

“It’s Harvest Time”

Pray

- **Matthew 9:35-38** ‘Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless [distressed and dispersed], like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”’
- Church anniversary.
- Resuming our in-person gatherings.
- **What is even more significant than all of that is that we believe that today marks the beginning of something new. A new season.**
- Exactly 6 months ago, today, we stopped gathering publicly.
- Today we resume our in-person gatherings, but things have changed.
- We don’t live in the same kind of world that we lived in just 6 months ago.
- The fabric of our society is wearing thin.
- The stability of people’s lives has been disrupted.
- **People are lost and without hope, and if they’re not yet, many will be soon.**
- These words from **Matthew 9** are a maybe good description. People are “**Confused, feeling helpless, distressed, wandering (not knowing where to go) like sheep without a shepherd.**”
- In the church, there’s a lot of confusing messages about what we’re supposed to do right now.
- We are like soldiers awaiting their marching orders.
- **1 Corinthians 14** — “If the trumpeter doesn’t sound a CLEAR call, then the soldiers won’t even know that they are being called into battle.”
- **My goal today: sound a clear call.**
- *Share “It’s Harvest Time” Story*
- “Autumn (fall) is the season of the harvest, when we reap what we planted in the spring.” - **Google**
- What has been sown in sorrow through COVID in the Spring, will be reaped in joy, through salvation, in the Fall.



- This isn't about harvest crusade or Greg Louri, or the fairgrounds necessarily, but it was HUGE confirmation to me that I was hearing from God.
- We believe that God has sounded the trumpet and the melody is clear.
- Put on your boots, pick up your tools.
- **"It's Harvest Time!"**

- **I don't think that it is a coincidence that the Sunday that we chose to resume our in-person gatherings happened to be exactly 6 months after COVID hit, which ALSO happens to be the exact duration between the Spring (when things are planted) and the Fall (when things are harvested).**
- Today is significant because this is the beginning of a new season.

- **Psalm 126** — what has been **sown in sorrow will be reaped in joy.**
- **Isaiah 61:3** — God exchanges **beauty for ashes and weeping for joy, praise for despair.**
- This is what God does.
- We even see this in creation. Something as tragic as a forest fire can produce ash that "sows" into the soil to making the ground more fertile.

- Diamonds are formed under extreme pressure and heat, and they won't even appear on the surface until there is enough **pressure** from a volcanic eruption to push them up to the earth's surface.

- **What if the fire and pressure of the the last 6 months was actually leading to this season where the riches of salvation are being pushed to the surface?**
- What if God has actually been USING the fire and subsequent "ash fallout", of the last 6 months to fertilize the soil of people's lives, so that they could receive the **implanted word of God that has the power to save their soul?** (ref. **James 1:21**)

- **Maybe that which was planted in the soil of people's lives in the Spring, has actually been growing roots that have sprouted little buds over the last few months, and we are on the brink of a season where those buds are beginning to bring forth fruit, and**

people who have had NO HOPE, will FINALLY FIND ETERNAL HOPE, which ONLY comes from Jesus.

- There's a lot to celebrate today, but this is what we're most excited about.
- So, as a church, this will be our focus for the rest of the year, at least. We want to DO OUR PART in reaping what has been sown.
- We're taking a 7 tiered approach to this this season.
- **H-A-R-V-E-S-T.**

(H)ONOR GOD, NEIGHBOR, AND CHURCHES

- Someone asked Jesus: **"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:36-39)**
- **In this season, that means that we are going to keep on obeying God, and complying with the government, as long as we can.**
- Sean (Calvary Community): "If and when our obedience to God finds us in non-compliance with the government, then we will be in defiance to the government. But we're NOT going to make it our purpose to defy or challenge."
- Our PURPOSE is the to bring the good news of Jesus to people who are desperately in need of Him, so THAT is where will our focus and passion will be.
- We also believe this approach will allow us to be a clear and obviously loving witness to our neighbors.
- Now, we recognize that this may not be the same approach, or perspective, of all of the other churches in our community. And that OK.
- We are not here to judge whether they're right or wrong. Those churches are going to do what they believe God is calling THEM to do. We need to do what we believe God is calling US to do.
- But through it all, we are going to honor and love the other churches in our community, no matter the approach they take.
- **Let's make sure we "don't pass judgment on one another" (ref. Romans 14:13), but instead "accept one another" (ref. Romans 15:7).**
- This attitude should characterize the conversation between Christians, between churches, and even between church leaders and members as we may come to different conclusions.
- **We must "make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification" (ref. Romans 14:19).**

(A)SK

- As in “pray.”
- As in “ask and you shall receive.” (Matthew 7:7)
- As in sometimes, “you have not because you ask not.” (James 4:2-3)
- Jesus said in **Matthew 9**, “PRAY to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest and ASK Him...”
- We believe this IS a season of Harvest — of gathering people into the storehouse of God, but that should not mean that we stop praying.
- Harvest Time IS Prayer time.
- “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)
- It is one of the great mysteries of scripture, that Sometimes God waits to act until we ask.
- It is time to double down on prayer.

