

SEEING THE HARVEST THROUGH HIS EYES

MATTHEW 9:35-38

INTRODUCTION

THE *BARNA RESEARCH GROUP* HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN GATHERING AND ANALYZING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE CHURCH SINCE 1984.

MANY OF THEIR FINDINGS ARE STARTLING AND EYE-OPENING.

THEY HAVE FOUND *THAT 33% OF AMERICANS ARE UNCHURCHED; THEY HAVE NO CHURCH AFFILIATION WHATSOEVER.*

WHILE IT FOUND THAT *20% OF THOSE WHO HAVE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP BELIEVE THAT LIVING A GOOD LIFE WILL GAIN THEM A PLACE IN HEAVEN.*

GIVEN THOSE TWO STATISTICS ALONE, THAT TELLS US THAT *53% OF AMERICANS ARE LOST AND ON THEIR WAY TO HELL.*

THIS DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ATHEISTS, OR ARE INVOLVED IN OCCULT FORMS OF WORSHIP.

OVER HALF OF EVERYONE YOU RUN INTO IS LOST. AND IT IS A GROWING POPULATION.

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE EACH YEAR ARE ADDED TO THIS CATEGORY.

AND IF WE WERE TO THROW ALL THE FALSE PROFESSORS THAT DO GO TO CHURCH INTO THE MIX IT WOULD PROBABLY BE *75% OR POSSIBLY MUCH HIGHER*, WHICH, BY THE WAY, IS THE PERCENTAGE JESUS REFERRED TO IN THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS.

THAT IS WHY JESUS SAID, "*THE HARVEST TRULY IS PLENTEOUS.*"

THERE ARE PEOPLE TO REACH; THERE IS A WORK TO BE DONE. AND OF THE GREATEST DANGERS OF THE MODERN CHURCH IS THAT WE DON'T SEE THIS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK.

MOST EVERYTHING ELSE COMES BEFORE THE WORK OF REACHING THE LOST WITH THE WORD OF GOD.

AS JESUS MINISTERED TO THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE ALL AROUND HIM, HE MET THEIR PHYSICAL NEEDS, BUT HE WAS ABLE TO SEE BEYOND JUST THAT.

JESUS WAS ABLE TO SEE THE DEEPEST NEEDS OF THEIR HEARTS.

AS JESUS LOOKED AT THE MULTITUDES AROUND HIM, HE WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION FOR THEM.

THIS WORD LITERALLY MEANS *"TO BE MOVED IN THE HEART."*

HE SAW THE REALITY OF THE NEED OF THE PEOPLE ALL AROUND HIM. HE SAW THEM AS THEY WERE AND HE SOUGHT TO SHARE THIS INSIGHT WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

HE STILL WANTS TO SHARE THIS INSIGHT WITH YOU AND ME THIS EVENING! HE WANTS US TO SEE THE PLIGHT OF HUMANITY AS HE DOES.

HE WANTS US TO SEE PEOPLE AS THEY REALLY ARE. HE WANTS US TO BE MOVED IN THE HEART JUST AS HE WAS.

HE WANTS US TO BE ABLE TO SEE THE HARVEST THROUGH HIS EYES. THAT IS THE THOUGHT I WANT TO MAGNIFY THIS EVENING.

I WANT TO PREACH FOR A FEW MINUTES ON THIS THOUGHT: *SEEING THE HARVEST THROUGH HIS EYES!*

MAY THE LORD HELP US TO SEE THE LOST PEOPLE AROUND US LIKE HE SEES THEM!

(I). V. 36 HE SAW THE PITY OF THE HARVEST

(A). WHEN JESUS LOOKED AT THE LOST PEOPLE AROUND HIM, HE SAW THEM AS THEY REALLY WERE.

(1). HE WAS ABLE TO LOOK BEYOND THE FACADES OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY, SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SELF-CONFIDENCE.

(2). HE SAW THE PAIN, THE LONELINESS AND THE MISERY THEY FELT IN THEIR HEARTS!

(3). JESUS SAW A PEOPLE WHO “*FAINTED*”, THAT IS “*GREW WEARY*” UNDER THE LOAD OF THEIR SINS AND THE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FORCED UPON THEM BY THEIR RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

(4). HE SAW A PEOPLE WHO WERE “*SCATTERED*”. LITERALLY, “*TO BE CAST DOWN OR THROWN OUT.*”

(5). PEOPLE WHO WERE WONDERING AIMLESSLY THROUGH LIFE WITH NO DIRECTION AND PLANNED DESTINATION, PEOPLE WHO LIVED LIFE WITH NO SHEPHERD FOR THEIR SOULS.

