

THE RADICAL PRAYER - PART 1

A Radical Perspective

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Luke 10:2a
Subject: What Jesus told His disciples about the harvest
Complement: it was truly great
Exegetical idea: Jesus told His disciples that the harvest truly was great.
Homiletical idea: **The harvest truly is great!**
Purpose: To convince my hearers that the harvest truly is great and to encourage them to pray that they might see the world from God's radical perspective.

Introduction

I love mountains! I even went looking for Mt. Dora, here in Florida, but I could never find the mountain! I can still remember the day that I rode in a cable car up the side of a rugged snow-covered mountain in California. What a view! It was exhilarating! However, when I finally reached the top of the mountain and stepped out of the cable car, my whole perspective changed. It was radical! Now, instead of merely gazing at one snow-covered mountainside, I had an amazing panoramic view of a whole range of majestic snow-covered Sierra Nevada mountains! I will remember that moment forever. I was seeing the world from a new perspective!

God wants *you*, God wants me, to view the world from a new perspective. Not just from a different altitude. He wants us to see the world as He sees the world. From His divine perspective. A radical perspective!

That's the title of the message today: A Radical Perspective. It is part 1 of a life-changing series about the harvest. (Hold up sheaf of grain). Jesus is going to challenge each one of us to pray a radical prayer to the Lord of the harvest. If you pray this radical prayer in simple faith, your life will be changed forever. I know that from experience! But before we can pray

this radical prayer, we must see the world from a radical perspective. From God's perspective.

So what is this radical perspective? It is found in Luke 10:2. Jesus shares with His apostles, and also with us, that "the harvest truly is great." What does Jesus mean when He says that the harvest truly is great, plentiful, abundant, extensive? The metaphor of the harvest is used in two ways in the teachings of Jesus. He speaks of the harvest when referring to the end of the world. In Matthew 13:39, Jesus tells us, "The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are the angels." The metaphor of the harvest is used in a similar way in Revelation 14:16. "Thrust in your sickle and reap, for the time has come for you to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." From these two passages of Scripture, it is clear that the harvest can refer to the gathering of the saints at the end of the age and the judgment of the wicked.

But Jesus also uses the metaphor of the harvest to refer to present missionary endeavors, leading men and women to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and gathering them into the Kingdom of God. This is the meaning of the harvest in the passage of Scripture that we are studying today. Look at the context for these words of Jesus. In Luke 10:1 Luke tells us, "After these things, the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go." This work of harvesting is a present activity. This is not the final harvest at the end of the world. In this present harvest work, God is using people, not angels. Jesus is sending His disciples out, two by two, into God's harvest field.

So what does Jesus mean when He says, "The harvest truly is great?" Simply this: there are many people, men and women, boys and girls, who are ready and waiting to be gathered into His kingdom. They only need to hear the Good News and receive the invitation. According to

Jesus, there is a present harvest to be gathered in, and “the harvest truly is great.”

But that raises a second question: Why does Jesus emphasize that the harvest *truly is great*? You say, “Because it is!” And this response is partially correct. Jesus is just telling the truth when He says, “The harvest truly is great.”

Have you heard the story of what happened on the day of Pentecost, ten days after the Risen Jesus ascended to heaven? Having preached a powerful sermon, the apostle Peter concludes with these words, recorded in Acts 2:36: “.....”

And Luke records, in Acts 2:37-40, “.....” What a day of rejoicing that must have been! When the apostles witnessed the conversion of three thousand individuals, I’m sure that they said to each other, “*Jesus was right! The harvest truly is great!*”

Similarly, when we see thousands receiving Christ as Savior and Lord, we also find it easy to say the same thing to one another. The words of Jesus are obviously true. I was reading about the amazing moving of God’s Spirit in the Inter American Division. On one Sabbath, March 24, 2007, almost 45,000 people were baptized. Here is the testimony of just one of those individuals who made a public confession of their love for Jesus in baptism:

Clarissa Pozo de los Santos gave this testimony: “I was walking in the world and I saw how there is so much evil , pain, and sadness, and God has something else for me! It’s like I have a new life now; I know that I will be different with God’s help.”

