

CALL TO ME — The Harvest is Plentiful

Matthew 9:35–10:8

SEE — FEEL — PRAY — GO

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon, church family. Greetings to you in the wonderful name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We have been walking through our series called **CALL TO ME**, learning how God's people call to Him in different situations. Last Sunday we saw Paul asking the Lord, "Take it away," and the Lord answered, "My grace is sufficient for you." Today we come to a completely new passage and a different prayer. This time the prayer is not mainly, "Lord, help me," but "**Lord, send workers into Your harvest.**" Many times we pray for our needs: "Lord, bless me. Lord, heal me. Lord, protect my family. Lord, provide for me." Those are good prayers. But how often do we pray, "Lord, send missionaries. Send pastors. Send church planters. Send people who will carry the gospel"? Jesus tells His disciples to pray exactly that prayer. But something interesting happens. At the end of Matthew 9 Jesus tells them to pray for workers, and at the beginning of Matthew 10 Jesus sends those same disciples as workers. Sometimes we pray, "**Lord, send somebody,**" and God may answer, "**I am sending you.**" Today I want us to see four simple movements: **SEE, FEEL, PRAY, and GO.**

1. SEE — JESUS SAW THE PEOPLE

Matthew 9:35 says Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness. Notice that Jesus **went to the people**. He did not sit in one place waiting for everyone to come to Him. He moved toward people. This is the heart of mission. We were lost, so Jesus came looking for the lost. We were sinners, so Jesus came to save sinners.

Then verse 36 says, "**When he saw the crowds.**" Jesus saw them. There is a difference between looking at people and really seeing people. We drive beside people, work beside them, shop beside them, and live beside them, but how often do we stop and ask, "**Does**

this person know Jesus?” Jesus did not simply see a crowd. He saw people. He saw their pain, their spiritual condition, and their eternal need.

Church, we live in a growing community. New families are moving around us. Indian families are moving around us. People are coming from different cultures, languages, and religious backgrounds. We can simply say, “Our community is growing,” or we can ask, **“Why has God placed us here? Who has God placed around us? Who needs to hear about Jesus?”** Sometimes we pray, “Lord, give me an opportunity to share the gospel,” while the opportunity may already be living next door. Maybe it is our coworker, our neighbor, another parent at school, or a family God recently brought into our life. Maybe we don’t need a new opportunity; we need **new eyes to see the opportunity God has already given us.**

Jesus cared for people’s physical needs, but He also proclaimed the good news. We should help people who are hurting, feed people who are hungry, and serve our community. But a person can have food, money, education, a beautiful home, and a successful career and still need Jesus. Our greatest problem is sin, and our greatest need is reconciliation with God. So our first prayer today is simple: **“Lord, help me SEE people the way Jesus sees them.”**

2. FEEL — JESUS HAD COMPASSION

Matthew 9:36 says, **“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”** Jesus saw the people, and what He saw moved His heart. He had compassion. Sheep without a shepherd wander. They become lost. They are vulnerable. They need someone to lead and protect them. Jesus looked at the crowds and saw people who spiritually needed a Shepherd.

How do we look at people who do not believe what we believe? How do we respond to someone from another religious background? Do we avoid them? Do we argue with them? Do we look down on them? Jesus looked at lost people with **compassion**. Jesus never ignored sin, but He spoke truth with love. Mission without compassion can become a project. Evangelism without compassion can become an argument. But people are not projects. **They are people Jesus loves.**

We must also remember that we needed grace. We needed forgiveness. We needed someone to tell us about Jesus. We were not saved because we were better than other people. We were saved because God showed mercy to us. So when we meet someone who does not know Christ, our attitude should be, **“Jesus showed compassion to me. Lord, help me show the compassion of Jesus to this person.”**

Then Jesus says in verse 37, **“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”** Jesus does not say there is no harvest. He says the harvest is **plentiful**. There are people who need to hear. There are families searching for hope. There are international students far from home. There are immigrants beginning new lives. There are children growing up without knowing Scripture. There are people across the world and right here in our community who need Jesus. The problem Jesus identifies is this: **“The workers are few.”** Somebody has to go. Somebody has to speak. Somebody has to invite. Somebody has to disciple. Somebody has to cross the street, and sometimes somebody has to cross an ocean. So our second prayer is: **“Lord, give me the compassion of Jesus.”**

3. PRAY — ASK THE LORD OF THE HARVEST

Now we come to Matthew 9:38, the heart of today's CALL TO ME message. Jesus says, **“Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”** Before Jesus says **GO**, Jesus says **PRAY**. Mission begins with prayer because mission belongs to God. Jesus calls God **“the Lord of the harvest.”** It is His harvest. It is His mission. It is His church. We cannot save anyone. We can preach, teach, love, serve, invite, and explain the gospel, but only God can change a human heart. So Jesus says, **“Ask the Lord of the harvest.”**

Church, we need missionaries. We need pastors. We need church planters. We need faithful men and women. We need young people who will say, **“Jesus, my life belongs to You. Use me wherever You want.”** We need people willing to cross the street, people willing to cross cultures, and some people willing to cross oceans.

