

Harvest Men Needed

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately calls for fervent prayer and dedicated laborers to reap the vast spiritual harvest of souls ready for salvation in a world largely neglected and in need of bold gospel proclamation.

Scripture: Matthew 9:37-38, Matthew 10:1, Ephesians 4:11

Topics: "Prayer for Laborers", "Gospel Proclamation"

Description

In 'Harvest Men Needed,' C.H. Spurgeon addresses the urgent spiritual condition of the world, likening multitudes of souls to a plentiful harvest awaiting reaping. He passionately exhorts believers to pray for and become dedicated laborers who will boldly proclaim the Gospel. Spurgeon highlights the value of souls to God and the necessity of immediate, diligent ministry to prevent eternal loss. This sermon challenges Christians to respond with compassion and practical action in evangelism.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"Then said He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few, pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest. And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Matthew 9:37,38; 10:1.

THE circumstances under which our Lord uttered these words are instructive. He saw the people thronging Him whenever He stood up to preach and He perceived that the regular instructors of the people, those who thought that they were commissioned to teach the nation, were, many of them, leading them into error. And the rest were either shamefully neglecting their duty, or were performing it without heart, zeal, or even sincerity. The poor people fainted and were scattered abroad like sheep without a shepherd, harassed by different fears and cast down by many anxieties. I do not think that the circumstances under which our Lord spoke these words have passed away, but rather that we are living under precisely the same conditions. I would not willingly be guilty of uncharitableness and I bless God that there are many left in our land who are preaching the Gospel in all its purity, and with great earnestness.

But still, it is lamentably true that those who profess to be the only authorized teachers are, a very great number of them, leading the people into spiritual bondage by reviving the old popish and pagan rites. And

those who do preach a measure of the Truth of God too often do not preach it boldly nor simply as they should. Neither is there enough of life and earnest concern for the souls of men among them. How many, even, of our own Churches, where we think the Truth is held, have their pulpits so ill-occupied that they might almost as well be empty as filled as they are, for there is a manifest need of zeal, love and spiritual power, while the clear testimony concerning Jesus is sadly lacking.

At this time the people of many towns and villages are shepherdless sheep, for whose souls no man cares. They are fainting and ready to die and no man lays it to heart. If the circumstances are the same—and he would be a bold man who would dare dispute it—then the text urgently demands our prayerful attention. Our Savior looked upon the people among whom He moved in a manner worthy of our imitation. He was a Man of great feeling. He was "moved with compassion," as the Greek word has it. "His heart yearned." His sympathies were awakened. He could not look upon a mass of men with an indifferent countenance—His inmost soul was stirred.

But at the same time He was no mere enthusiast. He was as calmly practical as if He had been a cool calculator. If He sighed, He did something more than sigh—He proceeded to aid those He pitied. He had practical compassion on the crowd and, therefore, He turned to His disciples and said, "Pray you the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." He did not go about among the masses with all undiscerning admiration of them. I do not hear Him praising them as, "the finest peasantry," or, "the sinew of the nation," as such will do. But neither do we see in Him any trace of aversion to them, as though He felt out of place in their society. He was often saddened by their follies and grieved by their sins, but He never loathed them or spoke contemptuously of them. The common people heard Him gladly because they saw that He had sympathy with them. Though in character grandly aristocratic, He was in manner and life profoundly democratic. He was the King, and yet, "One chosen out of the people." He loved them with all His heart.

It is clear, also, that He never grew discouraged in laboring for their good. You never hear Him say that it is useless to preach to the multitude, that they are too degraded, too priest-ridden, or too ignorant. No discouragement ever dampened His ardor. He persevered till His work was done. A brave, glorious heart was that of Jesus, always melted to tenderness, but, at the same time, always practical. He was never influenced either by admiration, or aversion, or discouragement, so as to cease from practical methods of bettering the condition of the people among whom He dwelt.

Take note, therefore, that we are about to speak upon a practical matter and I trust it may become so this morning that many may be influenced to pray according to the bidding of their Lord and, that the sincerity of their prayers may be proven by their subsequent endeavors to obtain their petitions.

