

**Matthew in Biblical Perspective:
A Royal Manifesto of the Kingdom from the King –
The Gospel Harvest Begins: Part 1—The Apostles**

Matthew 10:1-5a

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July 28, 2013 – Morning Sermon

I'm going to start out by reading from the end of Matthew 9 and then we'll go into our text for this study in Matthew 10. Matthew 9:35–38 says

[35] And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. [36] When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. [37] Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; [38] therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever, and by His grace and mercy may this His Word be preached for you.

We in the Gospel of Matthew and why was the Gospel of Matthew written? The Gospel of Matthew is an evangelistic biography declaring that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Christ of Scripture, who was sent by the Father, verified by the Holy Spirit, and now proclaimed as King and Savior to all the nations until He returns in glory. We have been working our way through the Gospel of Matthew and we are now at the second of five recorded sermons that Matthew gives of Jesus. There are six records of the sermons of Jesus in His three year ministry and five of them are found in Matthew. We have already covered one which was the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. This is the second sermon which is found in Matthew 10 beginning in verse 5 but we won't be covering the sermon in this study. We'll get to the second discourse in the next study.

What we look at in this study though is very important and I want to start it off by giving you an experience from my life. Every year when I was child growing up, in October, we'd take one Sunday and ride up to the mountains after church on Sunday morning. We never missed church to do this but we'd go after church to do this. An hour and forty five minutes later we'd arrive in Boone, North Carolina at the Daniel Boone Inn where we would buffet our bodies. When we finished

eating we'd ride through the parkway, driving through Linville Gorge, Linville Falls and up and down the parkway looking at the beauty of God's creation.

One time my dad said to me before we got into the car "Son, you're going to jump the Catawba River." I said "Dad, that's the river that gives all the water to Charlotte and beyond. It's unbelievably big and it has Lake Norman and Lake Wileysville. How am I going to do that?" He said "You'll see." He took me all the way up to the head waters of the Catawba River, up the mountain, where it is approximately twenty three inches wide. It is the spring that starts the Catawba River and we jumped across it. So why am I telling you this?

We are in a text of Scripture that ends the first year of Jesus' ministry in the Galilee. He is about to go to the Judean ministry in His second year. He has been to every village in town – preaching, teaching and healing – affirming that He is the Son of God and the Messiah. In this portion of Scripture where it's being wrapped up you are about to see the New Covenant Gospel harvest or switching metaphors, the River of Life and you can jump across it right here. It is very small here. There are twelve Apostles going out throughout Israel but before long this thing will spread. It will go from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, to Antioch, across into Europe turning the world upside down, to Rome, to North Africa, and it will keep getting wider and wider and wider. The Gospel harvest will become more and more plentiful. This River of Life will get wider and wider and wider but here we can jump across it and I believe learn some basic principles about a Gospel harvest.

It is my conviction that while there are a lot of things in my country that need to be addressed economically, politically, culturally and all kinds of areas and I believe there are all kinds of areas we need to be engaged in, but I don't think that's what the country needs in order to be brought to a testimony of that which is good, beautiful and true. What is desperately needed is a Gospel harvest, from the ground up, the bottom up. From the top down can restrain, open doors but it won't change so it has to be from the bottom up. That means we need a Gospel harvest.

How do you get a Gospel harvest? Sometimes the river is so wide as we see the movement of the Gospel in Africa, Asia and all places that it's just overwhelming but sometimes when you get back to where the headwaters are you can learn some basic principles. I want to make sure you know, embrace and God willing engage in the seven principles of a Gospel harvest. We have already covered three of the seven principles of a Gospel harvest. It comes from the Matthew 9 passage we read at the beginning.

The first one is the harvest is already assured and secured by the Lord of the harvest. Jesus said "The harvest is plentiful" not that if you help Me it's plentiful. No He has already assured that the Gospel harvest is plentiful. That is not the question. As I look at Birmingham desperately desiring a Gospel harvest, a

Gospel harvest for me is not can I create one. I already start with this assumption; the harvest is assured and secured by Christ. Jesus says "All that the Father gives Me, I lose not one." He has assured and secured the Gospel harvest.

