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36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38" Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

-----Chapter 10-----

1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and 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, the one who betrayed Him.

The task is daunting. How daunting? God sent one man into a lost world, and His task is to harvest souls out of that world that belong to His father.

Here's the situation. From scripture. *We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.* 1Jn. 5:19

The whole world lies in the power of the evil one. Every person born into Adam's family is born into a world that is ruled by evil. The evil one.

Listen carefully to what Jesus says in John 12:31 *Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.*

Even Jesus calls Satan the prince of this world.

Lucifer. Satan. Is the prince of this world. He rules the sons of Adam in this world. In Luke 4 he says it was handed over to him. When Adam sinned, the authority to rule and reign originally given to Adam, was defaulted to Satan.

In biblical terms, we could say, he has a kingdom. He has the authority to reign. He holds men in slavery.

God, Almighty, creator of heaven and earth rules everywhere else. He rules heaven. The entire universe is His. But for purposes of revealing His glory and grace, and redeeming lost sons who are born into Satan's kingdom, He allows Satan to reign. For a time. In this world.

You look around you and wonder at the discord and pain of this place. People ask continuously, if there is a God, why doesn't He do something about all of the evil, all of the pain, the wrong.

Epicurus the greek philosopher 300 years before Christ said in a famous quote;

“Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?”

That idea is the modern basis for atheists to say, Why would you believe in a God who is evil. God is evil. He allows evil. He doesn't do anything about it. Therefore, He is dismissed as God.

Our modern world has even got this so twisted as to say, If you believe in this evil God, you are by implication with him, also evil. It's evil to be a christian and believe in the christian God.

You've got Stephen Fry, a blasphemer, who uses words like capricious, maniacal, monster to describe God who created such a world as this which is riddled with suffering and evil.

But Mr. Fry neglects to understand that this world is an altered state. What we witness around us is a world forever changed after the fall of

Adam and Eve. One in which Satan is the current ruler. And the words he uses in confusion indeed describe the person that Jesus acknowledged was the prince of this world. Capricious. Maniacal. Monster. Evil. All good words to describe the ruler of this realm, Satan.

So why doesn't God just fix it! Just squash satan and make everything right. He is. He is! But, sorry, He's a sovereign King and will do it on His time schedule, not yours.

You can read a record of that very event, beginning in the garden with Adam, and finishing with the Lord Jesus Christ coming out of heaven with 10,000's of His saints (Jude 1:14) to retake this world and judge it. Start at Genesis, and finish in the book of Revelation.

God, is taking back this earth, from satan. A day is coming, and the signs indicate it may be soon, when time is up for satan and Jesus comes physically to this place to depose Satan, judge His enemies, Set up His Kingdom on earth, and fulfil the Lord's prayer. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*

But until that day, we live in an unstable dichotomy. God's kingdom, the people who have abandoned Satan's kingdom by remission of sin and become citizens of heaven, by a righteousness given to us freely, not our own, dwell here, right in the middle of enemy territory. Little enclaves of dissidents, who have come out of Satan's rule and been purchased by God.

C. S. Lewis describes our situation similarly but with the component of battle. We're dissidents in enemy territory, carrying out subversion on the enemy. We have radios that can talk to the Commander at the command post. Our radios are prayer.

It gives a whole new sense to what John says in 1 Jn. 3:13 - 14a *Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. 14We know that we have passed out of death into life,*

We're no longer citizens of this world. We're enemy combatants. Do

not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

2 Kingdoms. Diametrically opposed to each other. At war with each other. And for this current time, we've got one hand tied behind our backs. Satan has the upper hand. We're grossly out numbered.

Listen to how Paul viewed this situation in Romans 8:35 - 37. He takes the high road of sovereignty. Massively outnumbered in enemy territory, but God retains ultimate control.

35Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

By the way christians. Everything in that list is possible for us. Nothing is over-ruled just because you belong to the Father. sorry, that's not how it works. The promise is only that those things cannot separate us from the love of the Father and His Son, Jesus.

36Just as it is written,

*“FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG;
WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”*

37But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

Dual truths. In this world we are sheep to be slaughtered. Yet Jesus told us in Luke 21:17 - 18 *and you will be hated by all because of My name. 18"Yet not a hair of your head will perish.*

Enemy combatants in enemy territory. Hated by all. Counted as sheep to be slaughtered. Not a hair of your head will perish.

How can all of those truths be true at the same time? Sovereign God is in total control. You belong to Him. Not a hair will perish that He doesn't decree. But the day may come when all the hairs will perish along with your head, if it serves His purpose.

You say, Jim, that's not a very pretty gospel. Oh good, you're listening. That's why both Jesus and Paul take us to the accountant and tell us to count the cost. Here's Paul's version in Romans 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

The church is coming to a day when cost will be incurred. Right now the mega-churches are bursting at the seams. It's a billion dollar business. You get everything. You don't have to leave this world after all. It costs nothing.

