



CrossRoads Notes:

Title: Send Forth

Theme: Petitioning for Laborers for God's Work

Series: Girding up the Local Church

Matthew 9:35-38, "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. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 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.'" (Matthew 9:35-38)

Introduction: *Jesus Christ is compassionate for souls and the greatest compassion that can be expressed by the Body of Christ is for the souls of mankind to know Jesus as Savior and Lord.* People are apt to go astray much like sheep without a shepherd. Souls who do not walk closely in step with the Holy Spirit of Christ are very likely to fall prey to the flesh, the lures of the world and the lies of the devil. Without true shepherds, pastors to feed the people the Word of God and the help of Christians exercising their Spiritual gifts, those in this world and even the flock of God will be harassed and helpless against everything that sets itself against God, Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

It takes more than just one pastor in the church to maintain a spiritual hospital where lost souls can be born again, receive a powerful thirst for the Word of God and learn to say "Jesus teach me to pray." Jesus knew this and that is why in today's Scripture He exhorts us to pray for laborers for the work of God. No child of God is able to do this work on his own. He must have the help of other Christians.

Proposition: *I would propose to you that the harvest of souls and the amount of discipleship done in the Body of Christ is up to God.* The church of Jesus Christ may be a part of making disciples of Christ if she has the same compassion for the lost that Christ had. She must be committed to Jesus' call to go and make disciples. (Matthew 28:20) She must stay dedicated to expressing a genuine faith in God's Word and walk in faithful obedience to the Lord's call to pray for laborers for the whole work of God. The Great Commission is to make disciples of Christ. (Matthew 28:20)

The church that is girded up for the true work of God has a heart to make "disciples" (*mathetes*) who believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles. A church that is girded up has disciples of Christ who rest in the sacrifice Jesus made for them on the Cross of Calvary, disciples who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of Christ and who imitate Jesus' life.

Interrogative Sentence: *Just what laborers do we need to make true disciples of Christ?* The truths found in today's text can equip the child of God to meet Jesus' supreme Christian challenge, to pray for laborers for the church.

Transitional Sentence: *It is a sad thing when the work of God is at a standstill in any local church. A work can go slowly because of a lack of committed workmen or when keys workers are overworked.* The first thing in girding up the church is to enter the "Throne of Grace" with praise. (Psalm 100:3-5) Thank the Lord for His Holy Spirit empowered gifts to the church of Christ given for the purpose of edifying the Body of Christ. (Prayerfully Read 1 Corinthians 12-14; 12:8-10, 28-30; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:7)

We express praise to God by appreciating those who exercise their gifts in this Body of Christ for the good of others, by thanking God for them by name, and thanking them with a true and right heart. When someone does a good job, tell him. When someone is feeling like their laborers for the Lord are going nowhere, remind them that as long they are serving sacrificially, the Bible says there will be fruit from their labors in His time if they do not give up and if they serve Him wholeheartedly. (Hebrews 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:58) The Holy Spirit's presence will be among those who express true appreciation for what the Lord has done and is doing through His servants who experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Transitional Sentence: *The church that is girded up has Christians who express true appreciation for the work of the Holy Spirit of Christ working through the servants of God and she has Christians who trust only in God for the raising up laborers for the church.*(Matthew 9:38) **The Apostle Paul tells us** (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

Christians are to trust in God alone for Holy Spirit gifted laborers because the gifts are not selected by individuals or personally solicited or handed out by anyone. Christ sets the example, He prayed all night getting direction from God His Father before calling forth the original 12 apostles of the New Testament Church. (Luke 6:12-16)

Transitional Sentence: *The Lord wants Christians to depend upon Him alone and the church that is girded up in prayer has anointed leaders to lead the Body of Christ in Spirit and truth.* In regard to congregational worship the Body of Christ is to sing the praises of her glorious Lord. (Ephesians 5:19) (Colossians 3:16)

What the Bible says about music for the house of the Lord for public worship. (1 Corinthians 25:1) (1 Chronicles 25:6-8)

The church that is as hungry as Hezekiah was about having public worship services which are pleasing to the Lord will look to God's Word and see what His instructions are. In regard to the song service for the house of God Christians ask God for music ministers who are "trained and skilled in music" (*lamad*). (1 Chronicles 25:7)

The truths presented in 2 Chronicles 25 are still the guide for us today. One of the best ways of getting practical application from a passage of Scripture is to take a brief look into the life of a person who is mentioned in a certain passage of Scripture.

