

The Fields are White to Harvest

Steve Durham—November 11, 2023

The fields are white to harvest! Now, I especially understand this phrase found in the Bible. In Indiana, fall is harvest time, and it is especially beautiful this time of year. Leaves change colors and different reds, yellows, shades of brown and some orange. It's a gorgeous, gorgeous time.

It's also a time when the crops are being harvested in Indiana, and there are a lot of laborers, a lot of workers in the fields. Many workers are needed to get the job done of harvesting today. Not like it was back in the time of Jesus, but still there's quite a bit of work that goes on in getting these crops in.

In all the seasons, again, I think that the fall is the most interesting and the most beautiful time of the year for me anyway, especially in Indiana. But harvest time in the Bible teaches us many things.

One of those lessons is that workers and laborers are needed to complete the work. The preparation for the harvest actually begins long before the fall. Planning for the harvest begins way before the sickle even is placed to the stalk, so to speak.

You have to purchase seed, and you have to get the right kind of seed and fertilizer to make sure the soil is the best having the most proper minerals for a good crop. Then you pray for rain and sunshine.

Many farmers spend time maintaining their tools and taking care of the machinery at this time. It takes a lot of planning for that and a lot of care and a lot of effort to make sure that these plants grow healthy, that they bear fruit and are worthy of a harvest.

Now, once all that is completed, the time to prepare, the seed is planted, and now you have a long wait. Time to do a lot of preparation and work in between. That is when the labor begins. This is when the workers really begin in earnest.

To get this job done and enjoy the fruit of the labor, they must be dedicated. They must be hardworking, conscientious, and have a sense of urgency about them. Hardworking men and women, hardworking laborers, focused on finishing the harvest. Ecclesiastes tells us a little bit about this, and I enjoy this section.

Ecclesiastes 3:1: "To everything *there is* a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what *is* planted" (vs 1-2)

Verse 11: "He has made everything beautiful in its time; He has also set eternity in their heart..."

God has placed in the hearts of men a desire to have a relationship with Him.

"...so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end" (v 11). *It's really a miracle!*

Also, that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor. It is the gift of God. So, throughout the Bible, in many cases, God uses agriculture to teach us about His Plan for mankind.

In that Plan, there is a great harvest coming. An individual harvest, but a great harvest, as well. The harvest is a common Biblical theme associated with the Kingdom of God.

So, I want to ask you a couple questions. You've heard these questions before. It's good to think about.

- Why did God call me? *We've heard that many times! We've even said that!*
- Why did God call me?
- What part do I have in God's Plan for mankind?
- Is it just me?

or

- Do I have anything to do with the preparation and getting other people into the Kingdom, into the Family of God, into that harvest?
- What part, if any, do I have in God's individual harvest?

Good questions, questions I think that can be answered in God's Word.

We're going to focus on John 4 to answer some of these questions. You'll notice the story of Christ and the woman at the well. There's a lot more that takes place after that interaction when she runs back into the town. It'll help us answer some of these questions about God's harvest that I just asked.

John 4:35—*Jesus was telling them:* "Do not say that there are yet four months, and *then* the harvest comes. I say to you, look around. Lift up your eyes and see the fields, for they are already white to harvest" (v 35).

When grain is harvested, it's ripe, it looks light brown, and in the sun it looks almost white. So you see this field of wheat that looks just white, white to harvest.

Luke 10:2: “And so, He [Jesus] said to them, ‘The harvest *is* indeed great, but the workmen *are* few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest that He may send out workmen into His harvest.’”

God is calling people to that, to that particular job. All of us have that job that we need to take seriously and be dedicated about.

At another time Jesus taught the disciples about being a workman for the harvest of God.

Matthew 9:35: “Then Jesus went around to all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every bodily weakness among the people.”

Now this could be sickness, it could be just being weak, run down, or emotional. Isa. 61 talks a little bit about that.

Verse 36: “And seeing the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them...”

He truly set the example, Christ set the example for us in His attitude, in His heart, the way He dealt with, threw in and was dedicated and convicted about the work that God had given Him to do, about wrapping up this Plan of God, His phase of it.

He had the heart of a servant. We’ve heard before Churches say a Christ-centered servant. Well, Christ was centered on loving one another and being a workman and a laborer, setting the example for us to see what we’re supposed to do just by watching Him.

