

2.3 Jesus sees the POTENTIAL of the harvest

- Jesus does not focus on the hopelessness of the situation but he focuses on hope.
- Jesus realises that the lost can be saved. He knows that sinners can become saints. He is aware that the guilty can be set free. He believes the unforgiven can be forgiven. And more than anything else he knows that his father in heaven wants to lavish his grace on each member of these crowds. Jesus knows his father's heart, he knows his father's desire which is that each member of those crowds should come back and be in relationship with him.
- Do we see those around us as potential saints?
- We can read the latest report from the Christian Research Group and get depressed or we can look at the situation through Jesus' eyes and see the potential in those crowds of unchurched folk.

2.4 Jesus sees the PROBLEM of the harvest - *"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few."* (Matthew 9:37)

- The problem of lack of harvest is not in the harvest itself, says Jesus. The harvest is plentiful.
- The problem of the lack of harvest is not in God says Jesus, God still saves.
- The problem is *"the workers are few."* (Matthew 9:37)
- The problem today with the church is that so many of us are simply not interested in gathering the plentiful harvest.
- We are not interested in gathering the harvest because that involves time, effort, energy and work.
- With the result that the potential harvest simply sits and rots in the fields.

2.5 Jesus PRAYS for the harvest - *"Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field"* (Matthew 9:38)

- Jesus commands us to pray.
- We need to pray because this is the Lord's work.
- What is impossible with men is possible with God.
- If there is going to be a great reaping of the harvest it will because of God.
- New birth is a miracle. It is based on God's power.
- Only God can heal the lame, only God can raise the spiritually dead, only God can heal sickness, only God can cause dead ears to hear, only God can cause dead tongues to speak.
- It is His power and we must tap into it.

3. Questions to consider at home

3.1 Do you agree with Archbishop's comment on the latest report from the Christian Research Group 'that it should galvanise the Church into realising that it must communicate the gospel where people are or we will not deserve to have a Church'. If you agree what would you suggest that the church does locally to preach the gospel where people are?

3.2 Why does Jesus have *'compassion on the crowds'*?

3.3 A close friend says to you one day that she believes that the moral backbone of this country has gone because people no longer go to church. Would you agree? What might Jesus say?

3.4 Why are we so reluctant to bring the harvest home?

3.5 What practical steps would you recommend to a friend who has a genuine desire to see the harvest brought home?

Matthew Street 26th September 2021



The Parish of Peasedown St John

Matthew 9:35-38 - The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passage Matthew 9:35-38

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."



2. Talk Notes

2.1 Introduction - The outlook is gloomy

- Peter Brierley's Christian Research Group has been involved in gathering and analysing information concerning the Christian Church here in England and Wales for the last forty years and many of his findings have hit the headlines.
- The Group's latest report is no exception and indicates that if trends continue the way they are that by 2040 only 2% of the population in England and Wales will regularly attend a church service on a Sunday.
- This means that as each year goes by more and more people will be unchurched, more and more people will miss out on hearing the gospel.
- There are so many people to reach; *"The harvest is plentiful."* (Matthew 9:37)
- The challenge for today's church is whether we see bringing the harvest in as an important task.
- The Archbishop of Canterbury commenting on the latest report from the Christian Research Group said "The truth is stark. What this report should do is to galvanise the Church into realising that it must communicate the gospel where people are or we will not deserve to have a Church."
- Jesus faces a similar uphill task of growing the Kingdom of God but in this instruction to his disciples Jesus reveals a four point blueprint for bringing the harvest home or for growing the Kingdom of God:
 - i) Jesus sees the PITY of the harvest
 - ii) Jesus see the POTENTIAL of the harvest
 - iii) Jesus sees the PROBLEM of the harvest
 - iv) Jesus PRAYS for the harvest

2.2 Jesus sees the PITY of the harvest *'When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them'* (Matthew 9:36)

- Jesus is moved with compassion. He moved to love, mercy and pity by the crowds that flock to receive from him.
- Jesus does not see them but he sees their need.
- Do we see people like that? Do we see our friends and neighbours in desperate need of the gospel? Do we feel compassion for them?
- Jesus saw the crowds and was moved with compassion for them.

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- Jesus does not focus on the hopelessness of the situation but he focuses on hope.
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