I. First, our Lord STATES THE CASE of men of His time and ours. The people who gathered around Him He likens to harvest fields—wherein lay the similarity? First, He thought of the great multitudes. The thought of multitudes rises naturally from the sight of a harvest field and when the crop is plenteous the idea of multitude forces itself upon you at once. You cannot count the ears of corn, neither will you be able to count the sons of men. I suppose our Savior alluded, first of all, to the crowds around Himself, but His mind, being much more capacious than ours, He remembered all the thousands of Israel. No, I think He could not have restricted His heart to the little country of Israel. He glanced across the seas and beyond the mountains to the myriads of mankind swarming upon this globe!

Brothers and Sisters, it crushes one to think of the millions of our species. Nobody, yet, has been able to obtain an idea of the vast extent of this one city of London. You shall traverse it from end to end as long as you will, and you shall study its statistics, but you have no conception what the population of London is and you never will have—the mass is too great. But what is London compared with our nation and with the millions that speak our mother tongue all over the world? Yet even these are but a small portion of the innumerable host. We never shall be able to obtain even a fringe of a conception of China with its teeming millions, or of that other populous nation which owns our scepter, Hindustan.

Multitudes are in the valley of existence, as the drops from the rain cloud and as the leaves upon the forest trees—such are the sons of men. You might as well count the stars in the heavens or the waves of the sea as hope to reckon the myriads which have sprung from the loins of Adam. All these must be reaped and gathered into the Gospel garner or they must perish. All these must have laborers sent of God to gather them in or they will miss a blissful immortality. Well did our Savior compare the myriads of the sons of men with the multitude of the ears of corn in the harvest field.

Our Lord intended to set forth a second idea, which dwelt, perhaps, still more prominently in His mind and it was that of value. He did not speak of blades of grass, mark you, in His comparison, but of ears of corn. He did not talk of tares as He did in other parables. He did not speak of loose pebbles by the sea coast, or worthless grains of sand—He compared the multitude to wheat—and what is there more precious than corn? Is it not to us most valuable, because it is the sustenance of our life? Do we not, for this cause, gather it in with shouts? Harvest-home is always gladsome because we prize its sheaves! Much toil and care have been spent to secure the production of the harvest and when the yellow fields wave before our eyes we cannot despise them—we know that they are more precious than anything else that comes up out of the earth.

So is it to God and to Jesus, God's Son. He did not look upon men of any sort as things to be despised. He would not have the least among them treated as chattels nor regarded with contempt. He knew the wisdom which was displayed in the creation of the fabric of their bodies and in the faculties of their souls. He knew how God takes delight in men and how good men, sanctified men, give to God's heart a joy like the joy of harvest—and how men who have gone astray, when they are restored, make the great Father's heart leap within Him with a joy which angels cannot give! Of all creatures under Heaven, the most precious thing to God is man. He cares nothing for gems of the mine or pearls of the sea, but men He values so much that He gave His only-begotten Son to bleed and die that they might not perish, but have everlasting life.

The souls of the multitude are precious in the sight of the Lord, even as corn is precious to the farmer. But when the Lord spoke of them as a harvest, He had before His mind the idea of danger to them. The harvest in our own country is just now ripe and ready for the sickle. But suppose the owner of some large estate should walk through his broad acres and should say, "I have a great harvest—look at those far-reaching fields. But the country has become depopulated, the people have emigrated and I have no laborers. There are one or two yonder. They are reaping with all their might. They make long days and they toil till they faint—but over yonder there are vast ranges of my farm unreaped and I have not a sickle to thrust in. The corn is being wasted and it sorely grieves me. See how the birds are gathering in troops to prey upon the precious ears! Meanwhile the season is far advanced, the autumn damps are already upon us and the chill, frosty

nights which are winter's vanguard are on their way. Mildew is spoiling the grain and what remains sound will shell out upon the ground, or swell with the moisture and become of no service."

