

# The Lord Of The Harvest

**John 4:27-42 & Matthew 9:35-38**

**Sunday November 28<sup>th</sup> 2010 Morning Service**

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In John 4 Jesus takes the gospel beyond Israel to Samaritans. It ends in v.42 'We know that this man really is the Saviour of the world'. Also one of 3 occasions Jesus use the language of harvest to challenge his disciples with his heart to reach people with gospel.

## **1. The Mission Of Jesus John 4:27-34**

### **1) The Patience Of Jesus With His Disciples.**

These verses underline the gap between the way Jesus thought & his disciples thought.

They were preoccupied with own needs: though Jesus had called his disciples saying 'Come follow me & I will make you fishers of men' Mark 1:17 the disciples not thinking like that. The disciples of the Saviour of the world went into the Samaritan town, a place of great need, absorbed with shopping. Not unusual for believers to be immersed in a world of need but preoccupied with our own needs.

They were astonished by Jesus' behaviour: v27 'they were surprised to find him talking with a woman'. Seemed strange see v9 & v27. Profound racial, cultural, religious & historical antagonism between Jews & Samaritans: plenty of that still in our world. We may find it really hard to speak to others who are very different to us about the Lord. We may be quite like these discs. Yet Jesus did not give up on his disciples. He challenges them but he does not reject those he has so greatly loved even when they disappoint.

### **2) The Sovereignty Of Jesus In Reaching People.**

In v30 a crowd of Samaritans were making their way to meet Jesus. Who was agent here to draw all these people to Jesus? Not his disciples. It was the Samaritan woman v9 & 39. The centre of outreach and mission is not the church, it is God. This is God's work not ours. It does not stand or fall by us: even though God can use us. So while we want to play the part God calls us to, let us be very humble about it. This is not about our schemes, it is about God's power.

### **3) The Heart Of Jesus In Obeying His Father**

In v31-34 what is it that sustained, drove & energised Jesus? What brought him to earth? What caused him to open a conversation with this woman? He speaks of 'food to eat that you know nothing about'... My food is to do the will of him who sent me & to finish his work' v32 & 34.. Root of it is not his heart to obey his

Father. He sat at the well longing to fulfil his Father's purpose. What did it mean for Jesus to 'finish' his Father's work? Same word he used when he died: 'It is finished'. In John 12 Jesus said 'I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself'. This is great message of early church & it is our message: see 1 Cor 1:22-24.

## 2. The Challenge Of Jesus John 4:35-42

Jesus challenges his disciples using the language of harvest, sowing & reaping. Similar language in Luke 10. Matthew 9 and John 4.

### 1) Understand The Continuum:

Jesus tells them to 'open your eyes & look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest'. What they are seeing is Samaritans coming to Jesus. In Mt 9 & Lk 10 when Jesus uses this language 'the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few' about Jews. In Rom 1:13 Paul uses this language & speaks of 'a harvest among you' (that is in Rome) 'as I have had among other Gentiles'. The language of harvest speaks of the great work of God in gathering people to faith in Jesus in all the world. We often think of 'mission' as something remote: but Jesus uses this language of right where we are, as well as to ends of the earth. Doesn't mission start at home? See Gen 18:18-19 the Lord says 'all nations will be blessed through him (Abraham) 'For I have chosen him so that he will direct his children & household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right & just'. The harvest is also in our workplaces: in the circle of our friends: as well as in church outreaches and there a harvest to the ends of earth. Jesus says 'the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, then the end will come' Mt 24:14.

### 2) See The Immediacy.

Of locality: right here v34 'Do you not say 4 months more & then the harvest? I tell you, open your eyes & look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest'. Their mindset was of delay. Simply needed to see where they were with the eyes of Jesus. Look at the harvest in yr home/yr work/ right here/wherever you go in this world.

Of time: right now. v36 /Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life.' Payment was commonly given only for work completed & the reapers are being paid, even as sowing is going on.

Of importance: right up there as of huge urgent significance: v37 it is the harvest of 'the crop for eternal life.' Could anything matter more? Why are we still here? 'God is patient not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance'. 2 Pet 3:9.

### 3) Share The Partnership:

v26-38 'One sows, another....I sent you to reap what you have not worked for'. Partnership of three: the sower, the reaper & the sender. The harvest is not me by myself. Key player is not sower or reaper. See 1 Cor 3:5-7 'neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow'.

#### 4) Rejoice In The Harvest. V39-42.

'Many of the Samaritans believed in him because of the woman's testimony' v39. V41 'Because of his words many more became believers'. Our task is to bring people to hear the words of Jesus. The result is they said: v42 'this man really is the Saviour of the world'. This is saving truth: all about Jesus.

### 3. The Command Of Jesus Matt 9:36-38.

Here too Jesus speaks about the harvest.

The task is daunting: people are 'harassed & helpless, like sheep without a shepherd'. The need is intense & the scale is vast: 'the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few'. What should we do? Go. But who to? Go to God. The great command is 'Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore to send workers into his harvest field'. If you just rush off to respond to human need you will fall on your face. Rom 10:14-15 'How can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?'

Who is our God? 'The Lord of the harvest'. It is 'his harvest field'. All belongs to him. What do we do? 'Him to send workers'. This is not a going for a select few. It is a going to our God, falling on our knees. On our knees God deals with our hearts. On our knees we begin to see where we are & whole world as God sees it. Let us plead with the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest field.

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