

Ripe for Harvest Part 7

Partnering with the Lord in His Harvest Fields

Thesis: Our Triune God-- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit-- is at work all around us. The fields are ripe for harvest (John 4:34-38). We are called to partner with the Lord in his harvest fields (Matthew 9:35-38). May we see what God sees, feel what the Lord feels, pray what the Lord leads us to pray, and go as he sends us in his anointing, empowering, and grace.

Text: John 4:34-38; Matthew 9:35-38

Intro: Today is our last message in this sermon series, *Ripe for Harvest*. We all have the privilege and calling of praying, giving, and going locally and globally for the purpose of joining the Lord in his harvest fields.

1. **Jesus wants us to wake up and get in on what God is doing today.**
 - a. *"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" (John 4:35).*
 - b. Hear the word of the Lord to us: **Open your eyes and look at the fields. The fields are ripe for harvest... today!**

2. **We have story to tell and a message to demonstrate to those around us.**
 - a. *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" (Matthew 9:35-38).*
 - b. Like Jesus, we both proclaim and demonstrate what it is like when the Lord rules and reigns.

3. **We are invited to see what the Lord sees, feel what the Lord feels, pray what the Lord leads us to pray, and go as the Lord sends us in his anointing, empowering, and grace (Matthew 9:36-38).**

4. **We get to partner with the Lord in our spheres of influence, helping people in their spiritual journeys to come to know and follow Jesus.**
 - a. *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 [As you are going], **make disciples of all***

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

- b. We are not looking to make good church members.
 - i. We are not seeking to produce consumer Christians.
 - ii. Rather, we want to help people follow the Lord Jesus Christ, to follow the way of Jesus.

5. Jesus was sent by the Father. The Risen Christ, in turn, sends you and me into his Father's harvest fields.

- a. *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! **As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.**" 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven" (John 20:19-23).*
- b. The Lord comes to bring shalom-- wholeness, well-being, human flourishing, peace, the kingdom of God—even in the midst of difficult, trying, and changing circumstances (v. 19-21).
- c. You are a sent one (v. 21).
- d. You and I need empowering encounters with the Holy Spirit (v. 22).
- e. You and I are authorized to minister on behalf of Jesus and to declare what he declares (v. 23).

6. The Lord is mobilizing and empowering his people to touch all the nations of the earth.

- a. *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, **and to the ends of the earth**" (Acts 1:8).*
 - i. *Receive power:* We need the power of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus sends us in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. *My witnesses:* We are authorized, commissioned, and sent ones.
 - iii. *You will be my witnesses:* We don't go on our own, but in relationship with the Lord and in companionship with others.
 - iv. **Witnesses** share what they have seen, heard, and experienced (1 John 1:1-3).

- b. *I know everything they've ever done or thought. I'm going to come and then gather everyone—all nations, all languages. They'll come and see my glory. 19 I'll set up a station at the center. I'll send the survivors of judgment all over the world: Spain and Africa, Turkey and Greece, and the far-off islands that have never heard of me, who know nothing of what I've done nor who I am. I'll send them out as missionaries to preach my glory among the nations” (Isaiah 66:18-19 MSG).*
- i. There are people, from Greater Houston to the most distant places, who have never heard of the Lord and who know nothing of who God is or what he has done.
 - ii. We are sent out as his emissaries to proclaim his glory in the midst of every tongue, tribe, language, and nation. We have the privilege and joy to share the name and fame of the Lord, telling others who God is and what God has done.
 - iii. And, our message and ministry, in the power of the Holy Spirit, will bear much fruit to the glory of the Lord.
- c. *Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." 11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" 13 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes--who are they, and where did they come from?" 14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. 16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 7:9-17).*
- i. This passage describes the harvest during the great tribulation just before Jesus returns. Between now and then, there are many people to whom we are sent.
 - ii. And, our labors for and with the Lord are not in vain. There will be people around the throne of God from every tongue, tribe,

language, and nation. There will be a harvest that is too numerous to count.

- iii. Our Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of the fruit of his suffering and the desire of his heart.

Summary

Calvary, we have a great heritage of partnering locally and globally with the Lord in his harvest fields. Since we founded our church, we have tithed to missions. And, we have given over and above as a sending and servicing agent for people throughout the world.

Each year, together, we are privileged to sow hundreds of thousands of dollars into ministries and missionaries around the globe. And, we have the joy of catalyzing, mobilizing, and equipping people to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel of the kingdom of God from our Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. It is all because Jesus is worthy. We want to prepare the way for the Lord. We want people from every tongue, tribe, language, and nation on earth to know the fame and name of our God, joining with the saints, angels, creatures, and elders around his throne forever and ever.

Application: We all have the privilege and calling of praying, giving, and going locally and globally for the purpose of joining the Lord in his harvest fields.

1. In what way or ways are you serving in the harvest fields inside of Calvary?
2. In what way or ways are you serving in the harvest fields outside of Calvary?

Prayer

1. May we be stirred with expectation.
2. May we be captured with the vision of what the Lord is doing in and around us.
3. May each of us receive power from on high, not to have a better, happier life, but so that we can join Jesus on his mission in the earth.

Ministry Time

Missional Continuum

(From Faithwalking 201, pps. 180 – 181)

Ken Shuman, one of the Faithwalking community leaders, has developed a way of thinking about how we move mission from a compartment of our lives to its becoming a way of life. He has developed a missional continuum (see below) that helps to show that there is a developmental process that you engage as you learn to live the missional life. At each point on the continuum, God is developing something in you that is needed for the next stage of your development.

Missional Continuum

- **Missional Awareness:** I have a growing understanding of my true self and of how that true self is designed to join God in God's mission in the world. I will accomplish this through experiential boundary crossing. I will begin to notice the people in my life that I consider "other." An "other" is anyone toward whom I may have prejudice or fear or anyone with whom it's hard to imagine developing a personal relationship. I will be curious about what I have to learn from them and cultivate a posture of seeing them as God's Beloved.
- **Missional Exposure:** I will participate in short-term acts of service and short-term mission projects. In all relationships I will treat the other as a subject—someone to be known and loved, and not as an object—someone I am trying to fix or change. I actively arrive in every conversation as one with something to learn and something to share. In every act of service, I am curiously looking for the activity of God.
- **Missional Engagement:** I will participate personally in a prayerfully discerned missional activity on an ongoing basis that becomes part of my regular rhythm of life in both word and deed. I will begin looking for the person(s) of peace or key leader(s) in the host community who can help me discern what God is already doing, and I will cultivate a deeper, ongoing relationship with this individual or these individuals.
- **Missional Partnership:** I will join with at least one other person in a specific and ongoing missional work, focused on a specific place or group of people. I will continue doing the work begun in previous stages (above) while also inviting one or more individuals to join me as the nucleus of what could become a missional community. I will do the work needed to mentor new partners as we master missional values and the missional continuum.

- **Missional Community:** I will give my word to full participation in a missional community either by joining an existing one or serving as a catalyst to start a new one. I will commit to a goal of becoming a fully functional missional community, which is defined as a group of people who are journeying together in authentic community and working to see the Shalom of God, the Kingdom of God, expressed in a specific place and/or among a specific people.
- **Missional as a Way of Life:** I will live life on mission with God in my neighborhood, workplace, and third place, repeating this process as new missional communities emerge.

Take a moment to consider where God might be leading you in mission. Where is God leading you to be a catalyst? Where is God leading you to restore wholeness? Reflect on the continuum above in the space below. Where would you currently locate yourself? Does locating yourself on the continuum create anxiety or shame?