But mission is not only for missionaries. The whole church participates in God's mission. Some **GO**. Some **GIVE**. Some **PRAY**. Some **SEND**. Some encourage. Some support. But nobody should say, “Mission has nothing to do with me.” Never think prayer is the small part of mission. Missionaries need churches praying behind them. Church planters need prayer. Pastors need prayer. Christians sharing Jesus in difficult places need prayer. We may never know until eternity what God has accomplished through the prayers of His people.

But there is something challenging about this prayer. Jesus says, **“Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers.”** We might pray, “Yes, Lord, please find somebody and send them.” But then we turn the page into Matthew 10, and something happens.

4. GO — BECOME A WORKER IN THE HARVEST

Matthew 10:1 says, **“Jesus called his twelve disciples to him.”** Then in verse 5 we read, **“These twelve Jesus sent out.”** Don’t miss this. Jesus told them to **pray for workers**, and then Jesus **sent them as workers**. The people praying for the harvest became the people working in the harvest. They prayed, “Lord, send workers,” and Jesus said, **“You go.”**

That is why this prayer can change our lives. We may pray, “Lord, send somebody to my neighbor,” and God may say, **“You go.”** We may pray, “Lord, reach that family,” and God may say, **“I placed that family in your life.”** We may pray, “Lord, reach the Indian community,” and God may say, **“I gave you language, culture, relationships, and opportunity. You go.”** We may pray, “Lord, send missionaries to the nations,” and God may begin speaking to one of our children, one of our families, or even to us.

Not everyone is called to Africa. Not everyone is called to become a pastor or international missionary. But **every follower of Jesus should be available to God**. Your mission field may be your neighborhood, workplace, school, apartment community, or a family God has placed in your life. For someone else, God may say, “Go farther.”

Matthew 10 describes a particular mission Jesus gave the Twelve, but the larger biblical pattern is clear: **Jesus calls disciples, prepares disciples, and sends disciples**. After His resurrection Jesus says, **“Go and make disciples of all nations.”** And we go with a message. Matthew 10:7 says, “As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’” We carry the good news that Jesus came for sinners, died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and rose again. Salvation is found in Jesus Christ.

Before Jesus told us to go, **Jesus Himself came to us**. We were lost, and He came for us. We were sinners, and He died for us. Therefore, we do not go to earn God’s love. We go because we have received His love. We do not share Jesus because we are better than others. We share Jesus because someone shared Jesus with us.

So remember these four words: **SEE. FEEL. PRAY. GO**. SEE the people God has placed around you. FEEL the compassion Jesus has for them. PRAY to the Lord of the harvest. And when Jesus says GO, be willing to go.

Now church, I want to finish with a missionary story. I want this question from Jesus to remain in our hearts: **“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.” Who will go?**

A missionary story has often been told in connection with Scottish missionary doctor **David Livingstone**. Some details have been passed down in different forms, so our faith does not depend upon every detail of this story. **Our foundation is the Word of God**. But the story beautifully illustrates what we have learned today.

A missionary who had served in Africa returned to his sending church in Scotland. He told the church what God was doing in Africa, but he also told them the work was huge and more missionaries were needed. Then he asked, **“Who will go?”** The room became quiet. Nobody raised a hand. But then one young boy raised his hand and said, **“I will go.”**

The missionary challenged him to prepare himself. He encouraged him to study medicine so that he could care for people’s physical needs while serving them with the gospel. The boy took the challenge seriously. He studied hard, became a successful doctor, but success did not change his commitment. He remembered, **“I said I would go.”** And he went to Africa.

According to the story, one day a local chief sent a frightening message to the missionary compound: **“We are coming to kill you and everyone with you.”** The missionary had no army. He could not protect himself. So what did he do? **He called to God.** They prayed, **“Lord, protect us. Our lives are in Your hands.”** That night passed, and nobody attacked them.

Later the missionary asked the chief, **“You said you were coming to kill us. Why didn’t you come?”** The chief answered, **“We did come. But when we came near your compound, we saw 39 warriors surrounding it. We were afraid, so we turned back.”** The missionary knew he did not have 39 warriors.

Years later, according to the story, the missionary returned to his sending church in Scotland and told them what had happened. Someone asked him, **“Do you remember the date?”** He remembered it. They checked the church records. On that same day, believers in Scotland had gathered specifically to pray for their missionary. And according to the story, **39 people were at that prayer meeting.**

Church, our faith does not depend upon the number 39. Our faith rests upon Jesus Christ and His Word. But listen to the picture: **one missionary went, and a church prayed.** The one who goes needs the people who pray. The people who pray need to be willing if God says, **“Now you go.”**

So I finish with two questions: **WHO WILL PRAY? WHO WILL GO?**

Maybe God is not calling you to Africa. Maybe He is calling you to your neighbor. Maybe He is calling you to pray faithfully for missionaries. Maybe He is calling you to support someone who goes. Maybe He is calling one of our young people. Maybe He is calling someone sitting in this room. Maybe He is calling **you.**

Church, SEE the people. FEEL the compassion of Jesus. PRAY to the Lord of the harvest. And when Jesus says GO, be willing to go.

The harvest is plentiful. The workers are few. The gospel is still powerful. Jesus is still saving sinners. And the mission is not finished.

Lord, send workers into Your harvest. Strengthen those who have already gone. Make us a church that prays, gives, sends, and goes. And Lord, if You call us, give us faith to say, “Here I am. Send me.” May all the glory go to Jesus Christ. Amen.