Fasten your seat belts. I see storm clouds boiling out over the horizon. I long for a little group of people, built up in their most holy faith, who will be able to weather that storm when it gets here.

That's the introduction to the gospel Jesus is preaching.

35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

It's Jesus against the world. Everybody needs to hear the news. So Jesus starts going from village to village. Teaching. Preaching. Healing.

proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom What is the gospel of the Kingdom. It's exactly what we've just covered. 2 kingdoms diametrically opposed and at war with each other. His Kingdom is glorious and lasts forever. Come out of Satan's kingdom by repentance and faith, and come into the Kingdom of God. He said; *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

His message is not the message of Moses. Moses brought the law. The law defined your lostness. It defined the problem. This is what God looks like. This is what you look like, compared to God. Problem defined. Solution, faith that somehow God will solve the problem that you're helpless to do anything about. Sort of a faith in an as yet,

unknown solution. Cry out for mercy.

Jesus is the solution. His kingdom is set apart from this world. Matthew 4 tells us his message. *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* The authority to reign of God, has come. The kingdom of God is in your midst. Satan is deposed. Authority is mine. Follow me.

It's a radical message. These folks are steeped in a religion of do's and don'ts of God's law. Moses message that you are hopelessly lost in sin so cast yourself on a merciful God has been replaced with a tradition of the elders that's a sort of bootstraps religion. We can do this. We can be good enough for God. If we jump through enough god hoops. We'll be OK.

And Jesus comes with teaching like what we studied in the sermon on the mount. A proclamation of a new kingdom order. The King has arrived. And He backs it up with miracles.

When God introduces a new era, a new dispensation of His ongoing progressive revealing of Himself to men, he attests to the truths with miracles. That's what He did with Moses. That's what He did with the Prophets. That's what Jesus does. And we'll see before this morning is over, that's what the apostles will continue.

Miracles attest to new revelation from God. This is something new. The miracles that only God can accomplish are the attestation. This is the real deal. The authority of God is making inroads into the authority to rule and reign of Satan. This is a big deal. Huge. The Kingdom of God is here. In your midst.

Beloved, when the canon of God's progressive revelation of Himself to fallen man is complete, the miracles cease. This book is alive. It's the miracles. Once it's written down, no more miracles in the sense that Jesus and the apostles did. Revelation is complete in this book. Miracles are done.

So Jesus starts out like a circuit preacher. The whole world needs to know. One man, going from village to village taking a subversive

message to hostile recipients. The message is not different from the Word of God previously given. But it is different from their current religion of works righteousness.

Is that your plan Jesus. It's going to take a while. Village by village. Encircling the globe. big task. Daunting.

Well, in fact, that isn't His plan. He has a different plan. 12 men. He's going to train these 12 men to do this task, and they in turn are going to train men, who are going to train men, who are going to train men, etc. etc. until finally, you get to you and me.

Jesus plan is discipleship. Training others to continue to do this work.

36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

We need to look at those two words. The problem described here that Jesus notes belongs to the masses, causes Him to have compassion for them. The problem causes emotion in Jesus. Literally his inward parts are churning because of the condition of the masses he's encountering. He feels bad for them. They are in pain, and He feels that pain. Compassion.

They were distressed. This is a most interesting word. The root word is skinned. This is the word for scalped.

The indians would cut along the front hair line and peel the skin with the hair off of the victims head. Scalped. That imagery is starting to give some of you feelings in your bowels.

That's a physical picture of what was going on spiritually in that land. The people were getting scalped. And it was more than upsetting to Jesus.

In Satan's kingdom, that's the norm. Scalped. Spiritually and sometimes physically. He has no compassion. In fact he hates his captives and loves to see their hair peeled off their heads.

That's the sad fact in this world, and Jesus hates it. That's the word for distressed in the NASB, and the next word is translated dispirited.

And this word means tossed. Thrown out like garbage. Dispersed to the 4 winds.

That's a picture of their spiritual leadership and the resulting condition. Scalped. Flayed for what you can get. Tossed out like garbage. Thrown to the wind. That's how the authority to reign of Satan rolls. The result is hopelessness. Brokenness. No direction. Lostness. Death.

And Jesus feels compassion for them in his bowels. We would say heart. He was broken hearted over the condition of God's people, Israel.

37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

This is a famous passage of scripture. We're going to camp here for a few minutes and take this metaphor apart. This is important. This is the solution to what's ultimately breaking the heart of the Lord Jesus. So it must be important.

What does it mean.

There is a harvest. Amber waves of grain. Ripe. Rippling in the wind as far as the eye can see.

There is a Lord of the harvest. The land owner. The wheat belongs to Him. It's His harvest. He wants the wheat safely in His barns. It's His.

Then, there are workers. Folks physically working to make this a reality. Workers bringing in the sheaves to be threshed. That's the process.

The harvest is souls. The field is the world. Satan's kingdom. The job for the harvest workers is to safely gather what belongs to God, out of

Satan's field, and bring it into the barns which aren't mentioned here, but are seen other times when this same metaphor is used.