The people then are like we are today. They were wearied, they were scattered, they were confused. They were sheep without a shepherd. The shepherds were *false shepherds* and they were out for their own gain. They didn’t care about the sheep.

Verse 37: “Then He said to His disciples... [and He’s saying this to us, too] ... ‘The harvest *is* truly great, but the workmen *are* few; therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest, that He may send out workmen into His harvest” (vs 37-38).

That is certainly what CBCG is doing in getting the literature, videos the media that we have, the many books and booklets that have been put together and sent out. We’re certainly getting that information into the hands of individuals, **but there’s more that needs to be done!** There’s that personal touch when we can do that.

Second best is the online, the things that we’re doing there. We are focused on being a workman and being a laborer to get the harvest done that God has given us to do. Jesus uses the example of a woman at the well, and it shows us that God is

looking for laborers to assist in the harvest of individuals into the Family of God. There are a lot of people out there being called right now that we don’t even know about. I’ve got some examples of that if I have time to give them to you.

There is a harvest being done today, and we have a part in it. Those were some of the questions I asked. Yes, we do have a part in it, and yes, there is a harvest being done. We’ve been called as workmen to participate in it, to assist Christ in doing the work of a laborer for the harvest, to care for, to nurture, bring individuals that He calls to maturity into that harvest.

Help them make it. Help them make it into the family and help us make it. Bear one another’s burdens. Be conscientious of one another. So, before we go back to John, let’s read a section of Scripture in Luke. It sees what John the Baptist had to say about this work of a laborer. He certainly was quite the laborer of bringing people into the harvest and the Family of God.

Luke 1 is talking about John the Baptist. He was a true workman for the harvest.

Luke 1:15^[transcriber’s correction] “...but he shall be filled with *the* Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to *the* Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in *the* spirit and power of Elijah, to turn *the* hearts of the fathers to *the* children, and *the* disobedient to *the* wisdom of *the* righteous, to make **ready a people prepared for *the* Lord**” (vs 15-17).

- to make ready the harvest
- to make ready a people

These are all ways that we can prepare a people. This is an explanation of what a workman or a laborer in the harvest of God will be.

Make ready a people prepared for the Lord. This is an explanation of what a workman or a laborer in the harvest of God will be doing in preparation for the harvest.

(repeated audio)

It has been said in our generation, and we’ve heard it in the Church, that we have that mission or charge to do as Christ did. ***I believe it still holds true for us today!***

Let’s go to John 4 and look at the first section that comes before the statement, ***the fields are white for harvest.***

For time’s sake, I’m just going to read through it very quickly, but pick out some of the dialogue that goes on.

He had christened leaves from Judea, and He parts to Galilee. It was necessary for Him to go

through Samaria.”

You’ve got to know about the Samaritans. In 721_{B.C.} Israel went into captivity; Assyria took them into captivity. What they would do is transplant people from Assyria into the conquered area, and they sent them to Israel. They intermarried, and they had pagan ways. So, because of some lion troubles, the people thought they needed to be worshiping God.

The king sent back a Jewish rabbi to help them with the religion, and they brought the Pentateuch, but that was about it. So there was this mixture of idolatrous ways and pagan ways. Seventy years later, when Israel was allowed to return with Nehemiah and Ezra to rebuild the temple, the Samaritans fought against them, and they even built their own temple on Mount Gerizim.

The Samaritans were usually very universally, very much adamantly despised by the Jews.

John 4:5: “And He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. And Jacob’s fountain was there...” (vs 5-6)—*a well!*

So Christ comes up and sits down at the well about the sixth hour (v 6), which is noon.

Verse 7: “A woman came out of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me *some water* to drink.””

It says that the disciples weren’t there, they had gone into the city to buy food (v 8).

Verse 9: “Therefore, the Samaritan woman said to Him, ‘How *is it that* You, being a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, *to give You water* to drink? For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.””

Verse 10: “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you had known the gift of God, and Who it is that said to you, “Give Me *some water* to drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing with *which* to draw *water*, and the well is deep; how then do You have the living water?’” (vs 10-11).

Boy, this got her attention! You don’t have anything to draw water with, and the well’s deep. How do you have living water?

Verse 13: “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; rather, the water that I will give him shall become a fountain of water within him, springing up into everlasting life’” (vs 13-14).

Verse 15: “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir,

give me this water, so that I will not thirst or *need to* come here to draw *water*.””

Now Jesus tells her something that only He would know, a private bit of knowledge that a stranger wouldn’t know about her.

