

An Overwhelming Harvest

Scripture Reading — Matthew 9:35-38

The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. — Matthew 9:37-38

At a certain point in the harvest season, I can feel overwhelmed. The tomatoes in my garden are ripening fast. Zucchini balloons to the size of watermelons. My back aches as I pick yet another row of beans. It takes me over an hour to pick a bucket full of raspberries. It's hard to keep up. In a video chat with my young granddaughter in California, I tell her to come next summer to help her Papa pick the tomatoes.

My eyes for seeing the kind of harvest Jesus is talking about began to develop during an internship on the south side of Chicago. There were so many people in great need of God's love and grace. Today's Bible reading reveals that the diseased, sick, harassed, and helpless are also numbered in the plentiful harvest. The crowd we see with Jesus makes the harvesting seem all the more labor intensive. Perhaps that explains the shortage of workers.

Did Jesus feel overwhelmed by the work of gathering this crowd—"like sheep without a shepherd"? Is this why he pleads for workers? Perhaps, but the plea is more about drawing us into his life of compassion for people who have suffered the thrashings of life.

Are we praying for ourselves to become workers in this harvest field? Pray this prayer and see where it takes you.

Prayer

Lord of the harvest, overwhelm me with your com-passionate vision for the harassed and helpless. Send me into your harvest field and equip me with your love. Amen.

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