The second principle is the Lord of the harvest, provides not only the harvest, but He also provides the laborers of the harvest. Since the harvest is plentiful the first thing we should do is not to get a program, plan, strategy or get creative, but we are to fast. Then secondly, we pray earnestly as we fast. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into the harvest. That's what we do but it's not the only thing we do but our number one priority is to pray because the Lord not only provides the harvest but He also provides the laborers for the harvest.

The third principle is that the Lord of the harvest provides the means. The Lord of the harvest provides laborers for the harvest through the priority of fasting and praying. Notice I said priority because it is not all that you do. It is appropriate that we have all kinds of ministries to train and disciple leaders and laborers but that is not what you go to. Your 'go to' is to pray. Why? It is because when you look out you have the heart of Jesus. What do you see when you see people? One of the great testimonies of God's grace in your life is this.

Here is how you know God's grace is working. One, what you once covered up and rationalized, you now confess and repent. What you once loved you now hate. What is it that I once covered and rationalized that I now confess and what is it that I once loved and now hate? It is sin and now God's grace is at work in our hearts. We have millions of reasons to play the victim. Adam taught us right from the beginning when he said "Lord, it wasn't me. It was the woman and You gave me the woman. It wasn't my fault I have a dysfunctional wife. By the way, I have a dysfunctional God because You gave me her." So when God's grace comes we own sin, confess and don't rationalize it.

Secondly, what we once loved we now hate. When God's grace matures you, you hate sin and you love God's grace but you start loving sinners because you realize they are where you were, helpless and harassed. Do you know what happens when you become empty and purposeless because of sin? You become the object of harassment. You are the prey for every possible charlatan and every possible religious huckster. You are the prey for everything in this world, from corporate greed, personal greed, to racial hucksters, to corporate hucksters, to religious hucksters. Charlatans abound everywhere to say to you that your meaningless can be erased by you following me. So we become harassed in our helplessness. Jesus saw that and it says He felt compassion.

In the last study I gave you the translation of compassion which is a tough word to translate here. We think of compassion in the heart and a Hebrew wouldn't. Compassion was a gut. Compassion comes from a root word meaning pain in the bowels. I know what we're trying to say when we say "I feel your pain." You

can't feel my pain. I can't feel your pain but I can feel pain when I see your pain. That's what Jesus did. He saw them and said that they were like sheep without a shepherd.

What do you need to do? You need to realize you already have a harvest. You need to realize He provides laborers. That means you need to start praying to the Lord of the harvest. We have four more principles and to get there we need to look at these five verses somewhat carefully. Jesus tells the disciples to pray and guess what happens when they pray? Matthew 10:1–5a says

[1] And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. [2] The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; [3] Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; [4] Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. [5a] These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them...

Just from those words I want to point out five things. The first thing is that Jesus "called" them. There are two types of calling in the Bible. There is salvation calling and there is vocational calling. Salvation calling is indicated in the Bible when it says "Faithful is He who called you and He will bring it to pass" (1 Thessalonians 5:24). Also when it says "Those whom He foreknew He predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son and those whom He predestined He called and whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified" (Romans 8:29–30). Calling is when God takes the external call of the Gospel with the internal call of the Holy Spirit and brings sinners from death unto life. It is irrevocable, eternal and efficient that He calls His people and loses not one of them and that calling to a Savior and salvation is eternal verity that can never pass away. God who holds you will keep you. He will preserve you and the evidence will be your perseverance.

There is another word for calling and we get the word vocation from it. It is the voice of the Lord calling us to the roles and responsibilities in life. I will use myself as an example here. I was called from death unto life, a salvation calling, when I was 22 years of age. I also have some other callings. I have been called as a husband. I am Cindy's husband, to her chagrin and my blessing. I have three children so I am called to be a father. I'm called to be a citizen of the United States of America. I am called to be a pastor/teacher of the Briarwood Presbyterian Church. My salvation calling modifies, controls, directs and defines all of those other callings. It is for Christ I am to be a husband. It is for Christ I'm to be a father. Another calling I have is to grand-parenting, God's reward for not killing your kids. I am to be a Christian grandparent. I am to bring the claims of Christ upon my life to be an asset to some degree for God's people to be a

pastor/teacher. I am to be a Christian citizen of the Kingdom of God in a kingdom of this world. That controls all of my life.