Verse 16: “Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband and come *back* here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I do not have a husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have spoken well in saying, “I do not have a husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband. This you have spoken truly.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem’” (vs 16-20).

Verse 21: “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. You do not know what you worship. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. [because all the apostles were Jews] But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God *is* spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in Truth’” (vs 21-24).

He was giving her quite a bit of information. He was giving her an opportunity to have God’s Holy Spirit and to be given the Truth.

Verse 25: “The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming, Who is called Christ; when He comes, He will tell us all things.’”

And here He was, sitting right in front of them.

- the Word
- the Way
- the Truth
- the Life

with the Holy Spirit and the opportunity for her!

Then Jesus says something that he didn’t tell anyone else. He said it a couple times, but not very often.

Verse 26: “Jesus said to her, ‘I Who speak to you am *He*.’”

He said, ‘I am the Messiah, the Christ.’
WOW!

She just left her water pot and ran into the city and told them, ‘Come, see Who I’ve seen, this Man. He knows everything about me. Can it be that He’s the Christ?’

They all came out from the city to see Him. Meanwhile, the disciples had come back from the city with food, and it stops there.

But see, the Samaritans had been given a really rough way to go by the Jews. They were called 'dogs,' and they were seen as low-life individuals. No Jew would associate with them except for Christ. Christ was about to give them the Gospel and the Truth, which they had not had before.

We are faced with the same situation in the world today! We have individuals that are in bad shape, they have never known the Truth, and their lives reflect that. We are to teach all who come to find the Truth, all who are weary, tired and worn out by the world and the hassle and the confusion that's in it.

- we have that opportunity
- we have that responsibility
- we have that calling

To be a workman and a laborer in this wonderful Plan of God.

There can't be a harvest unless there's a planting, caring for the crop, and tending the crop: ***Teaching and caring for people, preparing the people for a harvest!*** That's what a workman does. That's what a laborer does. We need to take that seriously, dedicate it. There's an urgency to it. They were looking for the Truth, and they were looking for the Messiah.

Here He was right in front of them, both the Truth personified and the Messiah. It's the same today. There are people looking for God and for the Truth in bad situations in this world, because they don't know God the world's falling apart.

- marriages are in trouble
- children aren't being taught about God or how to act
- governments are failing; they're corrupt
- medical situations are dire
- education is falling apart
- the financial situation's bad
- religious leaders aren't leading the people to God in the way of the Truth

Yet, God has given us this calling to be workers and laborers with the Truth, with a way for them to be prepared for the Kingdom of God, the Family of God and eternal life! ***What a wonderful, wonderful blessing!***

Christ wants us to be laborers or workmen of the harvest. He calls us lights to show the way, to lead the lost to the Light of God and His Truth, to give them rivers of living water.

That's what we get to do, to heal and to prepare them for the harvest, which leads them to the family of God and eternal life.

Matthew 5:14: "You are the light of the world."

Verse 16 "...you are to let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father Who *is* in heaven."

Then begin in that relationship with Him. We get to be that light, that example.

- How are we doing with that?
- How are we doing with being a workman and a laborer in doing this; in leading them to God and to Christ?

We are doing the work of the laborers and workmen found in John 4,

- caring for the weak, the downtrodden, the widows and the fatherless
- learning His Word
- learning to teach and be ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within us.
 - you've got to know the Truth
 - you've got to study it
 - you've got to be able to rightly divide it, showing them life and life more abundantly

It says to pray for the workmen that God would add more and increase the abilities and the skills of those that are there so that we can show others how to live as God would have us live and glorify God in the process:

- to bear one another's burdens
- to love one another

He says, 'As I have loved you.' 1-Thess. 5 says to:

- admonish the idol
- encourage the fainthearted
- help the weak
- be patient with them all

This is what a workman does. This is what a laborer does, to make sure that crop and that harvest is plentiful and worthy of the harvest.

There are others that are laboring as well, other Churches, and we work together with them. He says that we are all one and all showing the light and how to get there.

In Psalm 119:105: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

It shows the correct way, the Truth and eternal life! We bring people to the right way of living. Workmen of the harvest ***must be teachable:***

- not stubborn
- not headstrong
- not hard-headed
- not hard-boiled
- not obstinate
- not hard to deal with

but

- teachable
- submissive
- yielding
- being able to handle the Word of God properly
- rightly dividing with a sound doctrine, with a sound mind
- ready to give that answer of hope that lies within us

Preparing the people for the harvest and becoming a workman or laborer involves teaching and being taught.