Behold in this picture the Redeemer! He looks upon the world today and He says within Himself, "All these multitudes of precious souls will be lost, for there are so few reapers to gather them in. Here and there are men who, with prodigious energy, are reaping all they can and all but fainting as they reap. And I am with them and blessed sheaves are taken home, but what are these among so many?" Look, Brothers, can your eyes see it? Can even an eagle's wing fly over the vast fields and unreaped plains without growing weary in the flight? There are the precious ears—they decay, they rot, they perish, they are ruined—to the loss of God and to their own eternal injury! And it grieves the Great Farmer that it should be so.

That is still the case today and it ought to grieve us that it should be so, for His sake, and for the sake of our fellow men! A multitude of precious souls were perishing and this, the Savior lamented. The Savior had yet another thought, namely, that the masses were accessible, for He used the same expression when the people came streaming out of Samaria to the well to hear Him, drawn out by curiosity created by the woman's story. He said to His disciples, "Lift up now your eyes, behold the fields are white already to the harvest." Now, when people are ready to hear the Word, then it is that the fields are ripe—and our Lord meant that as the wheat ears do not oppose the sickle, but stand there, and a man has but to enter into the field and use the sickle and the result will surely follow, so there are times when nothing is needed but to preach the Gospel and the souls which otherwise would perish, will surely be gathered in.

I do not believe, my Brothers, that at any time the world has had a dull ear to the Gospel. Who have gathered the crowds? Such men as Augustine and Chrysostom! And what was their preaching but the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Who have gathered them? Such men as John Buss, Jerome, Luther, Calvin, and the like, about whom there was ever a sweet savor of Christ. Who have gathered them in this land? Who but our Wycliffe and our Knox? Who gathered them in later days but our Whitfield and our Wesley—men who spoke the common language of the people and who had no theme but Jesus Crucified! They will not go to hear your philosophers—they leave you and your philosophers to the spiders and the dry rot! But preach Jesus and His precious blood, and tell men that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, and they will hear you gladly!

I heard but last week from a missionary who spends nights in working for his Lord in gin palaces and the lowest resorts of the people, that he has scarcely ever met with an insult. The people received his tracts and thanked him for his kind words. I find it continually asserted by our city missionaries and those who visit cab ranks, or omnibus yards, or work among other public servants, that in general there is a willing attention to the Gospel. The fields stand asking us to reap them—but there are not reapers enough—the grain perishes for lack of laborers! The people are accessible. What country is there where the Gospel cannot be preached? Fast closed was China, but you may go throughout the length and breadth of the land and talk of Christ, if you will.

Japan is open to you and Africa has laid bare her central secret. Spain, fast shut as with a seal, is this day set free and Italy rejoices in the same liberty. All the world lies before the reapers of the Most High, but where are they? "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." The idea of immediate need is contained in the figure, for the reaping of the harvest is, to a considerable extent, with the farmer a matter of now or never. "Ah," he says, "if I could postpone the harvest. If I could let it be gathered in by slow degrees. If we could work on till the harvest moon has gone and then through November and December till winter closes the year—then the scantiness of laborers would be a small evil! But there is a limited time

in which the wheat can be safely housed and it must be harvested before winter begins, or it is lost to us."

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, there is no time for us to waste in the salvation of the sons of men! They will not live forever! Yon gray head will not tarry till you have told him the Gospel if you postpone the good news for the next 10 years. We speak of what we hope may be accomplished for our race in half a century, but this generation will be buried before that time. You must reap yon harvest at once, or it will be destroyed! It must be gathered in speedily, or it will perish. Today, today, today the imperative necessities of manhood appeal to the benevolence of Christians. Today the sure destruction of the unbeliever speaks with pleading voice to the humanity of every quickened heart. "We are perishing! Will you let us perish? You can only help us by bringing us the Gospel now! Will you delay?" Thus we have indicated the design of the Master in selecting the figure of a harvest.

II. And now, secondly, I desire to point out to you THE SERVICE NEEDED. The world being represented as a harvest, the need was for "laborers." I have never seen in any commentary or sermon I have yet met with, any working out of the metaphor of laborers in the harvest field, and yet the meaning lies upon the very surface—I will call your attention to it in a moment, when I have noticed, first, that our Savior tells us that laborers are needed. There are certain persons in the world who do not believe in instrumentalities and habitually depreciate them. Our Savior was not of their mind. He did not say, "The harvest truly is plenteous, and the laborers are few, but that matters not, God can bless a few and make them accomplish as much as many."

