

EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

“Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” —MATTHEW 9:38

As Jesus travelled through towns and villages, preaching and healing the sick, Matthew records the effect of the crowds on Him. “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). Here, there is both an objective vision and a subjective compassion. Objectively, Jesus saw the crowds like ‘sheep without a shepherd’ and subjectively, He felt compassion for them.

What follows is a key to understanding effective evangelism. Jesus tells His disciples that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few, and He instructs them to ask the Lord of the Harvest to send out workers into the harvest field. Jesus was not saying to go into the field, but to ask the Lord of the Harvest to send workers. There is a ‘Lord of the harvest field’ who knows his business, and exactly the state of the harvest. Our task is not to take it upon ourselves to do the best we can, but to allow the Lord of the Harvest to direct our paths.

We would be making a mistake to think techniques are the key to effective evangelism. Though some techniques have validity, the key is found in relating to the role of Jesus Christ as Lord of the Harvest. It is very difficult to establish a strategy for evangelism

from the New Testament without recognizing the indispensable role of God in putting people in the right place at the right time. When an angel appeared to Philip in Samaria and told him to go south to a desert road, he did not know that he would meet up with the Ethiopian eunuch on his way home from Jerusalem. And this eunuch just happened to be reading a passage from Isaiah, which foreshadows Christ. Philip was able to jump on board the chariot, explain the passage, lead him to Christ and baptize him. Organized techniques will not bring that about!

The key elements in effective evangelism are vision, compassion and intercession. The vision of Jesus - 'when He saw the crowds', led to compassion, which led to intercession - 'ask the Lord of the Harvest'. Breaking one of these links renders the process ineffective. Jesus then called His disciples to Him and gave them the authority to drive out evil spirits and heal every disease and sickness (Matthew 10:1). The ones Jesus told to ask the Lord of the Harvest to send out workers are the same ones He then sent out to do the job. Vision, compassion and intercession lead to action!

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, help me to look to You as Lord of the Harvest, and not take it upon myself to win others. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I working together with Jesus in leading others to Him?