So in Matthew 10:1 it says that He called them to Himself into this vital relationship with Him. He called them to Him and then He called them to serve for Him. So they were called to Christ and they were called Apostles.

Secondly, He “gave” them. He gave them authority and power. These were Apostles which meant they were Christ’s special emissaries. When they spoke it was the same as when Christ spoke. That’s not true about me. I’m a little ‘a’ apostle. I’m not a capital ‘a’ Apostle. Paul said “I’m glad you took my word for what it is, the Word of God and not the word of man.” Do not take my word as the Word of God unless it is faithful to the Word of God. I am not infallible when I speak. You have to test it by the Scriptures, but these aren’t small ‘a’ apostles, they are capital ‘a’ Apostles. They were now to go to the same villages and towns as Christ’s emissaries to do what He did and say what He said. When Jesus went around to all the villages and towns what did He do? He proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom. He was teaching them, healing and He was sovereign over the demonic spirits of the day. Now He sends His Apostles out and gives them power and authority over unclean spirits, to heal every kind of affliction and they go preaching, teaching and healing because they are going to represent Him. In other words, God never calls you to do what He doesn’t give you the equipment to do.

I am called to be a husband and God has given me the equipment to do that. I am called to be a father and God has given me the equipment to do that. God called them to be Apostles and He gave them the equipment to do that. He gave them the authority and power to do that. He has called you to be a witness for Jesus Christ. All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth, now go for your ambassadors for Christ. You have that authority. I don’t have the authority to do Apostolic work but I do have the authority to do small ‘a’ apostle work. I am a sent one for the Lord. Here He called them with a salvation calling and a vocational calling and then He equipped them for what He called them to do by giving them the power and authority to do it.

Thirdly, He “named” them. He named them four informative ways in the text. First of all He named them by calling them the 12. Here are twelve individuals but He called them in the singular the 12. I think He did this for a very significant reason. The Old Covenant is obsolete, not because there is anything wrong with it but because Christ has fulfilled it. We now have the New Covenant, the new wine and the new wineskin. This new is not anticipating but it is announcing what was anticipated and has been done. Instead of a national wineskin we now have the church as a wineskin that can go from nation to nation and culture to culture throughout all the nations of the world. All of this is the glorious fulfillment.

So when God's people fast now they don't fast like they did in the Old Testament which was mourning over the incomplete. We now fast in humbling anticipation and affirmation of what Christ has done. Our fasting is totally different. Our prayers are totally different in terms of not anticipating what needs to be done because Christ hasn't come yet but gloriously and affirming what He has done and what He will do. It is a totally different dynamic that has changed. These 12 are moving to the New Covenant, new wineskin, new Israel, new Jerusalem. In the Old Covenant there are twelve patriarchs and twelve tribes. In the New Covenant there are twelve Apostles. A Hebrews would not have missed the importance of this phrase the 12. I want to show you this in Revelation 21.

When Christ, who came brought the New Covenant, comes again to bring what is now affirmed into what will then be a consummation it says this in Revelation 21:9–14,

[9] Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb (the church)." [10] And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, [11] having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. [12] It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—[13] on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. [14] And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

You see this continuity of the fulfillment to the New Covenant for a new Israel, now the twelve patriarchs have given way to the fulfillment in Christ who has established the twelve Apostles as the foundation of the New Covenant and the New Covenant people that is an Israel drawn from all the nations, a new Israel. Secondly, He calls them personally and descriptively. There are four times in your Bible that all twelve names show up in a listing. Interestingly, they show up in a different order except in this way. Every time the twelve Apostles are listed they always start with Peter and end with Judas – the spokesman and the one who denied Him. Secondly, they are given in twos. Thirdly, there is information given about them. They are not only the 12 showing unity, but look at the differences in them individually. There are some rich people in there like James and John who had a pretty big fisherman business right there on the Sea of Galilee along with Andrew and Peter. There is a radical who is Simon the Zealot (the Cananean not meaning he was from Canaan). He was part of a political party that basically sought change by assassination. He was one of the disciples. Then there was Matthew the tax collector and there was nothing more despicable to a Jew who went to work for the Romans to steal and oppress their people.

