



**Something Insidious is Stifling His Plan**  
**Matthew 9:35-38; 2 Timothy 2:14-26**  
**December 9, 2018**

Going to Israel reminded me that people are like sheep without a shepherd. The same is true here, too, but we may have stopped seeing it. Vast numbers of people desperately need the Good Shepherd.

Jesus says the way to address this ginormous need is to have more workers. "Worker" is one of our identities as followers of Jesus (Matthew 20:1-16). There have been some workers from his day to ours, but sadly only a "few." Something insidious is stifling his plan.

That something is our self-centeredness. It is seen in our preoccupation with self-interests, our incessant complaining, and our overly sensitive feelings. When we are preoccupied with these things, we are not following Christ (Luke 17:7-10; Ephesians 4:29; 5:4; Philippians 2:1-8, 14-16). There may be a valid reason for some degree of some of these, but there is no justification for being preoccupied with them. That will keep us from being available to our Lord as workers. If this makes anyone think we have some big, unusual problem going on here, you are half right. It is big, but not unusual. Our problem is we are too American.

To heed the words of Jesus and respond to the vast crowds of people who need the Shepherd, I recommend:

1. Inviting God to search our hearts and show us whether any change is needed (Psalm 139:23-24). Spoiler alert: the change may include to repentance, prayer, humbling our hearts, learning to share our concerns more respectfully, listening better to others, shepherding people in how they interact, having our feelings transformed by God's Spirit renewing our mind, lamenting to God, forgiving someone, dropping our grievances, refocusing our priorities, etc.
2. Praying for workers.
3. Meditating every day this week on 2 Timothy 2:14-26.

What difference do you think it would make to Israel, San Antonio, and NorthWest, if we all did these things?

