like some of you would remember raking dry leaves in the fall. I wanted to see the sights, smell the smells and experience what I knew as a young man growing up on the farm.
 - Because I grew up on the farm, working in those fields, I have an insight, experience that no one else can have. It is unique to me and all who grew up on a midwestern farm.
 - Unless you grew up on farm or in a farming community chance are you never will see the harvest as one who has farmed sees it.
- What is most fascinating about the accounts in Mt and John is Jesus understanding, experience and vision for the fields that are white/ready to harvest. I am fascinated by what Jesus sees and the lack of what the disciples see. I want to talk about having a vision for harvest in our community/in your neighborhood. In fact, The Word of the Lord to the Christian Community is: **See the Harvest!**

1. Jesus Saw the Harvest

- a. Jesus saw something that most Christians miss today. What was it?
 - i. In three of the four Gospels we hear Jesus saying something about the harvest. I have learned in life that if somebody says something three times...they are trying to make a point. Jesus says in the presence of his disciples, Mt 9:37 *“The harvest is great!”* Jn 4:35 *“Wake up and look around, the fields are already ripe for harvest.”* Lk 10:2 *“The harvest is great but the workers are few.”* What was Jesus seeing? He was looking at the very same thing that the twelve were looking.
 - ii. They saw people. Jesus saw a harvest. They saw dirty, sweaty, sinful, people with problems. Jesus saw opportunity for the Kingdom of Heaven to influence and make a beautiful change in these peoples lives. They saw him looking and talking with a Samaritan woman. Jesus saw an entire village coming to Christ. When Jesus looks at this world he sees His kingdom impacting it. He literally sees beyond our limited scope of perception of what is fixed in our minds eye to what reality is as the kingdom of God interacts with it. He was in this world but not of it.
- b. “One of the reasons missions is at the heart of Christianity is that Jesus teaches us to see the world utterly differently than we ordinarily see it. If you simply view the world the way it is seen in television and secular media and public education and theater, missions will make no sense and be no part of your life. In fact I would say that if you want to see how much the secular culture shapes and controls you, simply ask how great is your burden for missions. The only way to have a burden for missions is to be more influenced by Jesus than by the American culture. To see the world the way Jesus sees it.” John Piper
 - i. Ie. In Jn 2:15 Jesus drives out the money changers in the temple. They ask, *“What authority do you have to do this?”* He answers, *“Destroy this temple and three days I will raise it.”* He meant, Change the way you look at your world. He was declaring I have so much authority, that in the future men will encounter/meet God through me, not in this building. But they did not get it. Why? Because they did not see as Jesus was seeing. The reality they lived in was too narrow, too small.

- ii. In another example, John 3, Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night and trying to figure out who He is. In verse 3 Jesus hits him with, “*Unless one is born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*” Nicodemus the spiritual teacher does not understand and he asks more questions of Jesus...How? What? Jesus is trying to get this spiritual teacher to see the world in a radically different way. There are spiritual realities that he does not see it all. Until he does, entering the KoG will not make any sense to him. That is why missions/evangelism makes no sense to so many people today. There are spiritual realities that Jesus lives in, He breathes this stuff, it is the main reality of the universe, and people do not get it. Therefore they miss its importance, and value. “Jesus, help us see what you see.”
- c. Unless you are a farmer you will never see the harvest as a farmer does. And unless you are of the Kingdom of God you will never see the harvest like Jesus does. I love our passages today, because of the passion Jesus demonstrates in what He sees.
 - i. That is why he would say to this group of men around him who were looking at the same thing/same people, “Wake up!” “You are surrounded by the harvest field”
 - ii. The harvest made Jesus happy! The harvest made Jesus smile! The harvest made him rejoice with opportunity... you cant miss! The harvest was what it was all about. He was here for that reason!!!
 - iii. The point of these illustrations is this: Jesus wants us to see the world differently than the way we ordinarily see it. You will never have a heart for missions/evangelism if you don't see the world the way Jesus sees it. Missions/evangelism depends on seeing reality the way Jesus sees it. A different vision. Jesus Saw the Harvest and

2. Jesus Demonstrates a New Harvest Technique

- a. Not only does Jesus see the harvest differently he totally see the process of harvesting differently than we do. In John 4, Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at the well. What I want to look at is what is contained between the start of this story (Woman at the well) and the end of story (crowds coming out to Him.) In between Jesus has a conversation with the 12. verses 27-30. And this conversation is important to us.
- b. Vs 28 She leaves her water pot to go back to town to tell everyone she thinks she has found Messiah. At least that what Jesus calls himself in vs 26. The disciples then come to him.
- c. What on earth is He doing? Jesus is radically changing the process by which the Kingdom Advances.
 - i. They were amazed that He was talking to a woman. First of all Jews don't talk to Samaritans (racial issue). Secondly she is a woman and Rabbis don't talk to women. And thirdly from the readers perspective: she is a wild woman having had five husbands and now living with a guy.
 - 1. Rather than toss her to the side, Jesus gave respect to the woman and to women: His mom, Mary of Magdalene, the bent over woman 18 years, the gentile woman with demon possessed daughter, etc.
 - 2. Looking from Kingdom eyes He sees woman as they are seen in heaven. He restores dignity. This woman's life is gloriously changed because Jesus approaches her from a Kingdom perspective and not an earthly one. So she leaves her water pot to tell the village.
 - ii. Vs 30 Says they came streaming from the village to see Him. And look at verse 39 “*Many Samaritans believed in Jesus*” because of the woman's testimony. And in verse 42 “We believe not just because of her but because we have heard Him ourselves.” The woman's words brought faith and Jesus words brought more faith!
- d. What is He saying? He has already eaten! You say four months and then harvest, but I say, “Wake up!” The harvest is ripe and ready. I really don't believe that Jesus was angrily saying this to the disciples nor was he heaping a guilt trip on them. Jesus was excited about what was happening in this