(6). HE SAW A PEOPLE WHO WERE UTTERLY AND HOPELESSLY LOST.

(B). OH, HOW WE NEED TO SEE THE MULTITUDES LIKE JESUS SAW THEM!

(1). OVER HERE IS A FAMILY. THEY SEEM HAPPY.

(a). THEY HAVE GOOD JOBS, PLENTY OF MONEY, A NICE HOUSE AND ALL THE THINGS THIS WORLD CAN OFFER THEM.

(b). PLENTY OF PEOPLE LIKE THAT LIVE IN THIS COMMUNITY.

(c). BUT, IF YOU COULD LOOK INTO THEIR HEARTS, YOU WOULD SEE TURMOIL, FEAR, LONELINESS AND DESPERATION.

(d). THEY HAVE NO ANSWERS TO THEIR QUESTIONS. THEY NEED THE LORD!

(2). HERE IS ANOTHER FAMILY.

(a). THEY DON'T HAVE AS MUCH AS THE FIRST FAMILY, BUT THEY DO WORK AND THEY HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE.

(b). THEIR LIVES ARE DRIVEN BY ALCOHOL AND DRUGS.

(c). THEY SEEM HARD TO THE GOSPEL AND ARE ANTAGONISTIC TOWARD THOSE WHO TRY TO TELL THEM ABOUT JESUS.

(d). BUT, IF YOU COULD RIP ASIDE THE LAYERS OF THEIR LIVES AND PEER INTO THEIR SOULS, YOU WOULD SEE PEOPLE WHO ARE AFRAID TO DIE AND EVEN AFRAID TO LIVE.

(e). THEY ARE PEOPLE WITHOUT HOPE AND THEY NEED SOMEONE TO SEE THEM AS THEY REALLY ARE.

(f). SOMEONE WHO CAN SEE THEM AS

**THEY ARE AND STILL LOVE THEM,
THAT IS THE PERSON WHO CAN REACH
THEM FOR JESUS!**

(C). THOSE KINDS OF COMPARISONS COULD GO ON

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EXISTENCE.

**(1). HE KNEW THAT WITHOUT A RELATIONSHIP
WITH HIM, THEY WERE ALL DOOMED TO
PERISH IN HELL.**

**(2). THAT IS WHAT WE NEED TO SEE TODAY
ABOUT OUR FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS AND
FAMILIES.**

**(3). THEY MAY LOOK LIKE THEY HAVE IT ALL
TOGETHER, BUT IF THEY ARE LOST, THEY
ARE HEADED TO HELL AND THEY NEED TO
BE SAVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD!**

(4). CAN YOU SEE THEM AS THEY REALLY ARE THIS EVENING?

(5). CAN YOU SEE THEM LIKE HE SEES THEM?

(6). HE KNOWS THEIR CONDITION, YET HE LOVES THEM STILL.

(7). MAY THE LORD HELP US TO SEE THE HARVEST THROUGH HIS EYES!

(II). V. 37 HE SAW THE POTENTIAL OF THE HARVEST

(A). JESUS LOOKED AT THE CROWDS AROUND HIM AND HE SAW A “PLENTIOUS” HARVEST.

(1). I AM SURE ALL THE DISCIPLES SAW WERE PEOPLE PUSHING AND SHOIVING TO GET CLOSE TO THEIR LEADER. BUT, JESUS SAW MORE!

(2). HE SAW MEN WHO NEEDED TO BE SAVED BY GRACE.

(3). HE SAW A HARVEST THAT WAS RIPE FOR THE PICKING!

(4). HE LOOKED BEYOND THEIR CONDITION AND THEIR DESTINATION AND HE SAW A PEOPLE THAT COULD BE DELIVERED, CHANGED AND SAVED!

(5). HE DID NOT SEE THE PROBLEMS, ONLY THE POTENTIAL!

(B). WHAT DO WE SEE WHEN WE LOOK AT THE PEOPLE ALL AROUND US?

(1). DO WE SEE SINNERS LOST IN THEIR FILTHINESS AND VILENESS?