Fourteen hundred men and women were baptized at the one location where Clarissa took her stand for Jesus! As we hear a story like that, our natural response is to exclaim, “The harvest truly is great!”

But I believe that Jesus emphasizes that the harvest truly is great because there are times

when it does not appear to us that the harvest is great. From a human perspective, there are times when it appears to us that there is no harvest at all. At those times, Jesus also urges us to remember that the harvest truly is great. He urges us to view reality from a radical perspective. His perspective. And when we see as He sees, we will discover that the harvest truly *is* great.

A Great Harvest at Sychar

Have you ever read the story of Jesus meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar? (John 4:3-42) At first glance, there doesn't seem to be much of a harvest of souls there. Only one person comes to the meeting. Just one wayward woman. When the disciples arrive on the scene, they immediately evaluate the situation and conclude, "There's not much of a harvest here." And Jesus discerns the thoughts of the disciples. He reads their faces. He startles them with these words, recorded in John 4:35. "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest?' Behold I say to you, 'Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for the harvest.'"

In spite of the bleak landscape, Jesus sees that the harvest truly is *great*. I'm so thankful that Jesus can see past the externals, aren't you? That once wayward woman returns to Sychar and gives her testimony about her life-changing encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. And listen to what happens. The story is recorded in John 4:39-42. "....." Many Samaritans believe in Jesus because of this woman's testimony. The harvest is so plentiful that Jesus stays for two extra days and many more become believers because of His words.

Some of us would probably have driven straight through town without stopping. Or better yet, we might have chosen to avoid the town completely. No harvest here. At least, there

is no harvest that we can see from a human perspective. But Jesus challenges us to look again, to open our eyes. Or perhaps to give the Lord of the harvest permission to open our eyes and enable us to see from His radical perspective. Then we will more fully comprehend the truth in the words of Jesus: *“The harvest truly is great!”*

A Great Harvest at Sybertsville

I conducted my first public meetings in the small, depressed, town of Sybertsville, Pennsylvania. I was young and inexperienced, but the faithful followers of Jesus in that community were very encouraging. We rented a fire hall and sent out some invitations. I knew that I needed some powerful messages, so I called a well-known Christian evangelist, C.D. Brooks, and asked if I could borrow his sermons! He said, “Yes!” I knew right then that God was at work! I spent about four hundred hours transcribing those messages and making them my own. I listened to so many sermons by C.D. Brooks that I even started to sound like him!

As we prepared for the meetings, we had no idea if anyone would even show up on opening night. But somehow we had courage to believe the words of Jesus: *“the harvest truly is great.”* On opening night, the fire hall was full! The Lord of the harvest blessed as He always does when we put our trust in Him. I learned an important lesson during the next five weeks. It doesn’t matter what people say. You often hear, “It can’t happen here.” Or “It won’t work.” Or “No one will show up.” But I learned that when the Lord of the harvest is involved, anything can happen anywhere. This is His harvest, not ours. The Lord of the harvest knows what He is doing, and He says, *“The harvest truly is great.”*

Small Response–Big Harvest

On the day that one of the followers of Jesus named Stephen the deacon was stoned to death, he didn't notice much of a harvest as a result of his preaching. The Bible tells us that most of the people in the audience were furious, gnashing their teeth, stopping their ears, ranting and raving. Not exactly a positive response from his listeners. But Jesus looked down from the right hand of the throne of God, and said, "The harvest truly is great."

A young man by the name of Saul of Tarsus was in charge of the coats that day . The witness of Stephen changed Saul's life forever. Not long after hearing Stephen's sermon, Saul of Tarsus fell flat on his face before the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus and cried out, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6) Stephen's final sermon, preached in life and in death, has impacted the lives of thousands of future followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was right! The harvest truly *is* great, even when that harvest may not be immediately apparent to us.