village and He really wants his disciples to begin to have these kind of eyes, eyes that don't see people but harvest, where ever they come from! Religious systems exclude people.

- i. Two things we learn from Jesus in vs 32-38
 1. When we give ourselves to the work of personal evangelism and world missions, God pours more life into our souls. In giving life away to others, God pours life into us. The more you share God, the more you enjoy and experience God. Ie. I have never had more opportunity to witness than I have in the last three weeks since my accident. And every time I come away with "ahhhh! That was good."
 2. IE. *"You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest."* (John 4:35, NLT) There is no point in lifting up your eyes on July 4 in Illinois to see if the corn is ready to be picked. Knee-high by the Fourth of July, and that's that. But not so in the spiritual realm. Jesus says, in verse 35, "You say, there are four months till harvest."
- e. You think of fixed and unchangeable times between sowing and reaping. (This is how it works! Only)
- f. You think of excuses or reasons why harvest should be delayed.
 1. Jesus had just been sowing the seed of the Word during the last half hour. The Samaritan woman, full of wonderment, had gone to sow some more seed in the town. And the problem was now: would the disciples lift up their eyes to what God was doing, or would they just go about their business worrying about lunch?
 2. Jesus was saying, 'contrary to all your expectations, this town, where you just went to buy lunch, and saw nothing, is in fact a field white unto harvest!' The point is this: in the realm of missions and evangelism, don't be locked into fixed natural laws. Don't say, "Four months, then . . ." because that's the way it's always been. Instead lift up your eyes. Wake Up! Look. See what God is doing. Lift up your eyes and see that God is readying harvest all the time. Not just after four months.
- g. Another difference between the way Jesus looks at harvest and the way we usually do...Some are sower and some are reapers. Ordinarily in farming the same farmer who sows the seed also gathers the harvest. But in the work of the kingdom that is often most likely not the case.
 - i. Faith must lift up its eyes into the future and see the harvest and rejoice. We call it, "A vision for harvest."
 - ii. Here is what we are to take away: a surprising spiritual awakening in the town of Sychar. An unlikely woman becomes the means of an unlikely people turning to the Jewish Messiah, even though they were not even full-blooded Jews. This should encourage us in our society that holds so many opinions and views, that is religiously divided and ethnically diverse. God has a people in Samaria, and he has chosen surprising instruments to reach them—maybe you.
 - iii. Amos 9:13 There is coming a time in which you will not be able to tell the sower from the reaper because it all going to be happening at once. Jesus sow the word into the woman. The woman sows the word into the village.
 1. Jesus in our passage is both sower and reaper.
 2. He is telling his disciples that you are going to share in the harvest but you are laboring where you did not sow. So who sowed? I believe it was Jesus and woman.

3. Jesus Calls For Harvesters

- a. *"So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."* (Matthew 9:38, NLT) When you see the harvest and you see that it is plentiful you call to others to join you in bringing it in. Not only that but you ask the owner of the field, the Lord of the harvest, please get us more help.

- i. This is what Jesus was doing! He was so happy to see the fields that were ready. The harvest fields were: all of humanity around him, Nicodemus, woman at the well, the money changers in the temple, the leper on the street, the 5,000 in the country side. It was not just people that He saw. He saw the reality of the Kingdom! These fields are ripe! This is why I have come! Now you, come with me! Help me! “This is awesome what we can do for my Father in heaven!”
When you see the harvest you call for help.
 - ii. See this principal. Jesus send Peter back out to fish after he has fished all night. *“And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.”* (Luke 5:6–7, NLT)
- b. When you actually see a harvest so great...you call for help!
- i. What are we seeing?
 - ii. There is a call going out in the Spirit and has been since God clothed Adam and Eve outside the garden.

Conclusion:

- Invitation: To let Christ change your vision for the harvest.
- Father, have mercy upon our worldly, deadened, numb, unseeing, unresponsive, hearts. Breathe spiritual life into our souls. Open the eyes of our hearts. Shed divine, spiritual light into our minds. Awaken our Spirit-given ability to see and taste and know and understand and treasure the glory of Christ in your word. In his merciful and strong name, we pray. Amen.

- Pray over the food for the picnic.