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THE HARVESTER'S PLAN FOR WORLD EVANGELISM PART TWO

Last time we talked about the prayer aspect in the harvester's plan for world evangelism. Jesus said there was a big harvest with few laborers. So, what shall we do to reach the world. Come up with a strategy. Matthew 10 outlines such a plan.

CALL

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matthew 10:1). Because there are lots of lost and only a few seekers, God calls. Entire lessons and books have been written on the subject of the call so we won't linger with that. The thing to note here is to reiterate that for those He calls, He gives them power. He enables, equips, and empowers His workers to reap the harvest. A call birthed in prayer and fasting, releases spiritual authority and power.

Go

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 10:5-7).

The obvious thing about being sent forth is that someone has to "go." Jesus carefully directed them to the lost. They were to start with the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." His plan for evangelism started at home but eventually worked its way around the globe (Acts 1:8). They began in their Jerusalem but didn't stop there. It is always God's plan to go the distance; to the uttermost parts of the earth. Someone has rightly said that the light that shines the furthest shines the brightest at home. Some else quipped, "Don't send a lamp to the mission field that will not burn at home." In reading this verse and verses that follow it, it is obvious that Jesus had a strategic, focused, plan.

DECLARE

It wasn't enough to go. "As you go, preach." We are to proclaim the good news of the gospel. The kingdom is at hand: it is drawing close to people and bringing them to a point of decision. This is called a "truth encounter" and should be an integral, pivotal part of every Gospel presentation. Paul testified that he came "declaring unto you the testimony of God" but also in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:1-4). Those two aspects of presenting Jesus Christ to a lost world work hand-in-hand.

DEMONSTRATE

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast

them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matthew 10:1). See also Matthew 9:35 and Acts 3:6.

A "power encounter" is a demonstration of God's power and His acts. It manifests the power of God through answering immediate needs and (at times) through working signs, miracles, and wonders that will confirm the Word of God. These demonstrations may help people make a step of faith. They authenticate the message that has been preached. As signs they evoke awe and astonishment. As miracles they display supernatural power.

PROVIDE

"Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat" (Matthew 10:9-10). See also Matthew 6:31-33.

The principles of God's Word are very clear. If we take care of God's business, He will take care of our business. God will provide. He will not forsake us. We walk by faith. Susan Fitkins said, "We never test the resources of God until we attempt the impossible for Him." God has all we need and He will supply it to us (Philippians 4:19).

INQUIRE

The messengers were to inquire or search for a place or person open to letting them stay there. Hopefully, in any and every town there is someone that will welcome the truth into his home and heart and will listen to the message and let it take hold in his life. Not everyone will be open and receptive. That is why, in missions, we refer to populations or people that are either receptive or resistant.

"And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not

worthy, let your peace return to you" (Matthew 10:11-13).

Gailyn Van Rheenen in *Biblical Foundations and Missions* explains "the world may be thought of as a giant orchard having many fields. Although some fields are ready for harvest, the husbandman is concerned about all fields, for their harvest will come in due time." The Lord of the Harvest cares for the world and sends laborers out into the fields; everywhere and anywhere. People are like those fields. They go through times of readiness and resistance. She recommends that "the receptive should be harvested while they are open to the message and the resistant nurtured until they become receptive."

MOVE ON

"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet" (Matthew 10:14).

To shake the dust off feet was a Jewish custom. It was a visual to show the people that they had made the wrong choice. The opportunity to choose Christ may never be presented to them again. It let them know that the messenger was innocent of their blood. He had obeyed the Lord of the Harvest, fulfilled His task, and the results were in the hands of God and those that heard him. Shaking the dust off one's feet was also symbolic to the preacher. It told him to keep moving and not to be discouraged. It is easy to read this passage and the only thing that remains in our minds is the negative; to shake the dust off our feet and move on. But, look at the reverse impact of adhering to this master plan of evangelism. Through following its principles the gospel is taken to the whole world, the kingdom of God is expanded through evangelism, deepened through discipleship, new churches are planted in the most cost-effective manner, and souls are saved. These are all reasons for rejoicing and lifting one's hands in praise, bending one's knees in worship, and proclaiming God's goodness. And that beats causing a little dust storm any day.