I witnessed a similar miracle as a young pastor. I had the privilege of participating in some public meetings in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Our team sensed the Spirit of God in our midst but not too many visitors attended those meetings. Only a few made decisions to become fully devoted followers of Jesus. From a human perspective, one might have concluded that the harvest wasn't that great. Maybe Jesus made a mistake this time. There was, however, one young couple named Gary and Laurie who came faithfully to the meetings, night by night. They seemed very interested in the truths of God's Word. But by the end of the series, they just didn't feel convicted to make a complete commitment to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Have

you ever met anyone like that? It looked like we had a total crop failure.

All we could do now was pray. After all, the Lord of the harvest was in charge, not us. On Friday afternoon as Gary left work and drove down the highway toward home, he came under the overwhelming conviction of the Holy Spirit that God wanted him to make a complete surrender of his life to Jesus Christ and to confess that commitment through baptism. Gary had no doubt in his mind. He only wondered how he would share the news of his decision with his wife Laurie. But by the time he arrived home, he discovered that the Lord of the harvest had been there before him.

That same afternoon, as Gary drove home, his wife Laurie sat in their home. She also came under the overwhelming conviction of the Holy Spirit that God wanted her to make the same life commitment! Imagine their surprise and joy when they shared their decision with each other. Imagine *our* surprise and joy when they shared their decision with us the following day! Isn't God amazing? He is the Lord of the harvest!

Perhaps you're thinking, "That's wonderful! Two people made a complete commitment to Jesus Christ. Two people were baptized. Two people became fully devoted followers of Jesus. But that's hardly a great harvest!" You might be right, if you were evaluating the situation from a human perspective, but the Lord of the harvest knew that the rest of the story had not yet been told. That young couple, Gary and Laurie, sensed the call of God to enter into full-time ministry. Even though Laurie was struggling with a terminal disease, this young couple courageously followed the call of God. Gary, who had been working in a factory that assembled catalytic converters, left his former occupation and studied to become a pastor. Now, instead of helping to convert exhaust fumes, God is using Gary to convert people! Now, instead of just

making a living, the Lord of the harvest is using him to make a difference. That's quite a switch, isn't it?

The Lord of the harvest is in the miracle-working business. Gary is still serving in full-time ministry. Thousands have heard the truth about Jesus as a result of Gary's testimony. Was the harvest *great*? Absolutely! The words of Jesus are true, my friends. Even though it may not always be clear to us, the harvest truly is *great*.

Did you know that there are people here today just waiting for an invitation to become a part of God's kingdom? There are people here on campus, and people joining us via our media ministries who want to make a full commitment of their lives to Jesus and become a part of His kingdom!

One young lady is going to confess her love for Jesus in baptism today. Her name is Susie Kim. I have asked her to come and stand with me today at the front of the church as a public confession of her love for Jesus and her desire to be baptized.

There is someone here today who is listening to this message and the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart. You know that it's time for you to say "Yes" to Jesus as your personal Savior and Lord. I want to invite you to take a stand for Jesus today. I want to invite you to get up and come here and join Susie in a public confession of your love for Jesus, a public confession of your faith.

If you are joining us via our media ministries, I invite you to stand right where you are. You may be all alone in your home, or gathered with a group of friends. Today is your day to take a stand for Jesus. After this service has concluded, I want you to send me an e-mail or write a letter and let me know of your decision for Jesus.

Those of you standing here on campus, and those who have made decisions around the world, you are a living witness of the truth of the words of Jesus. The harvest truly is great!

Now, for those of us who have already trusted Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord, and have confessed our love for Jesus in baptism, I want to challenge you to pray a simple prayer: “Lord of the harvest, open my eyes so that I can see the world as you do. Open my eyes so that I can see that the harvest truly is great!