Paul tells Timothy that this time period between the seed going in and the harvest is a time for:

- teaching
- training
- loving
- caring for your neighbor
- doing these things

2-Timothy 2:2—*Paul tells Timothy*: “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, these *things* commit to faithful men, such as will be competent to teach others also.”

Verse 6: “*Moreover*, it is necessary for the husbandman to labor before partaking of the fruits.”

2-Timothy 4:1: “I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His Kingdom.”

Then Paul tells Timothy what to do as a laborer, as a workman!

Verse 2: “Preach the Word! Be urgent in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, encourage, with all patience and doctrine.”

The job and responsibility of a workman is preparing the people for the harvest.

John 4—the contrast between the woman at the well who was fired up. This was her first love. She was she had found the Messiah. She found the Truth and she’s going back to tell her friends and they hear and they see her enthusiasm and they’re coming out. Here are the disciples. They just came back.

- What are they concerned about?

- What are they thinking about?

They were more concerned with the physical food and water and rest. They were thinking that Jesus must be tired and hungry. They didn’t see the excitement of the woman and the opportunity to engage the city of Sychar and the people coming out with the Truth about the Kingdom of God.

John 4:31: “But in the meantime, the disciples were urging Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ And He said to them, ‘I have meat to eat that you are not aware of.’ Then the disciples said to one another, ‘Did anyone bring Him *something* to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My meat is to do the will of Him Who sent Me, and to finish His work’” (vs 31-34).

His food or my nourishment or my sustenance was the will of God who had sent Him. That’s what that was the urgency and the dedication that Jesus had to do the work and to prepare the people, especially the disciples for the harvest and to become laborers.

Jesus’ example shows us the way to be a proper workman. When he was younger, He said to His mom and dad, why? Why is it when He was at the temple that they were looking for Him? ‘Don’t you realize that I must be about My Father’s business?’

That was serving God and fulfilling and finishing the mission that God had sent Him on was far more important than the physical. So, we can ask: What drives us? *Yes, we need to be refreshed with food, water, clothing and a job!*

We need to have some recreation in our lives. But:

- What is our overall goal?
- What really drives us?
- Are we full of the work of God?
- Desire to get that job done?
- Do what we can and help people wherever they are?
- Do we have a sincere heart of a servant, of a laborer and a workman with what He’s given us to do?
- Are we passionate about it?
- About accomplishing the mission God has given to us as workmen in His harvest?
- To see others lives change?
- To get excited when we see someone in their first love with the Truth?
- Are we praying, studying, fasting, meditating and being concerned for others and not ourselves?

asking:

- What can I do for you? *Not what you can do for me!*
- What kind of skills are we asking God to

allow us to develop?

- What kind of fruit are we developing?
- How are we doing with that?
- Are we developing the skills of a workman, an effective workman, so that we can help with the harvest of God?
- Are we helping others see the Kingdom of God as well and let that be their goal?

Matthew 6:33: “But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Christ was telling them to be urgent and diligent, be fired up about this.

John 4:35: “Do not say that there are yet four months, and *then* the harvest comes. I say to you, look around. Lift up your eyes and see the fields, **for they are already white to harvest.**”

There’s an urgency here. Here they come. Here comes the townspeople. Lift up your eyes. He’s stirring them to action. He’s saying, ‘Focus on these who are coming out down the road from Sychar. They’re hungry for the Truth. Care for them. Prepare them for the Kingdom of God and the harvest.’ ***Prepare a people for the harvest and the Family of God!***

2-Corinthians 6:2 *has an urgency*: “For He says, ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.’ Behold, now *is* an acceptable time. Behold, now *is* a day of salvation.”

God is working with each individual on His individual time, His own individual appointed time. He has a purpose for us, to give us good things and not bad. What is the reward of a workman? or A laborer in the harvest? There is a reward. Just seeing people fired up, seeing their lives change is a joy.

John 4:36: “And the one who reaps... [the workman or the laborer who reaps] ...receives a reward, and gathers fruit unto eternal life; so that the one who is sowing and the one who is reaping may both rejoice together.”

There is a reward in doing the work of God! It is enjoyable to see someone with the first love get excited about the pearl of great price or that they found; the great treasure. And they’ll enter into the Family of God. Once they get that, it’s exciting to see that.

