

**Mat 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.”

40-09-02-Christ’s Heart for the Harvest

compassion, prayer, evangelism

Mat 9:35-38

Jesus wants to give us His own heart for seeking lost sheep.

**INTRODUCTION:** (Text as Scripture Reading)

–Jesus was a *busy, effective, seeker of lost sheep*. But He *didn’t* plan to do God’s work by Himself: He came as our Role-Model. **HOM.idea.**

–[In my teens I heard a pastor say, “*Reaching folks for Christ isn’t just my job, it’s everybody’s job!*”]. If we want to follow Jesus and finish what He started, we must keep our heart aligned with His heart, *and His heart is...*

**I. A Heart That Deals with People’s Needs– v.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.*

A. What He did *for* Kingdom outreach, He *still* wants to do:

1. He still wants to reach “*all the towns and villages*”– (What is His Great Commission? “Go,” and “I am with you”).
2. He taught “*in their synagogues*” (He’s still set on setting religious people straight (spreading orthodoxy [lit., *straight doctrine*]).
3. He went “*preaching the good news of the kingdom*” (It’s still *good news!*)

B. What He did *as* the Kingdom’s King, He *still* wants to do:

1. He was “*healing*”– mending what’s been broken [Humpty-Dumpty can’t be healed by the King’s men *or us*, but *only* by the King!]
2. Because *sin* disrupted the whole human condition, Jesus dealt with “*every disease and sickness*” [every dis-ease] (*God* addresses every aspect of our dis-ease, *partially now* but *completely in eternity*.)

**TRANS:** *Christ’s humanity* in time and space limited His dealing with Kingdom needs. His desire for seeking the lost was larger than His own lifetime. So, **Jesus wants to give His heart to us**, to carry on the work of **seeking lost sheep**. What kind of heart does He have?

**II. A Heart That Feels Compassion for People– v.36.** *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

A. When “*he saw the crowds*,” He saw more than faces: **He saw\***

1. \*different backgrounds, different histories of *trial* and *tragedy*.

2. \*emotional wounds, lingering scars of hurt and bitterness.
  3. \*varying degrees of distance or nearness to God and to truth.
  4. \*ultimate destinies, based on people's free-will choices.... **AND**
- B. "he had compassion" ["intense, deep-seated pity"— words often used of Jesus]
1. He felt compassion for the suffering— **Mat 14:14**, When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he was moved with intense, deep-seated pity and healed their sick.
  2. He felt compassion for the grieving— **Luke 7:13**, When the Lord saw her, he was moved with intense, deep-seated pity for her and he said, "Don't cry." (then he raised this widow's dead son to life)
  3. He felt compassion for the hungry— **Mat 15:32**, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I am moved with intense, deep-seated pity for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."
  4. He felt compassion for the lonely— **Mark 1:41** (to the outcast leper who asked for healing) Moved with intense, deep-seated pity, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"
- C. Here in particular, **He felt compassion for the "crowds" because\***
1. \*"they were harassed and helpless" [worn to a frazzle or laid low] (Life can wear us down to a point of exhaustion and despair.)
  2. \*"they were...like sheep without a shepherd" (He was calling lost sheep to follow Him and was teaching found sheep to find others.)

**TRANS:** *Christ's compassion is meant to be a contagious condition that spreads to His followers. His compassion for lost sheep sent Jesus to the Cross. He calls us to take up our crosses and follow Him, seeking lost sheep with a heart like His. His example is...*

**III. A Heart That Kneels in Prayer for People— v.37-38.** *Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

- A. We need to pray with eyes open on the world [How? by direct contact with missionaries, or by reading the magazines or newsletters of ministries.]
1. The problem isn't the harvest: "The harvest is plentiful"— **John 4:35**, Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. (The harvest is great!)
  2. So what's wrong? "the workers are few" (or limited) **Limited how?\***
    - a. \*in number? (No lack of soldiers, just not enough on duty!)
    - b. \*in time? (It does run out)— **John 9:4**, As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

- B. We need to pray with hearts open to the Holy Spirit:
1. Jesus says, "Ask the Lord of the harvest" (Glance briefly at the problems of harvesting, but gaze intently on the Lord of the harvest.)
  2. While asking God "to send out workers," we need to be ready to go ourselves (Maybe during our worship time, Jesus might speak to some of us about sharing Him with others— **Acts.13:2**, While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.")
  3. When we step out of our own room, we are stepping "into his harvest field," because the harvest of lost sheep is all over the place!
- C. Jesus began the job of harvesting, but even His apostles couldn't complete the work, **SO**, He calls upon us, His Church, to finish the task of seeking lost sheep and bringing them to Him.)

### **CONCLUSION:**

—God wants us to pray for workers, while being ready to go ourselves (and that might be as simple as just going next door to share our Christian testimony with a neighbors and inviting them to church).  
 —Physically Jesus is no longer in the harvest field except in us as His Body, the Church. That's why **He wants to give us His own heart for seeking lost sheep. I want to close by emphasizing this point...**  
 —from "**Jesus Christ and We**" (a poem by Annie Johnson Flint)

Christ has no hands but our hands	He has no tongue but our tongues
To do his work today;	To tell men how He died;
He has no feet but our feet	He has no help but our help
To lead men in His way;	To bring them to His side.

Let's be open and listening to Jesus' heartbeat for the lost.