**(2). DO WE SEE PEOPLE WHO LIVE LIKE DOGS
AND DON'T CARE?**

**(3). DO WE SEE PEOPLE AS THEY ARE, OR DO WE
SEE THEM AS THE LORD COULD MAKE
THEM OF THEY CAME TO HIM?**

**(4). THAT IS THE VIEW JESUS HAD OF LOST MEN.
HE SAW THEM NOT AS THEY WERE, BUT AS
THEY COULD BE BY GRACE!**

**(5). WE NEED THAT SAME KIND OF VISION IF WE
ARE GOING TO REACH MEN IN THIS DAY
AND TIME! (ILL. SLIGHTLY INEBRIATED
MAN I SAW AT THE STORE YESTERDAY!)**

ILLUSTRATION

**ONE DAY, JESUS STOOD WITH HIS DISCIPLES OUTSIDE THE
CITY OF THE SAMARITANS.**

**NOW, THE SAMARITAN WERE A PEOPLE DESPISED BY THE
JEWS OF JESUS'S DAY.**

**THE SAMARITANS CAME ABOUT THROUGH THE
INTERMARRIAGE OF JEWS WITH THE COLONISTS SENT TO
LIVE IN ISRAEL BY THE BABYLONIANS.**

**JESUS WENT TO A CITY OF THE SAMARITANS AND SPOKE
TO A SINFUL WOMAN.**

**HE SAW HER NOT JUST AS SHE WAS, BUT AS SHE COULD BE
THROUGH GRACE.**

**HE SAVED HER AND MANY SAMARITANS WERE ALSO SAVED
BECAUSE JESUS LOOKED AT THE HARVEST AS BEING
EVERYWHERE AND PLENTIFUL.**

**HIS WORDS TO THE DISCIPLES IN JOHN 4:25-41 ARE VERY
INTERESTING!**

**(C). WHAT I AM TRYING TO GET US TO UNDERSTAND
IS THIS TRUTH: THERE ARE PEOPLE ALL AROUND
WHO NEED JESUS!**

(1). THE HARVEST TRULY IN PLENTIFUL.

(2). MANY ARE RIPE FOR THE PICKING, WE MERELY NEED TO SEE IT AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

(3). MAY THE LORD HELP US TO SEE THE HARVEST THROUGH HIS LOVING EYES.

(III). V. 37 HE SAW THE PROBLEM OF THE HARVEST

(A). AS JESUS LOOKED AT THE HARVEST, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT FACT THAT IT WAS PLENTIFUL AND THAT IT WAS PITIFUL.

(1). BUT AS HE SAW LOST MEN ALL AROUND, HE ALSO RECOGNIZED A PROBLEM: *THERE WERE FEW LABORERS WORKING IN THE FATHER'S FIELD!*

(B). YOU KNOW, THAT SAME PROBLEM STILL EXISTS TODAY!

(1). REAPING THE SOUL HARVEST IS HARD WORK AND FEW, IT SEEMS, ARE WILLING TO ROLL UP THEIR SLEEVES AND GET INVOLVED IN THE WORK.

(2). JESUS CALLED HIS MEN TO FOLLOW HIM, PROMISING TO MAKE THE "*FISHERS OF MEN*", *MATT. 4:18-22*.

(3). OF COURSE, TO FISH, REQUIRES THE FISHERMAN TO GO WHERE THE FISH ARE: TO THE WATER!

(4). THOSE OF YOU WHO FARM KNOW THAT THE HARVEST DOESN'T JUST GATHER ITSELF. YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT THERE, GET DOWN WHERE IT IS AND DO THE DIRTY WORK OF HARVESTING IT.

(5). WOULDN'T IT BE NICE IF THE GREEN BEANS PICKED THEMSELVES AND PILED

THEMSELVES ON YOUR PORCH?

(6). WHAT IF THE OKRA, THE SQUASH AND THE CORN PLUCKED THEMSELVES AND CAME TO WHERE YOU WERE?

(7). WELL, IT DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT!

(8). TO HARVEST YOU GARDEN, YOU HAVE TO GO TO WHERE THE HARVEST IS.

(9). THE SAME IS TRUE IN BRINGING MEN TO JESUS.

(a). WE CAN SIT IN THE CHURCH, BUT WE WON'T SEE A HARVEST UNTIL WE GO WHERE THE LOST MEN ARE LIVING.

(ILL. HAG. 2:19!)

(b). IT IS DIRTY WORK, BUT IT MUST BE DONE, OR THE HARVEST WILL NEVER BE REAPED!

(C). SURELY WE CAN SEE THAT PEOPLE ARE IN SAD SHAPE TODAY, SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING.

(1). SURELY WE CARE ABOUT THEM AND WANT TO SEE THEM SAVED BY GRACE.

(2). MAY WE COME TO THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE NOT CONTENT JUST TO SEE IT, BUT MAY WE COME TO THE PLACE WHERE WE BECOME WILLING TO GO INTO THE HARVEST AND REAP IS FOR JESUS SAKE!

