



Life Group Study Notes

"The Secret of Harvest Time"

Sr. Ps. James Lowe - November 20, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What was the main reason why you attended a church service for the first time?
- Have you ever planted a garden? What was your greatest challenge or success?
- What is one thing in 2016 for which you are thankful?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Matthew 9:35-38, ESV *And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

- Jesus was around people in need. He was observant of their sorrows, burdens, and needs. His response was compassion, and his compassion moved him to act to help people. His actions touched their felt needs and brought God's truth to them to bring them salvation. Moreover, he urged his followers to follow his example and to also pray for others to join them in God's work.
- God wants the same from us. It's not okay to reclude ourselves from those in need. It's not okay to be aware of people in need and think someone else will take care of them. It's not okay to do little or nothing to help others. And it's not okay to not pray for others to join us in God's work.

John 4:25-39, ESV *The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" They went out of the town and were coming to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did."*

We believe God has promised us a harvest contingent upon three important things:

1. We need to have a clear Gospel message based on Scripture.
2. We are responsible before God to be his messengers.
3. We will see a harvest, if we will faithfully fulfill our responsibility to be messengers of the Gospel.

Like the harvest Jesus and the disciples experienced at Samaria, we believe God wants to entrust us with a harvest where others have done the hard work of plowing and planting. That means others helped prepare the people to be ready to respond when they would be introduced to Jesus. This preparation can include prayer for their salvation, good deeds done to soften their hearts, communicating moral truth to bring about an awakened conscience, as well as communicating other truth about God.

Even though all these things might be done and result in a people made ready to respond to Jesus, there remains the need to clearly communicate the Gospel to them. We must still do the work of harvesting. Because of this, the harvest depends on us as well as on God. God has prepared the harvest through others, but we also must do our part.

Will you do your part? Do you know the Gospel well? Are you available to God on a daily basis? Do you regularly pray for those who don't know Christ? Do you believe the claims of Jesus, that he alone is the way to the Father? Do you believe his warnings concerning God's judgment and hell for those who refuse to repent and come to him? Do you believe his promises that God will forgive all the sins of anyone who calls on him for salvation? Are you communicating the Gospel to others on a regular basis?

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- Do you feel you are able to communicate the Gospel clearly with others? Why or why not?
- Do you genuinely believe you are responsible before God to communicate the Gospel with others? Why or why not?
- What would it look like for God to bring a "harvest" of people into his kingdom? What work would that entail for those who serve him?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God to forgive you, if you haven't had compassion on people who are apart from God.
- Express your commitment to learn and communicate the Gospel more.
- Ask God to open doors and open your eyes to opportunities to communicate the Gospel.