There is an unbelievable diversity that is here. They are personally named and have a uniqueness about each of them.

Thirdly, they are called disciples – Christ followers, Christ learners. You can't do the Christian life first until you're a Christian that is a commitment to Christ and secondly until you learn the Christian life. The Christian life is counterintuitive. The tithe is ten percent and the 90 percent is bigger than the 100 percent and that is counterintuitive. I've tried to answer questions like that in math in High School and I never received an "A" on that one. Take one day and count it holy unto the Lord and the other six days will be more productive than if you go all out seven days a week. To live you have to die. The Christian life has to be learned. It's not a reflex. It has to be learned through the transformation of the mind. So we have to be disciplined and He called them disciples.

The fourth way He names them in the text and the only time He calls them this in Matthew is He calls them the Apostles – the Sent Ones. It is not small 'a' apostles. We are all sent ones but they are capital 'A' for they are like emissaries for Christ. It is like John Kerry who shows up to talk with the head man from Russia, Putin. When John Kerry shows up it is like the president himself from the US is speaking. When the Apostles spoke they were speaking on behalf of Christ and they were speaking the Word of Christ. Therefore they needed the credentials of Christ. What were the credentials of Christ? He would preach and teach the truth and He would heal as a miracle worker to verify that He was the Son of God and the Messiah. He then gives them the authority to preach, teach, give forth the Word, and do miracles. They become miracle workers, doing signs, wonders and miracles.

That brings me to something that I want to take a moment to deal with. This won't be popular but I need to deal with it to be faithful as a pastor. Miracle working is the ability of an individual to heal – to speak the Word of God, revelation. It is not illumination. I am doing illumination in this study. That is what preaching and teaching is – illumination. When the Apostles did it they were giving revelation. They would do something and say "Thus saith the Lord." I am saying 'thus says the Bible but you check it and make sure.' They were giving us the Bible. Now how do you know these were Apostles? They had the credentials which was they could do signs, wonders and miracles. They were not dependent upon the faith of someone.

When Peter and John walk up to the temple and a man is begging for alms Peter says "Silver and gold have I none but what I do have I give you in the name of Jesus. Get up and walk" (Acts 3:6). That man was not a believer but he was healed. They had the ability to do that kind of healing power to be a credential that they spoke on behalf of the Lord and ministered on behalf of the Lord and a special role as the foundation of the church. There are two other passages where I can show you this. First let's look at Hebrews 2. This is really important and I'll

tell you why in a moment. In Hebrews He has already talked about how God's Word has been spoken and it's the final Word. Hebrews 2:1–4 says

[1] Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. [2] For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, [3] how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord (He is the Word Incarnate), and it was attested to us by those who heard (the Apostles), [4] while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

In other words the Apostles had the power to speak forth the revelation of God's Word and their credentials were the ability to heal, cast out demons by their spoken word which is why we're supposed to listen to their word as the Word of God and why what they wrote is for us in the New Testament.

Which comes down to one asking me "Harry, do you believe in miracle workers?" and my answer is 'no.' Do you believe in faith healers? No. Are there any exceptions to this? No. Do not go telling someone that Harry Reeder does not believe in healing. We anoint people with oil and we pray for healing but no one praying is a healer. None of us have the power to heal. The Apostles had this power – through faith, affirming faith, beyond faith, creating faith. They had the power to heal because they spoke the Word of God for Christ. They were attested. In other words if I say "I have a sermon for you today but it's not in the Bible but it's the Word of God" this would not be true. The Apostles are done. The Scriptures have been given therefore we don't need the Apostles because we have something better which is the Word of God which they had been called to give to us which is sufficient for He has equipped us for every good work. We have God's Word and therefore we don't have Apostles. If anybody could do miracles how could it be a unique testimony to them as Apostles? It is a unique testimony to them as Apostles because only the Apostles could do it or to whom they would give the power and authority to do it. That's done so it does no good for us as preachers to call ourselves 'Apostle Harry' unless you mean small 'a' apostle.

