

2) Directed prayer. You don't pray to a group, church, or synogogue, but to the Lord of the harvest. The Father is surely this One (John 15:1), but the function of getting workers on to the field is that of the Spirit (Acts 13).

3) Detailed prayer. The specific thought here is that the Spirit is called upon earnestly to provide the needed leadership. He alone is able to "send forth" laborers. This verb is a compound one meaning to expel (cf. Acts 13).

NOTE: One wonders, in the light of this tremendous revelation if the children of God are really directing their attention properly these days. We plead for workers from pulpits and school rooms, but the prayer room is empty! If we bombard the Glory with our concerns, will He do something about the worker shortage? We dare to believe His response will be faithful to His expressed desire.

c. He acted definitively. v. 35. Some stand around and talk about what ought to be done, but never get involved. That's a great word: involvement. God have mercy upon our generation of viewers and bench warmers. He got involved on three specific fronts of engagement:

- 1) Teaching. This is the common word for ordinary instruction unto learning.
- 2) Preaching. Here is the very useful term for heralding the message.
- 3) Healing. The whole idea of therapeutics is involved here. Whatever the external methodology, it was a people-centered program to satisfy the obvious need of a flock of sheep which needed care and tending.

Conclusion. Today's society is full of smugness and personal concerns. What is really needed is men and women who are saved and possess a lively vision. That vision must be complemented with a generous spirit of deep concern. These issues having been settled, it will be apparent by the action a person gives to the task. He will become involved! Lord, stir us from above until Thou art truly glorified. Amen.

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW  
"The Passion of Christ"  
Matthew 9:35-38

Introduction

1. It will be forever clear in the minds of careful Bible students that the message of the kingdom presented in the Gospels is not the Gospel of God's grace for today (cf. Matt. 3:2 with 1 Cor. 15:1-4). This explains why the disciples did not understand our Lord (Luke 18:31-34). Dispensational distinctions are absolutely necessary to an understanding of the Word of God!

2. The application of all portions of the Word is legitimate so long as one acknowledges the interpretation of the passage within dispensational outlines. This message is one example of application. Would to God we could all be like our blessed Lord as indicated here. It is God's purpose that we should be conformed to Him (Rom. 8:29). Paul urges believers to mimic him in so much as he imitates the Lord (1 Cor. 11:1). Oh, to be like Him!

3. It cannot be stated too strongly that if the worldwide mission of the church of Christ is going to be accomplished adequately, it must be done by a proper adjustment to the Person and Work of our Lord. Some of the areas of adjustment are suggested in this text. Check them out for your own spiritual enrichment:-

1. THE VISION OF CHRIST v. 36.

The common verb for "see" is employed in this text. Hence, it cannot be argued that some special sort of engagement is considered. The verb is suggestive, along with the context, of the kind of vision required:

- a. Individual vision. It is clear that the Lord did not lose the vision of the ones and twos for the sake of the crowds (cf. vv. 22ff.). The Gospel of John is replete with instances of His individual concern (John 3,4,5, etc.). Crowds, yes, but individual people must be seen!

- b. General vision. The word "multitudes" accents our Lord's vision of the general publics. Just as He did not lose sight of the specific person, He also saw the masses (cf. John 6:5).
- c. Dimensional vision. The term "faint" suggests the idea of distressed and harrassed. It describes the sheep of Israel as God saw them through Christ. Further, they are seen as "scattered" which means to be thrown, hurled, or lying down as being worn out and unable to go forward. It is a typical picture of a flock of sheep suffering for lack of careful tender care by a shepherd. The whole idea is developed in the O.T. (Ezek. 34). The case of the Gentile today is not much different. The character of the situation in which sheep find themselves must be seen. Oh, for a vision of people and their needs.

## 2. THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST. v. 36

The Scriptures teach how some of His servants felt toward people. Take a glance at the lives of Moses, Samuel, or Daniel. Try the warm broken hearts of men like Peter, Isaiah, or John. But none can compare with our Lord. See Him as compassionate:-

- a. Externally. This has nothing whatsoever to do with emotional expressions. What is meant is that conveyed by the passive voice of the verb "was moved." This shows that our Lord was influenced from above. He had some external stimulus and it must have been from heaven (John 3:34). The whole mystery of the God-Man (Theanthropic Person) is brought into play here. Such divine movements can only come from the Glory (cf. Judges 16 where it is specifically stated that Samson was as he was because of the Lord and not his hair, v. 20).
- b. Internally. The root meaning of the verb "moved" presses the matter further. It points to the fact that the seat of affections was touched. The viscera are implied here. Whether it be the heart, liver, or lungs, the real man must be moved! God give us men who have a heart.

- c. Fraternally. The compassion of our Lord was "upon them" and this means His feelings were not egocentric, but anthropocentric. He moved toward others. There is no self-pity here, but a genuine sense of active movement in love toward others. This has real spiritual value (cf. Gal. 5:22, 23).

NOTE: The Lord saw needs of people! The needs of people brought a deep sense of emotional involvement. Here is true empathy.

But there is more. When Christ saw a need, He did something about it. The Gospels are replete with examples to support this truth. Look at the text for reinforcement here.

## 3. THE ACTION OF CHRIST. vv. 35, 37-38.

- a. He spoke persuasively. v. 37.
  - 1) It was restricted. The word of our Lord to his own. This is such a blessing to find in the Book. The ministry of reconciliation is given to those who know what it means to belong to Christ. None but saved ones really know about a true "mission" from heaven (John 17:16, 18).
  - 2) It was related. Our Lord's concern in speaking to the disciples is the harvest. Let none say there is no wheat to gather. The Word of God proclaims a harvest is present. It is tragic when the harvest grain is allowed to spoil in the field!
  - 3) It was restrained. The word "laborers" means "workers". A large harvest demands a great number of reapers. The lament here is that there are not sufficient workers to do the job. Where are the reapers?!? There is never a "no help wanted" sign in the Lord's work.
- b. He pleaded prayerfully. v. 38. This includes:
  - 1) Determined prayer. The aorist imperative passive of the verb "to pray" really means that one should suffer himself to be used as a vessel for prayer. The root conveys the idea of begging. Not just prayer ditties, but prayer burdens!