

# Sermon Study Guide

Pastor: Pastor Kent Priebe

Date: November 4 / 5'17

## Sermon: Hidden Mission (Matthew 9:35-38)

### **IN** *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. Tell of a time when you experienced in a new way that 'God was at work' in you.
2. When has a sense of compassion overtaken you? What did you do about the situation?

### **UP** *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Review Matthew 8 and 9. List all of Jesus' activities that precede Matthew 9:35-38. How does He describe the people? Why? (Matt 9:36)  
How do Jesus' responses demonstrate what it means to be a labourer in the harvest?
2. Read John 8:44. What lies does Satan tell a believer who experiences biblical compassion?  
What examples did Pastor Kent give? Why are these lies so dangerous?
3. Pastor Kent outlined the following steps when praying for another person:  
Focus on God; Thank God for this person; Pray for the person; Trust God's promises for this person.  
How do these steps reveal the 'hidden mission' of the Body of Christ?
4. What does it mean that Jesus tells us to 'ask the Lord of the harvest' for workers 'in His harvest field'?

### **OUT** *Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community*

1. 'To be like Jesus means that we share in His feeling of compassion.'  
(quote from Pastor Kent)  
What do you see around you that awakens your compassion?  
What do you feel? What might God be calling you to do?
2. What action can you take this week? How can the group pray for you?

### **Resources mentioned by Pastor Kent:**

Mere Christianity: <http://www.cslewis.com/us/>

10/40 Window: <https://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/1040.htm>

*UP – IN – OUT* reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

### THE WORD (NIV)

#### **Matthew 9:35-38**

<sup>35</sup> Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

#### **John 8:44**

<sup>44</sup> You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

# Sermon Study Summary

Pastor Kent opened today's sermon with a true story, happening right now. A young man came up after last week's service, and after talking with Lawrence, the Young Adults pastor, announced that he wanted to be baptized. When asked whether he had made a personal decision to trust in Jesus as his Saviour, the young man said no, but that he wanted to. He knew that he had an emptiness and void in his life and he was spiritually curious.

A teacher at his school had given him the book 'Mere Christianity' by C.S. Lewis. The book presents an argument for Christ and the Christian faith; the young man had read the book and agreed with it. So Lawrence asked him if he wanted to pray and ask Jesus to forgive him and to lead his life: the young man said yes, both prayed, and this evening the young man will be baptized and then disciplined in his new walk with Christ.

It's a heartwarming story, we are gratified and pleased and we rejoice: for the young man who sought and found Christ, for God's work and His word, for the teacher who helped the young man find some answers, for the pastor who led him to surrender his life to Jesus and for the church where he will be baptized and then disciplined as a member of the Church, the Body of Christ. God is always at work. His Spirit is moving in the hearts and minds of people and leading them to believe in His Son Jesus. God is always working. But why also are we so surprised when we hear a story like this one?

Could it be because Satan is conducting a subtle campaign of lies that he wants Christians to believe? -- the lie that no one wants to hear or talk about Jesus, that everyone is against Jesus, that people will dislike you, be against you and think you are stupid if you believe in the Bible or in Jesus. Satan wants us to believe these lies so that we should become silent, quiet and discouraged; fearful in acting and living and speaking out our belief and excitement about Jesus and what He has done.

Satan is a liar (John 8:44), but Jesus tells the truth. Jesus defines the current and present spiritual reality. When Jesus says "the harvest is great and plentiful" (v.37) He is telling us that people are ready to hear about Jesus; are open to conversations about Him, open to the truth, and they are ready now. Then Jesus says, "but the workers are few." (v.37) These words of Jesus come right after chapters 8 and 9 which detail an extensive and exhausting journey of leadership, teaching, healing the sick of various diseases and even of demon-possession; including raising a dead girl back to life, recruiting disciples. All this while travelling from town to village to town. His scope of ministry was very wide and He was working very hard to bring the Good News to people's lives.

This is one of the few times that the Bible speaks of Jesus' feelings. For compassion is a feeling -- we do not think it or rationalize it. We feel it -- it is literally a pain that is "as a strong punch to the gut." Jesus "saw the crowd, harassed, helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (v. 36) He saw their need, pain, poverty, and loneliness; their defenselessness against Satan and their desperate longing for God. And Jesus, the Son of God, was deeply moved to compassion when He saw their need. Pastor Kent told of the couple who felt God's call to the 10-40 Window because of the need they saw.

What do we do when we see or become aware of a need and feel an emotional response that feels like a punch in the gut? We are daily flooded with so many images of great need in all parts of the world that we are in danger of being overwhelmed, of becoming emotionally numb and anaesthetised. We are so busy that often we don't pay any attention to the need. Or we see the need, but pretend that it's not there. Or we chose to live in our own worlds, and ignore the needs.

To be like Jesus means that we share in His feeling of compassion. Together with Jesus, we look out and SEE the need. Because of what we see, we FEEL, and then we are moved to ACTION. This is what compassion does: compassion only becomes actualized when our feelings move us to do something (Brian Lorritts). Biblical compassion is an act -- you see / you feel / you do something about it. Jesus saw the crowds and healed them; saw they were lost and preached the Gospel to them. Saw that the harvest was plentiful and the workers were few.

Just so today -- the opportunity is great, but few people follow Jesus doing what He wants them to do. Jesus tells us, "PRAY to the Lord in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into his Fields." (v. 38) We may not be confident speaking to others about salvation, but all of us can be confident speaking about others to Jesus. So how do we pray?

Start by focusing on God: Thank Him for his love, for being a good Father, for the life or lives that you are praying for, for Jesus' death on the cross that was for this person; and for the Holy Spirit's presence in this person. Then, thank God for this person: for their gifts and abilities, their good qualities, the work already being done in them by the Holy Spirit, in faith for the answers you believe will come. Now move to pray for this person: ask God to guide you in praying for this person and show you specifically what to pray for, to block Satan's plans against this person, to open this person to God's voice and become sensitive to personal sin and need; to dissolve any resistance against God, and to ask God to send the right people at the right time into this person's life to tell them about Jesus with the right words. Finally, place your trust in God's promises for this person: ask for specific promises in Scripture that He wants you to pray over this person, for the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind and heart specific passages to pray and to pray, again and again, and then to persist in praying.

Pastor Kent ended by sharing a story about the power of faithful prayer by a group of moms praying weekly, specifically for students at a particular school-- that they would know Jesus as their Saviour, AND that God would send them to the youth ministry at Pastor Kent's church. The moms saw a need, felt it and prayed. The workers were prepared and ready; the students came and heard the good news; and the harvest was great. It was only after the harvest that God's "hidden mission" of the moms was revealed.