Jesus has been going from town to town, but that isn't going to get the job done. Too many towns for one man to go to.

The solution for the heartbreak is more workers. More harvesters working in God's wheatfield, bringing the harvest out of this world and into the Kingdom.

And Jesus says, Therefore. Therefore is the swing word. Here's the problem. Here's the solution. Therefore connects the two.

38“Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

The solution is simple. Ask the Lord of the harvest, that's God, to send more workers. Harvest workers. People doing what Jesus was doing, going from town to town. Teaching. Preaching. Calling people out of Satan's kingdom into God's kingdom.

So, here's your homework.

That was a direct command. *beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest*

I want you to tell me when that requirement was lifted. When was that command rescinded.

We're literalists here. Some of us even sort of pride ourselves that we believe in a historical-grammatical method of literal interpretation. Smaller words. We believe it means what it says.

Jesus told us to pray for something specific here. Send more workers into this harvest of His Father's. And I'm telling you, as a good historical-grammatical literal interpretation methodist, if that command was never rescinded, that's exactly what we need to do.

Us. Those of us in this room. Jesus said to pray this, and as far as I know, we haven't paid any attention to this, and it's high time we did. This is a direct command from the person we call Lord.

A cautionary note. Here's the thing, and Jesus knew this, we become what we pray. The answer to this prayer is that the one praying goes into the harvest, and takes 2 more with him to train them to go into the harvest.

If we don't pray this prayer, alongside Jesus, aren't we sort of like the slave that buried the talent. He was like, I don't care about your harvest. I don't care about your talents. Why would I bother to go make money for you. Why am I going to go gather grain for your barn. I don't care about you or your grain or your barn. I care about my barn. Here's your stupid talent back.

That's harsh, but I think it's spot on. I'm loading the guilt on. We need to get serious about praying this prayer. We need to start praying this every day.

Lord, please send more workers into your harvest. Please Lord. Send some workers to help. Jesus was broken hearted over the condition of the captives in Satan's kingdom. The solution is more people harvesting them into your kingdom. Please, please send more workers to do that.

The Lord knows, if we invest ourselves in that prayer, we'll invest ourselves in the answer. If this prayer becomes important, and I pray it will, we'll have to see ourselves as part of the solution.

Now recall that someone somewhere has taught you that chapter and verse designations were added later. So the first verse in chapter 10 may well be part of the idea we're looking at here. And I believe it totally does.

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

This is Jesus plan for the whole world to hear this message. He has 12 men that He has called to follow Him. And they have committed to spend all their time with Him, watching Him teach and preach as He goes from village to village.

They are disciples. The word isn't casual. I'm not sure we have a word any more that describes someone investing themselves to learn what someone else knows. Our society has moved so far away from this. We used to call them scholars. A scholar was someone in a school who was dead serious about learning.

These men each have a large investment in this process. Each one has left their old life behind in order to do this. Family's. Careers. Wives, temporarily. This is a 3 year crash course. They've walked away from their past lives to learn from Jesus. Ultimately, they turned the world upside down. Disciples.

At this juncture, as Jesus has just defined the problem, sheep with no shepherd, fields ripe for harvest, He's going to send his learners, his disciples on their first little flight out of the nest.

Since what they're going to teach is radically different than what is the norm in Israel, God is doing something NEW, they will also be given the power to do miracles. Attesting miracles. Authority over Satan's kingdom. Power to heal diseases. IN that sense, they are unique.

God is building a building. His church. Jesus is the cornerstone. The apostles are the foundation. The foundation is set into stone with miracles. We're building the 21st floor in that building. The miracles that set the foundation in stone . . are enough. We don't cast out demons and heal diseases on the 21st floor. One foundation is all that's needed. The apostles were unique.

2Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

In coming weeks we'll watch and learn as this process of discipleship unfolds. Fascinating stuff. We don't expect the building of the 21st floor to look like the laying of the foundation. But we do expect the principles of discipleship that have brought us to the 21st floor, to be the same.

Discipleship and evangelism go hand in hand. Discipleship and evangelism are normative for the church. That means if we're not making any effort to do this, we are sub-normal.

I know we're not going to put anything earth shattering together in a week or two. But I will ask one thing. Join me in praying for the Lord of the harvest to add workers to His harvest. Daily. Make a time and add that to your prayers. With passion.

One thing I do know. When God's people pray and ask for what God wants . . . it's going to happen. Those prayers **WILL** be answered. Distinctly. That's where we begin.

Aren't you curious to know what the harvest fields in Tonopah might look like? I don't have any special glasses I can put on to see if it's 10's or 100's or 1000's.

Last week I challenged us. Are we really evangelicals? Is that word a good fit for this church? Is that what we want to be? Or would we rather be *us 4 no more shut the door*.

The pattern Jesus clearly laid out, and indeed commands us to pursue in this text, is evangelical. It's still a good word. Even better if it describes us as a body of believers.