He believed in His Father's Omnipotence, but He also believed that the Lord would work by means, and that many laborers were required to gather in a plenteous harvest—and therefore He told us to pray for them. He believed in results being proportionate to means used and He, therefore, bid us go to the root of the matter practically. Neither did our Lord say, "The laborers are few, therefore pray God to do the work. He can do it alone and has no need of men. You think too much of men. Your one-man ministry ought to be put away." No, Jesus did not talk so. We do not see any trace of such sentiments in our Savior's teaching—our Master never made too much of men but He made a very great deal of men anointed of the Spirit and sent to preach—in fact He taught us to pray for them.

And the very last thing He did for us when He went to Heaven was to give us men, for it is written, "He received gifts for men; and gave some Apostles, some Evangelists, some pastors and teachers." If we despise what Christ evidently prizes as His Ascension gift, we may fancy we are honoring God, but we shall grieve His Spirit. He would have us attach great importance to the instrumentality. He bids us know that though God could reap His harvest without men, He will not do it. Could He not bring forth a spiritual reaping machine? Modern invention has done this for the farmer and the same idea could be carried out in spiritual things—and so thousands would be converted in an hour without human agency!

But the Lord asks for no such inventions. He does not direct us to ask for spiritual reaping machines, but to pray the Master to send laborers into the harvest. And what kind of men does the Master mean to use? This is indicated in the text. First, they must be laborers. The man who does not make hard work of his ministry will find it very hard work to answer for his idleness at the Last Great Day. A gentleman who wants an easy life should never think of occupying the Christian pulpit. He is out of place there and when he gets there the only advice I can give him is to get out of it as soon as possible, and if he will not leave the position voluntarily, I call to mind the language of Jehu concerning Jezebel, "Fling her down," and think the

advice applicable to a lazy minister.

An idler has no right in the pulpit! He is an instrument of Satan in damning the souls of men. The ministry demands brain labor. The preacher must throw his thought into his teaching and read and study to keep his mind in good trim. He must not weary the people by telling them the Truth of God in a stale, unprofitable manner, with nothing fresh from his own soul to give force to it. Above all, he must put heart work into his preaching. He must feel what he preaches—it must never be with him an easy thing to deliver a sermon—he must feel as if he could preach his very life away before the sermon is done. There must be soul work in it—the entire man must be stirred up to effort—the whole nature that God has endowed him with must be concentrated with all its vigor upon the work in hand. Such men we need.

To stand and drone out a sermon in a kind of articulate snoring to a people who are somewhere between awake and asleep must be wretched work. I wonder what kind of excuse will be given by some men at last for having habitually done this? To promulgate a dry creed, go over certain doctrines and expound and enforce them logically, but never to deal with men's consciences, never to upbraid them for their sins, never to tell them of their danger, never to invite them to a Savior with tears and entreaties? What a powerless work is this! What will become of such preachers? God have mercy upon them! We need laborers, not loiterers! We need men on fire and I beseech you, ask God to send them. The harvest can never be reaped by men who will not labor—they must off with their coats and go at it in their shirt-sleeves—I mean they must doff their dignities and get to Christ's work as if they meant it, like real harvest men. They must sweat at their work, for nothing in the harvest field can be done without the sweat of the face, nor in the pulpit without the sweat of the soul.

But what kind of laborers are required? First, they must be men who will go down into the wheat. You cannot reap wheat by standing a dozen yards off and beckoning to it. You must go up close to the standing stalks. Every reaper knows that. And you cannot move people's hearts and bring men to Christ by imagining yourself to be a superior being who condescends wonderfully when he shakes hands with a poor man. There is a very genteel order of preaching which is as ridiculous as reaping with a lady's ivory-handled pocket knife, with kid gloves on! And I do not believe in God's ever blessing it. Get among the wheat, like men in earnest! God's servants ought to feel that they are one with the people.

Whoever they are, they should love them, claim kinship with them, be glad to see them and look them in the face and say, "Brother." Every man is a Brother of mine. He may be a very bad one, but for all that I love him and long to bring him to Jesus. Christ's reapers must get among the wheat.