Let us consider just one of the music ministers mentioned in 2 Chronicles 25. Asaph was placed in charge of the music ministry and he was under the authority of the king. The music ministers mentioned in 2 Chronicles 25:2-5 were under the supervision of their fathers for music in the temple of the Lord. Paul D. Gardner, writer of "Who's Who in the Bible" tells us according to other Scriptures in the Bible, Asaph was one of the keys singers overseeing the music that was played and sung when the Ark was brought into Jerusalem as well as at other national rejoicings. (1 Chronicles 15:17-19; 16:5,7,37; 2 Chronicles 35:15) He joined in with the other Levites in leading the praise of God when the temple was consecrated. (2 Chronicles 5:12) His musical influence extended far beyond the temple and into Jewish hymn books for all time. During the revival under King Hezekiah songs were sung that were written by David and Asaph. (2 Chronicles 29:30)

Transitional Sentence: *The church that is girded up for vibrant public worship services has children of God praying for ministers of music for the house of the Lord.* She also has Christians praying for Holy Spirit appointed overseers to lead the Body of Christ. (Acts 20:28) Church attendees often have heard the term "The New Testament Church," yet very few have been taught just what that means. Here in Acts we read of the Apostle Paul talking about who is to oversee the New Testament Church. The term "elder" has been so misunderstood and so watered down by a world view that we have lost the value of this ministry in nearly all our churches in America.

The appointment process of Holy Spirit leadership involved a real investigation of the man's life to see if there was a desire to be an overseer for the Lord's church placed with him by the Holy Ghost. New Testament elders are to be examined to see if they meet the Biblical qualifications, then a selection process is done by those who are found faithful in their calling as overseers. Finally is the public installation and the laying on of hands for prayer.

The Pastor of New Spring Community Church in Anderson, South Carolina wrote about a burden that was upon his heart in regard to the un-Biblical way churches function today. He wrote, "If you operated an airplane like most churches operate today, you would have a pilot and his crew in the cockpit, knowing how to fly that plane. They know every instrument – that is their job. But if it was run like most churches, these pilots, or this crew, before they needed to make a life protecting decision, would have to come out of the cockpit, go into first class to meet with the plumber whose cousin was once a pilot, an electrician, a housewife, and a doctor. After they have met with those people, they would take it back to the coach section for a business meeting and have a vote. After they voted they could go implement what the coach section had told them to do. Now, my question is, 'How many would want to fly on that plane as it carried it's passengers through possible storms?' Pastor Noble continues with, "But that is the way people want to have church. That is why so many churches are crashing and burning as their people are facing the storms of life on this earth."

The Greek Word for “overseers” (*episkopus*) is synonymous to elders, bishops and pastors. The call and appointment is the special function of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, men who take on this responsibility are to keep a close watch over themselves, prayerfully studying the Word of God so they correctly handle the Word of truth. They are to be as skillful with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God and in living it out as a skilled pilot and his crew are at flying a 747 carrying precious souls.

Transitional Sentence: *The church that is girded up has a congregation that is often in prayer for Biblically qualified overseers because they are put in charge by the Holy Spirit to oversee the guiding and protecting of the precious souls purchased by Christ’s own blood.* She also has Christians who are serious about her teachers. (James 3:1)

The Apostle Paul admonishes the church to limit the number of teachers in their midst. He urges those who want to be teachers to just not assume they are teachers (*didaskaloï*). A teacher in the local church must be able to correctly handle the Word of God and there must be an application of Christian living expressed by all who would be called a teacher in the local church. Paul knew the damage that could be done by one holding the position of teacher as well as the benefits of a Christian possessing the gift of teacher appointed by Christ. (Ephesians 4:11)

People who do not attend church are constantly watching and taking mental notes. People who hold the position of teaching in the church can either help or hinder the work of God, especially in a small community. The church that is girded up to do the work of God has Christians who take the position of teacher seriously because God’s Word does.

In Closing: *The church that is girded up has Christians who regularly petition the Lord for laborers to work in this world.* All it takes to have qualified workers is for the Body of Christ to take time to be obedient in prayer.

No church holds the keys to the work of or the anointing of the Holy Spirit of Christ. The church needs only have prayer warriors who obey Christ, petitioning, “Send Forth” laborers for the harvest field!!!!