Daniel 12:1^[transcriber’s correction] *tells us about a reward*: “...And at that time your people shall be delivered—everyone who shall be found written in the book.”

Our job is to help them be written in the book, help them along that path.

Verse 2: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.... [that’s a future harvest] ...And they who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever” (vs 2-3).

Isn’t that a great reward for a workman and a laborer? Christ tells us that he’ll give us a reward!

Revelation 22:12: “And behold, I am coming quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each one according as his work shall be.”

And he says in another place, ***‘I will give you a crown of life’***

The preparation and the care of the grain is a joint effort and can be participated as laborer or worker and will work with other people and all will be partakers of its joy. It’s a team effort.

John 4:37: “For in this the saying is true, that one sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that in which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor” (vs 37-38).

1-Corinthians 3:5: *Paul says*: “Who then is Paul? And who *is* Apollos? *They are* but ministers through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one. I planted *and* Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” (vs 5-6).

We have to remember that. God gives the increase.

Verse 7: “Therefore, neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; for *it is* God Who gives the increase. Now, he who plants and he who waters are one, but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; *and* you are God’s husbandry, *even* God’s building” (vs 7-9).

And he goes on to talk about the foundation being Christ’s, and if he builds building and endures, he shall receive a reward.

John 4:39: “Now many of the Samaritans from that city believed on Him because of the word of the woman, who testified, ‘He told me everything that I have done.’”

Well, a lot of us have entered in, if you can remember back when you were called and one person maybe told you something and you came in and you believed that person.

Well, it wasn’t long after that you began to own the Truth and believe God because you began a relationship with Him. It wasn’t that person anymore. ***It was God!*** So, many of us came in, in that way. But it shouldn’t stay that way.

Verse 40: “Therefore, when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to remain with them; and He remained there two days. And many more believed because of His word; and they said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe because of your word, for we have heard *Him* ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Christ, the Savior of the world’” (vs 40-42).

So, once someone comes in and begins to study and they begin that relationship with God, they learn their commitment should be with God and not with the person. I hope that all of us are that way.

Christ is telling us today that the harvest continues. There is a harvest today. There is a need for sincere workmen and laborers that have a sincere heart, that are dedicated and zealous and motivated to get the Plan of God completed and to fulfill their calling as a worker and a workman and a laborer in the harvest of God to help plant, to help nurture, to care for, to harvest the grain that God has planted and is working with, that God has given the opportunity to develop Holy, righteous character in each one of us and in each one of them, to be co-inheritors in His Family as spirit-begotten sons and daughters of Christ and God the Father.

So we know in the resurrection chapter, , it says:

1-Corinthians 15:57: “But thanks *be* to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in *the Lord*” (vs 57-58). *He wants everyone to be in the Family!*

Hebrews 2:10: “Because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Christ is going to present both the laborers of the harvest and the harvest to the Father, and we will see Him face-to-face. Christ will finish it Himself. When He thrusts in His sickle and reaps. “Because it’s time for you to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe,” (Rev. 14).

So listen, don’t give up. It gets weary, it gets tired. Hanging into the work gets tough. But don’t give up. I’m going to leave you with one last Scripture:

Galatians 6:9: “Now, we should not lose heart *in* doing well, because we who do not faint will reap in due time.”

***We will reap a harvest if we do not give up!
So, hang in there and don’t give up!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, 11
- 2) John 4:35
- 3) Luke 10:2
- 4) Matthew 9:35-38
- 5) Luke 1:15-17
- 6) John 4:5-7, 9-11, 13-26
- 7) Matthew 5:14, 16
- 8) Psalm 119:105
- 9) 2 Timothy 2:2, 6
- 10) 2 Timothy 4:1-2
- 11) John 4:31-34
- 12) Matthew 6:33
- 13) John 4:35
- 14) 2 Corinthians 6:2
- 15) John 4:36
- 16) Daniel 12:1-3
- 17) Revelation 22:12
- 18) John 4:37-38
- 19) 1 Corinthians 3:5-9
- 20) John 4:39-42
- 21) 1 Corinthians 15:57-58
- 22) Hebrews 2:1-
- 23) Galatians 6:9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 61
- John 4:8, 12
- 1 Thessalonians 5
- Revelation 14

SD:bo/po
Transcribed: 11/15/23

Copyright 2023—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.