(ILL. PSA. 126:5-6)

(3). IF WE CAN EVER COME TO SEE THE HARVEST THROUGH HIS EYES, WE WILL NOT BE CONTENT TO MERELY SEE IT, WE WILL HAVE TO ENTER IS AND WORK TO SEE MEN SAVED. MAY GOD GRANT IT!

(IV). V. 38 HE SAW THE POWER OF THE HARVEST

(A). AS JESUS SPOKE ABOUT THE HARVEST AND THE NEEDS ASSOCIATED WITH IT, HE TOLD HIS MEN WHAT TO DO FIRST: *PRAY!*

(1). WHY PRAY?

(2). BECAUSE SEEING THE HARVEST BROUGHT INTO THE BARN IS GOD'S WORK!

(3). HE MUST TILL THE SOIL OF THE HEART.

(4). HE MUST WATER THE SEED OF THE WORD THAT IS PLANTED AND HE MUST CAST THE SUNSHINE OF GRACE UPON THE LOST HEART, OR THERE WILL NEVER BE A HARVEST!

(5). YOU SEE, THE NEW BIRTH IS A MIRACLE!

(a). IT IS THE AWESOME WORK OF GOD IN A HUMAN HEART! ONLY HE CAN DO IT AND WE MUST PRAY OVER THE HARVEST.

(B). NOTICE THAT JESUS TOLD THEM TO PRAY THAT THE LORD OF THE HARVEST (GOD) WOULD SEND FORTH LABORERS INTO THE HARVEST.

(1). AS WE DEVELOP A BURDEN FOR THE LOST AND BEGIN TO PRAY FOR THEM AS WE SHOULD, THE LORD WILL DEVELOP A COMPASSION FOR THEM WITHIN OUR OWN HEART.

(2). IF WE PRAY AS WE SHOULD , THE LORD WILL WORK WITHIN US SO THAT A DESIRE WILL BE BORN WITHIN US TO GO INTO THE FIELD AND WORK FOR THE HARVEST. (WE

WILL BE LIKE ISAIAH - ISA. 6:1-9!)

(C). CAN WE SEE THE NEED THIS MORNING?

(1). IF WE CAN, THE STARTING PLACE IS TO GET BEFORE GOD IN PRAYER, TRUSTING HIM TO DO HIS WORK IN THE HARVEST!

(2). IF WE PRAY, HE WILL SEND FORTH THE LABORERS. OF COURSE, THEY MIGHT JUST BE US!

CONCLUSION

I WILL CLOSE WITH A RECORD OF SOMETHING GOD DID 130 YEARS GO IN NEW YORK CITY.

IT ILLUSTRATES HOW GOD HAS STARTED EVERY HARVEST TIME IN HISTORY, THROUGH THE CONCERTED PRAYER OF HIS PEOPLE.

TOWARD THE MIDDLE OF THE LAST CENTURY THE GLOW OF EARLIER RELIGIOUS AWAKENINGS HAD FADED.

AMERICA WAS PROSPEROUS AND FELT LITTLE NEED TO CALL ON GOD.

BUT IN THE 1850S ...SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS COMBINED TO BRING ABOUT A CRASH.

THE THIRD GREAT PANIC IN AMERICAN HISTORY SWEEPED THE GIDDY STRUCTURE OF SPECULATIVE WEALTH AWAY. THOUSANDS OF MERCHANTS WERE FORCED TO THE WALL AS BANKS FAILED, AND RAILROADS WENT INTO BANKRUPTCY.

FACTORIES WERE SHUT DOWN AND VAST NUMBERS THROWN OUT OF EMPLOYMENT.

NEW YORK CITY ALONE HAVING 30,000 IDLE MEN.

IN OCTOBER 1857, THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE WERE THOROUGHLY WEANED FROM SPECULATION AND UNCERTAIN GAIN, WHILE HUNGER AND DESPAIR STARED THEM IN THE FACE.

