

Title: What Have You Been Up To Lately?

Scripture: Matthew 9:35-38

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Event: Sunday Evening Service

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**Matthew 9:35-38** *“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”*

**Four things that reveal the ministry of Christ in these verses:**

1. Vision
2. Heart
3. Purpose
4. Call

It is easy to criticize others for the things that we aren't doing ourselves. We want to blame everyone else for things not getting done when we could very easily do them ourselves. Proverbs 6:6 *“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.”* In a 3 year period of time, the species of ants known as Allegheny Ants, moved 15 tons of sub-soil. A Christian should strive to do work like these small creatures. We should be working like these ants. Somewhere down the line, Satan has deceived us to think that God can't use us if we aren't like Paul, James, or John. Here are some biblical characters that had very little to work with:

- Shamgar – he killed 600 Philistine men with an ox gourd
- David – killed a 9 foot giant with a slingshot and a single rock
- Samson – grabbed the jawbone of a donkey and killed everyone around him
- Rahab – she had a rope and used it to get the spies out of Jericho before they were killed
- Mary – anointed Christ with oil
- Aaron – all Aaron had was a stick, but when he cast it down it destroyed the image of all the magicians and what they had done
- Dorcas – she had a needle and the ability to sew

All of these people who had something small but were used in a great way for God. God can use anyone who makes themselves available.

1. **God can use you when you see others compassionately:** *“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”*

Being compassionate means being sympathetic, but taking a step further. Being compassionate is not based on feelings of the flesh, but the depth of the heart. You can feel bad for someone but never do a thing about it. When we were saved, we gained the heart of compassion. This helps us reach out and encourage those who need it. Christ had compassion because he saw those people through the eyes of God. Maybe we should be praying for eyes like God. There are some things to know about compassion.

- a. **Because of the power of Christian love, God can use us.** I Corinthians 13:7 *“Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”* The love mentioned goes beyond the faults and meets the need. We are told to bear one another's burdens and fulfil the law of Christ. II Corinthians 5:14 *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:”*

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- b. God desires to use us. In 1954, Sir Winston Churchill met Billy Graham for the first time. Sir Churchill asked Rev. Graham the following question: "Do you have any hope". This question reveals desperation. Christ had a vision to help the lost because they were desperate. In Matthew 9:36 it says *"because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."*

Three things about the lost:

1. They are living in danger
2. They are living in darkness
3. They are living without direction

2. **God can use us when we respond to a challenge with enthusiasm:** verse 37 *"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;"* Christ was enthusiastic about finding the lost. He wanted to please his father. He had a zeal and a desire to do things and he wanted to get them done even if there weren't many to help. One of the biggest sins we have to guard against in the church is praying to see souls saved, but we aren't willing to go out and witness and bring those in. We say "God, we don't want to do it, so you do it." There are two reasons why we should act with enthusiasm:
  - a. **Because of the tremendous job that needs to be done.** Verse 37 said that the harvest truly is plenteous. Joel 3:14 says *"multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision"*. God loves working *through* us. He wants to take our small abilities and do great things with them.
  - b. **Because there are so few willing to become involved, we must be enthusiastic.** The laborers are few. There aren't many willing to help. If we could get Sunday school teachers involved, deacons involved, and church members involved and take what we have and work with what we've got, we could get some things done.
3. **God can use us when we come prayerfully:** [believing] prayer does accomplish things. God said *"pray ye therefore"*. Prayer works. The harvest isn't getting any smaller.
  - a. **Acknowledge that this is God's harvest.** God created this world. Even though God knew that his creation would fall, he still went ahead with creating us. Because of this, we are to be husbandmen of that harvest.
  - b. **Believe that as God adds people, he will add laborers for the harvest.** Every time we get new members that are children of God, we should encourage them to share what Christ has done for them.

We must not wait until others are involved before we get into the harvest. We need to have the desire to go out and do it on our own to see the kingdom of God expanded. Go home and think about what you've done lately. What has your time been spent doing? Have you been working for the Lord or doing things to fulfil your own desires? Honestly think about the time you spend working for God compared to the time you spend doing other things.