Now, see what the laborer brings with him. It is a sickle. His communications with the corn are sharp and cutting. He cuts right through, cuts the corn down and casts it on the ground. The man whom God means to be a laborer in His harvest must not come with soft and delicate words and flattering doctrines concerning the dignity of human nature, and the excellence of self-help, and of earnest endeavors to rectify our lapsed condition and the like. Such mealy mouthedness may God curse, for it is the curse of this age. The honest preacher calls a sin a sin and a spade a spade, and says to men, "You are ruining yourselves! While you reject Christ you are living on the borders of Hell and before long you will be lost to all eternity. There shall be no mincing the matter, you must escape from the wrath to come by faith in Jesus, or be driven forever from God's Presence and from all hope of joy."

The preacher must make his sermons cut. He is not to file off the edge of his scythe for fear it should hurt somebody. No, my Hearers, we mean to hurt you! Our sickle is made on purpose to cut. The Gospel is

intended to wound the conscience and to go right through the heart with the design of separating the soul from sin and self, as the corn is divided from the soil. Our object is to cut the sinner right down, for all the comeliness of the flesh must be slain, all his glory, all his excellence must be withered and the man must be as one dead before he can be saved. Ministers who do not aim to cut deep are not worth their salt. God never sent the man who never troubles men's consciences. Such a man may be an ass treading down the corn, but a reaper he certainly is not! We need faithful ministers.

Pray God to send them! Ask Him to give us men who will preach the whole Truth of God. Who will not be afraid of certain humbling doctrines, but will bring out, for instance, the doctrine of Election and not be ashamed of it. Who will tell men that salvation is of the Lord and will not go about to please them by letting them have a finger in salvation, as though they were to share in the glory of it! Oh for laborers who can use sharp cutting sickles upon ungodly hearts! But then a laborer has only begun when he cuts the corn—much more is needed. As he cuts, he lets the corn fall onto his arm, and then he lays it along in rows. But afterwards he binds it together and makes it into bundles, that it may be gathered in.

So the laborer whom God sends into the field must be a gathering laborer. He must be one who brings God's people together, who comforts those that mourn and picks up from the earth those who were cut down by the sharp sickle of conviction. He must bind the saints together, edifying them in their most holy faith. Alas, how many have been scatterers, rending Churches to pieces? Pray the Lord of the harvest to give His Church binders who can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, unite men's hearts! Remember, also, that the laborer's work is never done in harvest time till he sees the corn housed—until it is made into a stack or put into a barn, his toil is not over. And the Christian minister, if God has truly anointed him to His work, never leaves caring for souls till they get to Heaven. He is like Mr. Greatheart, with Christiana and Mercy and the children—he goes with them from the City of Destruction, right up to the River Jordan—and if he could, he would go through the river with them.

It is his business to march in front with his shield—to meet the dragons and giants with his sword—and protect the little ones. It is his to be tender to them as a shepherd with the lambs and a nurse with her children, for he longs to present them at the last to his Master and say, "Here am I, and the children that You have given me." Brother minister, ours is a great work and it never ceases from the first moment when our sickle touches the conscience and wounds it, to the last moment when we are enabled to present our people before the Lord, saved, by His Grace, forever! The Church needs men sent of the Holy Spirit who can do all this, by God's help, for though the Lord works all things, He does it by men and men are needed everywhere that the work may be accomplished. Thus have we described the service required.

III. The third thing is, our Lord DIRECTED HIS DISCIPLES HOW TO OBTAIN A SUPPLY. He bids them pray for such men. Every word here is instructive. "Pray you." Brothers and Sisters, do you ever pray God to send such workers into His vineyard? How long since you heard that prayer prayed, except from this pulpit? Pray you, every one of you! Are you in the habit of doing so every morning and night? Why is there such a dearth of really warm-hearted, loving, earnest Evangelists in England? It is because they are not asked for! God will not give them to us if we do not ask for them. If there is one thing noticeable in this Church it is our continual prayer that God may be pleased to raise up among us men who will work for Him, and He has done it! And He continue will to do it if we continue to pray for it.