Was there any Apostle whose apostolic ministry was challenged? Which Apostle had the biggest challenge as to whether he was really an Apostle or not? It was Paul. Let's look at II Corinthians 12. The Corinthians said to Paul "You're not an Apostle.

We want Peter, James and John for they are the super Apostles." II Corinthians 12:11–12 says [11] *I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing.* [12] *The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.* Paul

tells them that they may not want to believe but all you have to do is look and see for I did what Apostles do. Now if anybody can do it then how can it be a unique testimony of an Apostle? Therefore the Apostolic ministry is finished and that miracle working power in an individual.

I did not say that miracles had ceased. I pray for them and I'm praying for one right now. I don't know whether God gives it miraculously through His providence and medicine or directly. He can give it one way or the other but I don't go for faith healers. I'll go to the Lord and pray. I'll ask you to pray and it's not because I think you're a faith healer or a miracle worker. It is because I believe God does miracles but miracle working power was given to the Apostles. That is why Paul could appeal to it as a credential that he too was an Apostle.

I want to tell you why this is very important to me. The Bible says in the book of Thessalonians that in the latter times within the professing church God's people will fall away from the truth and they will seek teachers for their itching ears. Satan will deceive them because he will deceive them through false signs, wonders and miracles done with power. So if your bent in this life is to find the next "miracle worker" then you've just become a prey for the schemes of Satan. What you want to do is build your faith in Christ on the Word that the Apostles and Prophets gave us. I'd like to look at Ephesians 2:18–22 which says

[18] For through him (Christ) we both have access in one Spirit to the Father (The Triune God). [19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21] in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22] In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

In other words, Jew and Gentile, from all the nations have been brought into a new temple, in the New Covenant as the new Israel, as a people who make up the Kingdom of God and we have a foundation. That foundation is the Prophets who gave us the Old Testament, the Apostles that gave us the New Testament, God bore witness of them by giving them miracle working power and He has now through them given us the Word and that foundation has won and all rest against a Cornerstone. That Cornerstone is Christ Jesus, the glory of God revealed in Christ. That Word brings you to Christ. That is what you focus upon in your life to the glory of the Father.

Number four, He "sent" them. Matthew 10:5a says [5a] *These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them...* Then fifthly, He "instructed" them. In other words, He disciplined them and then they went out. Here is the River of Life where you can jump over it and it will start spreading. It's now enveloped many of you that are reading this today in it. Here you are at the headwaters right here.

I gave you three principles and now I want to give you the four concluding principles. To recap the first three; one, the Lord of the harvest has already secured the harvest. Two, the Lord of the harvest is the One who provides the laborers for the harvest. Three, the Lord of the harvest provides laborers through the means of intercessory prayer and fasting.

Number four, the laborers for the Gospel harvest are first produced from the Gospel harvest. In other words, you can't be sent until you're called. You have to come to Christ before you can go for Christ. He doesn't send the Apostles until verse 5 of Matthew 10. He calls them in verse 1 of Matthew 10. The laborers for the harvest are first produced from the harvest.

Number five, the Lord of the harvest sends laborers into the harvest and the labor force is marked by unity and diversity. We see "the 12" but look at them individually. I just adore Christ's grace as I meet you individually, you're uniqueness and how God has gifted you. We have rich, poor, black, white, people gifted this way and people gifted that way. Each one has a spiritual gift. Each one has a spiritual calling. We have this diversity of the body yet the unity of it. The 12 are together as the 12, unity, yet there is diversity.

