

The Commands of Jesus pt. 20
Seeing How Jesus Sees Matthew 9:35-38

Do you suppose that if we could see people around us the way Jesus sees them, it would make a difference in how we relate and reach out to them? It truly would. Let's talk about that today.

Jesus didn't come just to teach us truthful things from God. He Himself is truth personified (see John 14:6), thus the way He viewed everything is the way it actually is, this includes the way He viewed people.

A real part of following Jesus is learning how to adopt His perspective about everything, including His perspective of those who live around us.

While all Christians are commissioned by Jesus to be His witnesses (see Matt. 5:6, Mark 16:15-16, Matt. 28:19, Acts 1:8), I believe our effectiveness in this task is determined by whether or not we are seeing them the way Jesus sees them.

So how does Jesus view the lost around us? We get our answer from Matthew 9:35-38, when Jesus began His itinerant ministry, going from town to town to preach the good news and to heal their sick.

We discover that every time Jesus saw people, He saw the need, how He saw the opportunity and He saw the sovereignty of God. Let's study these out to gain the same perspective.

SEEING THE NEED:

Matthew 9:36, "When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

Jesus saw everyone with a true heart of compassion. This shouldn't surprise us, remember He is God in the flesh. Over and over again the Bible reveals that God is a compassionate God.

We read in Psalm 145:8-9, "The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made." God has compassion on ALL He has made; this includes both sinner and saint alike.

Biblically, compassion is that deep feeling of sympathy, mercy and care for someone, that is combined with the desire to alleviate their suffering and distress.

When Jesus saw the crowds of people, He saw them with compassion because He saw them as they truly are, like sheep without a shepherd, ever harassed. They are ever harassed by the many toils and burdens, griefs and tragedies that comes from living in a world broken by sin.

Jesus also had compassion on them because He saw them as they truly are in their helplessness. They are helpless to deal with their own sin issues and helpless to deal with the eternal and temporal consequences that come because of their own fallenness.

Sometimes it is hard to view people that way because all we see is their facades where they seem so together. But to be effective in our witness to them, Jesus invites us to see through their facades with compassion, because they too are harassed and helpless, needing a Savior.

SEEING THE OPPORTUNITY:

Matthew 9:37, 'Then He said to His disciples, "the harvest is ripe, but the workers are few."

When Jesus saw all the hurting people around Him, He looked at them with the eyes of faith and saw how there was a right now opportunity for harvesting souls for salvation unto God.

Jesus saw the same thing when the Samaritan town came out to see if He was the Christ. He said in John 4:35-36a, "Do you not say, 'Four months and then the harvest?' I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life."

Jesus invites us to also "open our eyes" and have His same perspective of faith seeing the opportunity to share the heart, truth and touch of Jesus with those around you. As we are told in 2 Corinthians 6:2b, "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."

SEEING THE SOVEREIGNTY:

Matthew 9:38, "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."

Notice how Jesus' perspective was shaped by the sovereignty of God. First Jesus saw that there is a Lord of the harvest, that is the owner, master and controller of the harvest. Second Jesus saw that it is the Lord's harvest field.

This totally fits with what we are told us in Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."

To be an effective witness, Jesus calls us to have this same perspective. Obviously, we are to be used in bringing people to Jesus, but the task is too great for any one of us to do alone, so Jesus commands us to pray that Father God will send more workers.

The Scriptures also calls us to direct our prayers for those workers in three specific ways:

Pray for an open door: **Colossians 4:3, "And pray for us too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ for which I'm in chains."**

Pray for clarity of proclamation: **Colossians 4:4, "Pray that I may proclaim it [the gospel] clearly."**

Pray the gospel will be received effectively: **2 Thessalonians 3:1, "Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you."**

We are called to see those around us with the Lord's compassion, to see the hurting with the eyes of faith as an opportunity for harvest and to see the lost through the lenses of God's sovereignty. As we do, it will make us more effective witnesses for the Lord.