But if you do not pray that God would send forth the laborers and the laborers do not come, who is to blame? "Pray you." "Pray you therefore," He says, as if the very fact that there are so many precious souls

perishing should be our argument for praying, "Lord, it is not a few score that are left untaught and unsaved, but millions in our own land and hundreds of millions in other lands! Therefore, Lord, we do pray You send forth laborers." We are to pray to the Lord, for it is the Lord's business. Only the Lord can send us the right men. He has a right to send whom He pleases, for it is His own harvest and a man may employ whom he wills in his own field.

It would be all in vain to appeal to anybody else. It is of no use to appeal to bishops to find us laborers. God alone has the making of ministers and the raising up of true workers. And therefore the petition must be addressed to Him. "Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest." The Lord's Prayer, in its first three petitions, contains this prayer—"Our Father which are in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, in earth as it is in Heaven." Does not that mean, "Lord, send forth men who may teach this world to hallow Your name, that they, through Your Spirit's power, may be the means of making Your kingdom come and causing Your will to be done in earth as it is in Heaven"? We ought to pray continually to the great Lord of the harvest for a supply of earnest laborers.

And do you notice the expression used here, "that He would send forth laborers." Now the Greek is much more forcible. It is that He would push them forward and thrust them out. It is the same word which is used for the expulsion of a devil from a man possessed. It takes great power to drive a devil out—it will need equal power from God to drive a minister out to His work. I always say to young fellows who consult me about the ministry, "Don't be a minister if you can help it," because, if the man can help it, God never called him! But if he cannot help it, and he must preach or die, then he is the man! May the Lord push men out, thrust them out, drive them out and compel them to preach the Gospel! For unless they preach by a Divine compulsion, there will be no spiritual compulsion in their ministry upon the hearts of others. "Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would thrust out laborers into His harvest."

And notice, Beloved, that our Lord said, "into His harvest." I like that, because the harvest is not ours. If that harvest shall perish, it is our heavenly Father's harvest that perishes. This makes it weigh upon my soul. If they told me that the harvest of some harsh, overbearing tyrant was perishing, I might say, "Let it! If he had it, what good would it be to him or anybody else? He grinds the faces of the poor. Who wants to see him rich?" But when it is our gracious God, our blessed loving Father—one cannot bear the thought—and yet Jesus puts it before us that it is God's harvest which is perishing for need of reaping!

Suppose an angel should take you upon his wing and poise you in mid-space some hundreds of miles above the earth where you could look down on the globe with strengthened eyesight? Suppose you rested there and the world revolved before you 24 hours? You would see the sun and gradually all portions of it. And suppose that with the sunlight there should be rendered visible certain colors which would mark where there was Divine Grace, where there was idolatry, where there was atheism, where there was popery? You would grieve to see only here and there upon our globe, like little drops of dew, bright marks of the Grace of God—and many shades of darkness would show you that the whole world still lies in the Wicked One.

And if the vision changed and you saw the two hemispheres spread out like a map and transformed into a corn field with corn all white for the harvest. How sad would you be to see here and there men reaping their little patches, doing the best they can, but the great mass of the corn untouched by the sickle. You would see leagues of land where never an ear was reaped, that we know of, from the foundations of the world. You would be grieved to think that God's corn is spoiling—men whom He has made in His own image, and made for immortality, perishing for lack of the Gospel. "Pray you," that is the stress of the

whole text—"Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would thrust forth laborers into His harvest," that these fields may not rot before our eyes.

Will you pray it, my Brothers and Sisters? This text is laid on my heart. It lies more on my heart than any other in the Bible. It is one that haunts me perpetually and has done for many years. What can one voice, one tongue, do? That is why we instituted the College, that men might be instructed in the way of God more perfectly, and you, my beloved people, have helped me these many years, for which I thank you, thank you lovingly and with all my heart! You have never ceased from that best of works and therefore you, as a Church, can honestly pray because you work as well as pray. Some Churches cannot do so—they despise the teaching of a simple man of utterance—but they love him that can read the Scriptures in the original tongue and speak his own language correctly.