ON 1ST JULY, 1857, A QUIET AND ZEALOUS BUSINESSMAN NAMED JEREMIAH LANPHIER TOOK UP AN APPOINTMENT AS A CITY MISSIONARY IN DOWNTOWN NEW YORK. LANPHIER WAS APPOINTED BY THE NORTH CHURCH OF

THE DUTCH REFORMED DENOMINATION. THIS CHURCH WAS SUFFERING FROM DEPLETION OF MEMBERSHIP DUE TO THE REMOVAL OF THE POPULATION FROM THE DOWNTOWN TO THE BETTER RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS, AND THE NEW CITY MISSIONARY WAS ENGAGED TO MAKE DILIGENT VISITATION IN THE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH A VIEW TO ENLISTING CHURCH ATTENDANCE AMONG THE FLOATING POPULATION OF THE LOWER CITY. THE DUTCH CONSISTORY FELT THAT IT HAD APPOINTED AN IDEAL LAYMAN FOR THE TASK IN HAND, AND SO IT WAS. BURDENED SO BY THE NEED, JEREMIAH LANPHIER DECIDED TO INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN HIM IN A NOONDAY PRAYER MEETING, TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAYS ONCE A WEEK.

HE THEREFORE DISTRIBUTED A HANDBILL:

HOW OFTEN SHALL I PRAY?

**AS OFTEN AS THE LANGUAGE OF PRAYER IS IN MY HEART;
AS OFTEN AS I SEE MY NEED OF HELP;
AS OFTEN AS I FEEL THE POWER OF TEMPTATION;
AS OFTEN AS I AM MADE SENSIBLE OF ANY SPIRITUAL
DECLENSION OR FEEL THE AGGRESSION OF A WORLDLY
SPIRIT.**

IN PRAYER WE LEAVE THE BUSINESS OF TIME FOR THAT OF ETERNITY, AND INTERCOURSE WITH MEN FOR INTERCOURSE WITH GOD.

A DAY PRAYER MEETING IS HELD EVERY WEDNESDAY, FROM 12 TO 1 O'CLOCK, IN THE CONSISTORY BUILDING IN THE REAR OF THE NORTH DUTCH CHURCH, CORNER OF FULTON AND WILLIAM STREETS (ENTRANCE FROM FULTON AND ANN STREETS).

THIS MEETING IS INTENDED TO GIVE MERCHANTS, MECHANICS, CLERKS, STRANGERS, AND BUSINESSMEN GENERALLY AN OPPORTUNITY TO STOP AND CALL UPON GOD AMID THE PERPLEXITIES INCIDENT TO THEIR RESPECTIVE AVOCATIONS.

IT WILL CONTINUE FOR ONE HOUR; BUT IT IS ALSO

DESIGNED FOR THOSE WHO MAY FIND IT INCONVENIENT TO REMAIN MORE THAN FIVE OR TEN MINUTES, AS WELL AS FOR THOSE WHO CAN SPARE THE WHOLE HOUR."

ACCORDINGLY AT TWELVE NOON, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1857 THE DOOR WAS OPENED AND THE FAITHFUL LANPHIER TOOK HIS SEAT TO AWAIT THE RESPONSE TO HIS INVITATION

FIVE MINUTES WENT BY. NO ONE APPEARED.

THE MISSIONARY PACED THE ROOM IN A CONFLICT OF FEAR AND FAITH.

TEN MINUTES ELAPSED. STILL NO ONE CAME.

FIFTEEN MINUTES PASSED. LANPHIER WAS YET ALONE.

TWENTY MINUTES; TWENTY-FIVE; THIRTY; AND THEN AT 12.30 P.M., A STEP WAS HEARD ON THE STAIRS, AND THE FIRST PERSON APPEARED, THEN ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER, UNTIL SIX PEOPLE WERE PRESENT AND THE PRAYER MEETING BEGAN.

ON THE FOLLOWING WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7TH, THERE WERE FORTY INTERCESSORS.

THUS IN THE FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER 1857, IT WAS DECIDED TO HOLD A MEETING DAILY INSTEAD OF WEEKLY

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WITHIN SIX MONTHS, TEN THOUSAND BUSINESS MEN WERE GATHERING DAILY FOR PRAYER IN NEW YORK, AND WITHIN TWO YEARS, A MILLION CONVERTS WERE ADDED TO THE AMERICAN CHURCHES

UNDOUBTEDLY THE GREATEST REVIVAL IN NEW YORK'S COLORFUL HISTORY WAS SWEEPING THE CITY, AND IT WAS OF SUCH AN ORDER TO MAKE THE WHOLE NATION CURIOUS.

THERE WAS NO FANATICISM, NO HYSTERIA, SIMPLY AN INCREDIBLE MOVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE TO PRAY.

BEFORE IT WAS OVER, 1 OUT OF EVERY 5 PERSONS IN AMERICA HAD BEEN SAVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD!

THAT IS WHAT GOD CAN DO WHEN PEOPLE BEGIN TO SEE THE HARVEST THROUGH HIS EYES.

CAN YOU SEE? GOD HELP US TO GET A VISION OF WHAT HE CAN DO.