Prayer

Lord of the harvest, thank you for revealing to us even today that the harvest truly is great! I pray a special blessing for all today who have made a public confession of their love for Jesus and their desire to be a part Your kingdom. Lord, we pray that you would open our eyes to see the world from Your radical perspective—in our homes, our communities, our workplaces. Help us to see as You see, that the harvest truly is great. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

THE RADICAL PRAYER - PART 2

A Radical Problem

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	Luke 10:2b
Subject:	Though the harvest truly is great, what problem did Jesus identify
Complement:	that the laborers are few
Exegetical idea:	Jesus pointed out that even though the harvest truly is great the laborers are few.
Homiletical idea:	God can take distracted and discouraged non-laboring laborers and renew them by His grace, empower them by His Spirit, and send them out as effective laborers in His harvest field!
Purpose:	To help my hearers to see that the real problem with gathering in the harvest is not too few laborers but too few laboring laborers and to encourage them to allow the Lord of the harvest to renew them by His grace and empower them by His Spirit to become effective laborers in His harvest field.

Introduction

The Lord of the harvest has a problem. A radical problem. We learned in Part 1 of this series on the Radical Prayer that the harvest truly is....GREAT! There are many men and women, boys and girls, who are just waiting for the invitation to become a part of the Kingdom of Heaven. Some of you have been praying this simple prayer: "Lord, open my eyes so that I can see as You see." And you are beginning to see from God's radical perspective, that the harvest truly is great!

But there is a problem. A radical problem. We can read about this radical problem in Luke 10:2. Please open your Bible to the gospel of Luke 10:2. Jesus says to the apostles, and also to us, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." (Luke 10:2).

If the radical perspective is that "the harvest truly is great," what is the radical problem? "The laborers are few." I have a question for you. Why are there so few laborers? Perhaps an inadequate number of laborers were assigned. In that case, we could blame the Lord of the harvest. He should have anticipated the size of the harvest. If He knew that the harvest was

going to be great, abundant, extensive, He should have assigned an adequate number of laborers. Maybe it's His fault that the laborers are few. What do you think?

Let me ask you another question. How many individuals has the Lord of the harvest called to be laborers in His harvest? Everyone! Everyone who chooses to become a part of His kingdom! You're right! When Jesus gave the command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, He wasn't just speaking to the eleven remaining disciples. When Jesus said, "Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," that command was for all of us, for everyone who accepts the call to become a follower of Jesus and part of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus says, "Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

So, if we are all called to be laborers in God's harvest field, perhaps our initial question should be modified. Instead of asking, "Why are there so few laborers?" we should rather ask, "Why are there so few *laboring* laborers?" Most of the so-called "laborers" seem to be inactive. "The harvest truly is great, but the *laboring* laborers are few."

So why are there so few laboring laborers, if the harvest truly is great? We may find the answer to that question in a story that Jesus told about a man who had two sons. The story is recorded in Matthew 21:28-30. "....." Their father asked them to work in his vineyard, to be laborers in his harvest field. One refused but later regretted his hasty decision and went. The second son initially agreed to go, but didn't. Have you ever wondered why the second son didn't go to labor in his father's vineyard? Do you think that he was lying to his father, deliberately trying to deceive him? I doubt it. He probably intended to go—after all, it was the right thing to do. But somehow the second son became distracted. Someone or

something else captured his attention, and before he knew it, the day had slipped away. We are left wondering what distractions might have caused him to become a non-laboring laborer.

In another story, Jesus told about some guests who were invited to a great banquet. They weren't expected to do any labor. They just had to show up and enjoy the party. But they also became distracted. If you read the story, you'll discover some of the excuses that they made. The story is recorded in Luke 14:16-20: "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'"

Do you notice the distractions? Material possessions—a piece of land. Business activity—trying out a new pair of oxen. Relationships—the person just got married. Now there's nothing inherently wrong with material possessions, business activity, or relationships. But when any of these get in the way of God's invitation, we have a real problem.

