

# Pray to the Lord of the Harvest

José de Dios. 19 November, 2018  
Evangelical Free Church of Bemidji

## **[Slide1 : Sermon title and verses]**

Matthew 9:35-38

“35 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. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. 38 So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”\*

## **Introduction:**

I want to express my gratitude to Pastor Jerry and the leadership of the church for inviting me to speak today, it's a privilege to be with you all once again. This church has been a family and a community for us for many years. Thank you everyone for your partnership with us in the gospel. Over 20 years of fruitful partnership have allowed us to follow God's invitation to serve him so that all might hear, and all might have access to the Bible in their own language.

## **[Slide 2: Family Picture]**

When we hear the term “The Great Commission” this is the verse we usually associate with it. Matthew 28:16-20 .

## **[Slide 3: Great Commission verses]**

Today, however, I'd like to reflect with you on another passage, which we normally don't associate with the great commission, but I've been learning a lot about.

## **[Slide 4: Main verses for today. Mt. 9:35-38]**

These are my musings as I've read, reflected and taught from these verses. I hope the thoughts I share with you are a blessing, and help you in your journey of faith, as we all seek to follow God's “Great Commission”.

## **[Slide 5: Last verse from Mt. 9:35-38]**

We don't have time to delve into this long chapter, but let me give you some idea of the things that happen here.

## **[Slide 6: Chapter Outline]**

Let me share some thoughts about this.

**[Slide 7: The Cross]**

**1. The Great Commission IS the Christian Journey.**

In the chapters preceding verses 9:35-38, Matthew treats us to a series of events strung together as Jesus is in Galilee, on the road, on a journey heading down to his hometown. Matthew tells us about many different parables and teachings of Jesus, and then he highlights several encounters he has with a variety of people. As he travels, Jesus teaches, he heals people, he forgives sins, and talks about the Kingdom. He calls Matthew, and he also takes actions that anger the religious leaders. The culmination of these chapters happens at the end of Chapter 9, in verses 35-38. Jesus concludes as if to say “all these things I have shown you” are meant to teach you about this: Consider the multitudes, who are like sheep without a shepherd. Respond by praying to the Lord of the Harvest, to send workers.”

I would like to think Jesus first teaches people in order to help them know the Father, and his Kingdom, and then he shows them in practical ways how they are to go about spreading the good news of the Kingdom. He models compassion, forgiveness, inclusion and also obedience, faithfulness to God’s direction, staying on course until the end. He is showing us here how we are to go about fulfilling his command to make disciples of all nations. It’s not for “missionaries” or full-time ministers, it’s the journey for all of us. No person is too small, no opportunity too insignificant. Wherever we are, whatever our circumstances, we are always on this journey, the Journey of Jesus.

**[Slide 7-11: Global Christianity]**

**[Skip 12-14]**

**2. The Great Commission is not only about numbers.**

it’s about God’s redemptive purposes. From forgiving sins to healing diseases, to calling Matthew and dining with him and his friends, from stopping everything to find out who touch his robes (“daughter”), from healing a blind man to raising a daughter from the dead, Jesus shows us God’s heart of love and compassion and grace. Of course, we want to see great numbers of people come to Christ, were it that ALL would, but we can’t forget that each person is important and precious in God’s sight, and He desires to heal and forgive.

One of the reasons why I’m so passionate about seeing God’s people partner and work together, is that in doing so we ourselves are transformed, we model in our relationship with one another, what this kingdom of God is about.

**3. The Great Commission is ultimately about God.**

We try to predict how and when we will complete our task, when Jesus will return. We tend to focus on our strategies, our resources, and capacity to “complete” the Great Commission. But Jesus’ exhortation to pray to the Lord of the Harvest (not for the harvest, or for acceleration of the work but pray **TO the Lord (master) of the Harvest**, is a reminder that this is God’s journey, His Mission, and he invites us to join him. As Hebrews reminds us, we must keep “our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.” (Heb. 12:2a NLT)

We are seeing incredible growth in the Church around the world, record numbers of people coming to Christ, in spite of all the existing challenges, the Gospel is marching on. Though the resources have not necessarily increased (giving to missions in the West is actually less than it has been historically), what we call Kingdom Collaboration has brought about tremendous breakthroughs. Not because this is a great strategy (or silver bullet), but because the Holy Spirit's power, as Jesus prays in John 17, is released into the world, when God's people work together in unity, as a body.

I want to conclude by commending you as a church, for your long commitment to World missions, for your prayers and your financial support. I want to encourage you, to tell you that God has honored your faithfulness and used to impact the world, to bring hope, healing salvation. But there's so much more to do. Pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send out workers, give to those workers, as a church and as a family, and who knows, you might the answer to your own prayers!

Dear friends I want to invite you to prayerfully consider joining us in this missionary journey. We invite you to become a prayer partner, and advocate or a financial partner. If you'd like to know more about how to become one of our partners, here's some information. I will be at a table in the fellowship hall if you want to learn more about our work, or how to give or pray.

**Contact information:**

José and Laura de Dios  
139 Buckskin Drive.  
Waxahachie, TX 76167. USA  
Laura +1.214.909.3783 • Jose 214.435.4317

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