

BIBLE STORY: PRAY THE LORD OF THE HARVEST TO SEND LABORERS

Matthew 9:35—10:8

Central Thoughts

- God gives us pastors because He loves us and has compassion for us.
- We need pastors to preach the Gospel to us and to other sinners who do not know Christ.
- As Jesus was sent into the world to preach the Gospel and forgive sins, so the Father sends ministers into the world to carry out Jesus' ministry on His behalf.
- The forgiveness of sins for Jesus' sake is the power and authority of every pastor.
- We are called to pray for the gift of pastors.

Discussion Questions

What did Jesus do as He went about all the cities and villages?

He taught in their synagogues, preached the Gospel of the kingdom, and healed every sickness and disease of the people.

What did Jesus teach and preach from in the synagogues?

The Old Testament Scriptures (the Law of Moses and the Prophets)

What is the Gospel, or "Good News" of the kingdom?

God forgives sins as a free gift of His love in His Son.

What power was at work in the miracles of Jesus?

The power of His forgiveness.

What were the healing miracles of Jesus a sign of?

The resurrection of the body, and how Jesus' forgiveness will deliver us from all sin, sickness, and death in the resurrection on the last day.

What did Jesus feel in His heart as He looked out over the multitudes?

He was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

What does the word "pastor" mean?

"Shepherd"

What did the multitudes need?

They needed pastors to "shepherd" them by teaching and preaching the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins to them just as Jesus had done.

How does Jesus instruct His disciples on the need for pastors?

He tells them, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

How is the world of souls who do not yet know the gift of Jesus described?

As a field of grain ready to be harvested.

How are the pastors and preachers described?

As laborers who are sent out by the Lord to harvest these souls by preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God.

For what is the Church and every disciple of Jesus to pray?

We are to pray to the Lord of the harvest for the gift of pastors and preachers to proclaim God's Word to those who do not yet know the love of God in Christ.

Who is the Lord of the harvest?

God the Father who sent His Son into the world to save the world. As God the Father sent Jesus into the world, so Jesus sent out His disciples to preach and teach the Gospel of the kingdom.

Who were the first pastors or preachers after Jesus?

His twelve disciples who became His Apostles.

What did Jesus give to His Apostolic ministers who were sent out on His behalf to preach the Word?

He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

By what power do ministers cast out demons and heal the sicknesses and diseases caused by sin?

Christ's Word of forgiveness creates faith, drives away Satan, cleanses us from sin, and gives us the sure and certain promise of the resurrection of the body to eternal life.

Where did Jesus send the Twelve to proclaim that the promised Seed of Abraham had come?

He sent them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel rather than to the Gentiles.

What were the Apostles to tell the children of Israel?

The kingdom of heaven has drawn near to them in Jesus of Nazareth, who was the promised Messiah, the Seed of Abraham, the Son of David, and the Savior of all nations.

What did Jesus tell the Apostles to do for the house of Israel?

They were to preach the Gospel, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons just as Jesus had done.

What does Jesus say to them that teaches us that both pastors and forgiveness are gifts of God's grace?

"Freely you have received, freely give."

How does the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer teach that we are praying for God's Word and the gift of pastors when we pray, "Hallowed be Thy name...?"

"God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity..."

How does the Office of the Keys teach us that Christ's forgiveness is being proclaimed to us by our pastors?

"The Office of the Keys is that special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners..."

How does the Third Article of the Creed teach us that we need pastors to preach the Gospel to us?

"I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel..."

Meditation on the Bible Story

Jesus' ministry continues in the world today as the Lord of the harvest sends out ministers of the Gospel to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments in the stead and by the command of Christ. We are to pray for the gift of pastors for the Church and for those who do not know Christ, because Jesus has compassion on all sinners and came into the world to save. Jesus' gift of forgiveness is the power of God through which the Holy Spirit calls sinners to repentance and faith. Ministers are like laborers who gather the sheaves of grain into the granary at harvest time. Ministers are shepherds who feed, care for, and protect the flock from danger by faithfully preaching the Word that Christ has given to them. We need pastors. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray for the gift of pastors and that they would be faithful to God's Word (First Petition) for our faith and that we might live a holy life. Under the Office of the Keys, we know that Christ Himself and His forgiveness is the power and authority our pastors bring to us. In the Third Article, we are reminded that the Holy Spirit Himself is at work through the preaching of the Gospel and the gifts of the Sacraments to "call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify the whole Christian Church on earth, and to keep it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith." We need pastors because we need to hear the good news of the Kingdom of God. Our faith and salvation depend upon the power of Jesus' forgiveness. As we have freely received this gift, so we are to faithfully pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest that others might receive this gift too.

Prayer on the Bible Story

Heavenly Father, as you sent Jesus into the world to teach and preach the Good News of His forgiveness to sinners, send out laborers into the harvest field of this world, so that Your Church might always have pastors to preach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments of Christ to us and to all who do not know Jesus, through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Pray the Lord of the Harvest to Send Laborers

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