Here is just one diversity. There is Matthew the tax collector. He is considered a traitor. There is Simon the Zealot. Here are both sides of the political spectrum. Let me put it this way. Jesus has a democrat and a republican as His disciples. I'll let you determine which one is which. He has rich, poor, tax collector and sinners. He has a Zealot who goes around killing people saying "Vengeance is mine, forget the Lord." He has all of them together but yet He brings them together by saving grace and then He takes their backgrounds and uniquely gifts them for their ministries. That's what the laboring force looks like.

Sixthly, functionally the primary means the laborers work are two by two. Mark even says it in Mark 6:7. Jesus sent them out two by two and notice how Matthew puts them in twos. He'll send the seventy out two by two. Why? We need our strengths and our weaknesses together. You come to Christ alone. Nobody can get saved for you. You make a personal commitment to Christ on your own but then we start working together. We have unity, the 12, functionally, two by two in teams of ministry that the Lord sends out.

Finally, number seven, the first laborer produced by the Lord of the harvest through your fasting and prayer will be you. Here is Jesus saying "See they are helpless and harassed. The harvest is plentiful. Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers in the harvest." He said to His disciples to pray. In the next verse, who is getting sent? It is the disciples who have been called to pray. When you start praying for the laborers for the harvest, you'll find out that the first answered prayer will be you. You are a laborer.

I want you to think of two things as you finish reading this. Do you believe there is a Gospel harvest needed? If you do, it's not the only thing we do but a priority ought to be prayer and fasting to the Lord of the harvest, for laborers of the harvest that we'll send out just as He designed, two by two – together in unity and with their individual diverse gifts. That is what we'll do but we first need to fast and pray.

Some approached me a few weeks ago and said you had never fasted before. We learned a few weeks ago about the prophecy of His people fasting, the command to pray earnestly and we put them both together. The elders and staff of this church got together and talked about this. If you want to start with a 30-day fast then you do so, but a lot of us aren't there yet. So we thought about giving you an opportunity to start. I don't know where this will lead and it's not designed to be a point of termination. It is just an opportunity to get your feet wet. You have the opportunity to give up a Sunday night dinner and come to the chapel and pray. There is a Monday morning breakfast time and a Wednesday lunch time as well that you can chose from. Those are the times that we have decided to start with to give you this opportunity to pray and fast for the laborers of the harvest. Set the meal aside and hear from the Lord from His Word. Come to prayer with His people and pray for laborers of the harvest. I want to get started on this so I want to just start from where I am.

I think this is very important also. We will find out in the next study where the disciples will be sent first and that will be to the house of Israel. What are these people? They are Jews. Pastor, if I start praying for the laborers of the harvest and I'm the first answered prayer and I'm a laborer, where do I go to work? Go to your home. All of us want to go globally but start locally. Go to your church. You might think, "Wait, I'm at Briarwood. You want me to harvest at Briarwood? Aren't we all Christians?" The answer is 'no.' We have done our best to ascertain a credible profession of faith but here the disciples are not only the foundation of the church but the disciples are the first testimony of the church and you have a lost one right in the middle of them. His name is Judas. So I don't take for granted that everyone at Briarwood knows Christ as Lord and Savior. I hope and pray they are but baptism won't get you there. Church membership won't get you there. It is Jesus and that relationship that you have with Him.

So start in your home. Start in your church. Go to your neighborhood. We'll find those who are gifted to go cross culturally. We'll get with them too but that's where you start. Start laboring in the field that is surrounding your home. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Lord, I sense this is so crucial and so important. I think it's crucial and important because I'm fully aware that as You sent the first laborers out in the New

Testament that one of them was lost and certainly they are in our church today. So if you're reading this today I pray that God would bring you as a first fruit of salvation from the harvest. The Lord of the harvest went to the cross and died for your sins. Would you come to Him? Lord, we will now with full assurance that the harvest is plentiful, we will begin to pray and fast at some level for laborers that we'll send out two by two, together as one, uniquely gifted by Your grace personally and then we'll rejoice as You start doing a work in our Jerusalem, our Judea, our Samaria, to the utter most part of the world. I pray this Father, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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