But you have taken tenderly and generously to the work and God has blessed you, and at this very moment some 300 of your sons, nursed at your knees, are preaching the same Gospel which we are preaching here, for which let God be praised! While we give let us pray and when we have prayed, let us give, that God may send forth laborers into His harvest.

IV. The last point is this—THE LORD JESUS HEARD THEIR PRAYERS—He did send forth laborers. I feel vexed

with the fellow who chopped the Bible up into chapters. I forget his name just now and I am sure it is not worth remembering. I have heard that he did the most of his carving of the new Testament between London and Paris, and rough work he made of it. Surely he was chaptering the Gospel of Matthew while he was crossing the Channel, for he has divided it in such strange places. He has chopped this passage in two. "Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

Down comes the meat axe, right across a bone! Let us put the bones together, and read what is next. "And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out." It appears, then, that the Lord told them to pray that God would raise up laborers and then called them to be the laborers themselves! "You have been praying for men," he said, "and you are the very men yourselves." He puts His hands upon them one by one. "You prayed God to send out laborers, come here Matthew, come here Peter, James, John. I heard you pray as I told you, and behold I send you forth to work for Me." What if God, this morning, should move some of you to feel that men are perishing and you cannot let them perish? What if you should pray, "Lord, send out men to save souls," and then He should put His hands on you and say, "You are the man yourself. Behold I send you"?!

I do not suppose the 12 dreamed for a moment that they would be sent forth to be reapers, but so the Lord of the harvest had decreed. Have I not some men here who, if they thought it over, would say, "Lord, I am of uncouth speech and I cannot serve You as I would, but such as I have, I give You"? And, dear Brother, when you begin to talk about the Savior, you do not know how well you will succeed. And if you do not please yourself, that does not matter if you please God. There is another, a man who has been dumb half his life, and yet, if he did but know it, has force and power in him. "But I shall never preach," says one. If you do not preach you can serve God another way. Could you not start a Prayer Meeting in your house? Some of you live in different parts of London, could you not commence such interests?

Do something for Jesus! Some of you good women, could you not get young women together and talk to them about the Savior? Yes, but perhaps I have some Brother here who has been smothering in his heart a desire to go into the missionary field. Brother, do not quench the Spirit! You may be missing your

vocation while trying to suppress that desire. I would sooner you should burst into fanaticism, some of you, and become right down fools in enthusiasm rather than remain as the Church now is, in a dead coolness, caring little for the souls of men. What do Christian people nowadays think of? If they hear about Japan, they say, "Oh, we shall have a new trade there!" But do they say, "Who among us can go to Japan to tell them of the Gospel?"

Do you not think that merchants, and soldiers, and sailors and such like people who trade with distant parts of the world are the very persons to spread the Gospel? Should not a Christian man say, "I shall try and find a trade for myself which will bring me into contact with a class of persons that need the Gospel. And I will use my trade as the stalking horse for Christ. Since hypocrites use religion as a stalking horse for gain, I will make my trading subservient to my religion." "Oh," says one, "we can leave that to the Society." God bless the Society and, I was going to say, smother the Society rather than alloy it to smother personal effort! We need our godly merchants, working men, soldiers and sailors everywhere to feel, "I cannot go and get a proxy in the shape of a Society to do this for me. In the name of God I will do it myself and have a share in this great battle."

If you cannot labor, yourself, the Society is the grandest thing conceivable, for you may help others. But still the main cry from Christ is that you, yourself, should go into the highways and hedges and as many as you find, compel them to come in to the Gospel feast. The world is dying! The grave is filling! Hell is boasting and yet you have the Gospel! Can it be that you do not care to win souls, do not care whether men are damned or saved? The Lord wake us from this stony-hearted barbarity to our fellow men and make us yearn over them, care about them, pray about them and work for them till the Lord shall arise and send forth laborers into His harvest!

But I remember that some of you may very well be unconcerned about others, for you are unconcerned about yourselves. Oh, I do implore you, remain so no longer! Live not upon the brink of the grave without a Savior! Sport not between the jaws of Hell, but fly to Him, to Him who never did reject a sinner that came to Him and never will. God hear you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Matthew 9:9-38; 10:1.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/harvest-men-needed/>

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