(R)EACH

- Harvest is a time when you REACH OUT and pick the fruit that’s ripe.
- “Pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.” (Matthew 9:38)
- The problem isn’t that there’s no fruit on the vine. The problem is there’s no workers to harvest it.
- **GOD is the one who saves, but God uses people like US to invite people to be saved.**
- Listen, The stability of people’s lives has being shaken.
- The storm hit and people realized that their lives were built on sand. People are broken.
- And they need to know that the longing their souls will NEVER be satisfied, their lives will never be stable, they never find lasting hope apart from having their sins forgiven and them coming into a relationship with God, though Jesus Christ.
- People don’t need you. They need Jesus. But YOU CAN bring them TO Jesus, by REACHING OUT.
- **Jesus said He has given us the keys to my Kingdom.**
- What are the keys? **The keys are the proclamation of who Jesus is.** When we share the good news of who Jesus is and what He came to do, it opens up the doors of the Kingdom to people.
- Some will be ready. Some not.



- Some of you have sown seeds in people's lives through prayer, or loving interactions, or mentioning little things about Jesus. It's time to harvest that which has been sown, by explicitly inviting people to Jesus.
- **And if that's too overwhelming, then invite them to CHURCH.**
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- Some will receive him. Some will not. That's ok. Our job to simply open the doors.

(V)INE

- [Jesus said] "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me." (John 15:4)
- If we are there is going to be any fruit of boldness, or love, or discernment, or kindness, in this season, it is going to come from abiding in Jesus.
- Ministry flows from intimacy.
- There will be no effective lasting ministry apart from abiding intimacy with Jesus.
- I HOPED, that God would let me just kind of cruise for the rest of the year.
- When He woke me up in the middle of the night and told me it's harvest time, my immediately response was, "Really Lord? That sounds like a lot of work. I don't know if I have that in me."
 - I am willing to bet, that some of you might feel the same way right now. But I THINK that's maybe right where we he wants us — at the end of ourselves, where all we can do is abide in Him and ask Him to do what only He can do.
- In John 6 fed thousands of hungry people. And the only the thing the disciples did was bring a few fish and loaves. And that's all Jesus WANTED them to do. Just bring what they had.
- What He's asking us to do, is just show up with the few fish and loaves. It's His harvest. He's got a plan. He's do the saving amazing work.

(E)VERYONE IN

- **Notice how Jesus said:**
- **“The harvest is great, but the workers are few.” (Matthew 9:38a)**
- The problem is not that there’s no fruit on the vine.
- The problem is there’s no workers.
- If we are going to see a great Harvest, then we are ALL going to need to be in the fields.
- **Everyone doesn’t need to do everything, but everyone does need to do something.**

(S)ING

- There is something significant about musical worship in connection to the Harvest.
- Unity is going to be under attack in this season. The enemy HATES all this, and He will do everything He can to divide the people of God.
 - Coals are hot and effective as long as they stay together, but as soon as you separate them from one another, they all lose their heat.
- We must do everything we can to REMAIN unified.
- **Worshipping together unifies the people of God.**
- **2 Chron. 20 shows us that there is also a spiritual warfare element to worship, and the work of the enemy is actually thwarted, when God’s people start praising Him, in song.**
- **We believe that we need to double down on musical worship in this season.**
- What does that mean for YOU? Well, for one... SHOW UP. When we have worship nights, show up!
- And on Sundays, show up. And show up ON TIME. Get here early, BEFORE the music starts. And when the music starts, JOIN in.

(T)EACH

- This IS a season of harvest — where we are reaching out and inviting people into the Kingdom of God, but that will not come at the expense of us teaching the Word of God every week.
- **We don’t want to just go wide, we want to continue to go deep.**
- **We will continue to teach through the our Kingdom Family series in the book of Ephesians, and dig deeper into the Sunday sermons, through our community groups during the week.**
- So, this is what we’re doing. This is what we believe God is doing. And we believe God inviting US into it.

- *(Father at dining table, inviting us to join Him).*
- So, I'm saying yes. I'm all in. Our staff is all in.
- We're asking you to be all in too.

- I can't be 100% sure that God said it's Harvest Time, but it seems pretty obvious to me.
- And if I'm wrong... all right... I'd rather go all in on this and be wrong, then be right and ignore it, and totally miss out on what God is doing.