



Changing the World Like Jesus
Matthew 9:35-10:8
August 16, 2020

We noted last week that the world is terribly broken, and we should seek to change it like Jesus. In this passage Jesus said there was a plentiful harvest (9:37; cf. John 4:34-38). I have often assumed there isn't much harvest today, because church attendance is in decline. But just because people aren't open to our expression of church doesn't mean they are closed to Jesus.

Jesus doesn't explain why he said there was a plentiful harvest, but there are two clues. First, the crowd in v. 36 seems to have gathered as a result of Jesus' ministry in v. 35. The fact that a crowd gathered indicates interest in Jesus. Second, the people in the crowd are broken (v. 36), and broken people are often more open to God than others (Matthew 11:25-27; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31). Both of these conditions are still true today. Many people are still attracted to Jesus, even if they don't like the church. Plus there are still many broken people around us, and all the more so during the pandemic. Based on this, there may well be more harvest than we realize.

In spite of the plentiful harvest, however, Jesus said the workers are few. God has chosen to help people enter his kingdom through human workers, and the need for more is great. Notice four truths about workers from this passage:

1. A worker in this context is *someone who does what Jesus did*, namely, teaching, proclaiming the kingdom, and healing (9:35;

stated in 4:23 also). This threefold summary of Jesus ministry describes how he established and grew the kingdom of God. We might refer to these three aspects as teaching, evangelizing, and serving.

2. The *Lord* is the one who sends out workers (9:38). We must never coerce, pressure, guilt or manipulate people to get involved. All our ministry must be done in a way that is conducive to the Lord working.
3. Jesus tells us to *pray* for workers (v. 38). The word for pray here is a strong one and can also be translated beseech, implore, or plead (ESV pray *earnestly*). I invite you to add this clear, specific instruction from Jesus to your daily prayers. How and how much we pray says a lot about who we believe will send out the workers.
4. Jesus *empowered* the twelve to go out as workers (Matthew 10; the word "worker" in 10:10 is the same as the one in 9:38). In addition to his own prior example, he also literally gave them power (10:1), instructed them (10:5), taught them to do what he had been doing (10:7-8) and then sent them out to actually do it (10:5). After he finished instructing them (10:5-11:1), he, too, went on to teach and preach more (11:1).

I believe we need a major focus on building the kingdom as Jesus shows us here. This is the best hope for addressing the brokenness of the people around us, as well as solve the issues of our own lives. I have been trying to learn to actually do what Jesus teaches in this passage and hope you are too or will.

If you want to learn along with me, I invite you to consider *Empowering Subjects, Changing the World like Jesus*. This is a training opportunity aimed at equipping subjects of the King to do what the King did. It emerges directly from Matthew 9:35-11:1. It begins with a Zoom discussion Wednesday September 2nd at 7 pm. Then, each week we will have a short video, a written assignment, and a non-coercive practical application. If you want to participate or have questions, contact me.