There's a second possible explanation for the spare number of *laboring* laborer's in God's harvest field. The laborers might have become discouraged. After all, the task is enormous. The harvest truly *is* great. It's easy to feel overwhelmed.

There are several reasons why a laborer might become discouraged. A laborer might be trying to bring in the harvest all by himself, all by herself. I have met some laborers who labor unceasingly until they're exhausted. They give their all and then some, but it never seems enough.

May I remind you that the Lord of the harvest doesn't expect you to work yourself into an early grave. Just like the early disciples of Jesus, you need to take time to come apart and rest awhile (Mark 6:30-31). But you ask, "How then will the great harvest be gathered in?" The apostles faced a similar challenge in the early days of the Christian church. They were overwhelmed with the immensity of the task. And so, guided by the Holy Spirit, they delegated responsibility to others. You are not called to do all of the laboring alone. Make room for others to labor by your side.

You may also become discouraged because you are trying to bring in the harvest in your own strength. If you try to serve the Lord of the harvest trusting in your own resources, you will surely become discouraged. We all need to live by the words of the prophet Zechariah, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the LORD of Hosts." (Zechariah 4:6) Otherwise, you will surely become discouraged non-laboring laborer.

At this point you may be thinking, "This is a *radical* problem! The harvest truly is great. There are many people just waiting for the invitation to become a part of the Kingdom of heaven. But there is a radical problem. There are too few *laboring* laborers! Too many of the professed followers of Jesus have become distracted and discouraged."

But there is good news! The Lord of the harvest can take distracted, discouraged non-laboring laborers and renew them by His grace, empower them by His Spirit, and send them out as focused, effective laborers into His harvest.

Consider the experience of Simon Peter, one of the first followers of Jesus. He had listened to the words of Jesus when the twelve were sent out and also when the seventy were sent out: "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." (Luke 10:2) He had experienced the

power of the Lord of the harvest as he labored in Jesus' name. The sick were healed. The oppressed were set free. The good news was preached with power. But Simon Peter became distracted by his own failures and discouraged by his own frailty. Perhaps you remember the story during the trial of Jesus when Peter cursed and said, "I don't know the man!" Even after meeting Jesus, risen from the dead, Peter is still distracted and discouraged. He says to his colleagues, "I'm going fishing." Now, there's nothing wrong with fishing. But Jesus had died on the cross to save us from our sins, He had risen from the dead as a glorious demonstration that He was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, and He had told His followers to preach the good news to everyone that they met. And what is Peter doing? He is going fishing. He is a classic example of a distracted, discouraged, non-laboring laborer.

How did Jesus respond? Jesus didn't give up on him. Jesus is there to meet Simon Peter on the beach after a wasted night on the lake. You can read the story in John chapter 22. Jesus calls Simon Peter again, renews him by His grace and empowers him by His Spirit. And that distracted and discouraged disciple experienced a personal transformation. He became bold, not in his own strength, but by the Spirit of God. Simon Peter became focused and fearless. We heard his testimony in part 1 of this series, recorded in Acts 2:36. And as a result of that powerful testimony, three thousand men and women took a stand for Jesus. Not long after the day of Pentecost, Peter and John were talking to the Temple. As they approached the Gate called Beautiful, they met a beggar, asking for a gift. And how did Peter respond? Was he distracted, discouraged? No! You can read his response in Acts 3:6, "....." And then Dr. Luke records in Acts 3:7-8, "....."

If Jesus can take a distracted, discouraged non-laboring laborer like Simon Peter and

transform him into a focused, effective laborer in the Lord's harvest field, then He can do that for other distracted and discouraged non-laboring laborers. Isn't that true? He can do that for me and He can do that for you.

Some years ago, a young man named Simon came into my office. He had spent his teenage years in East Los Angeles. The Lord Jesus Christ had rescued this young man from a life of violence and crime, and called him to be a laborer in God's harvest field. Simon had already seen God work in his life in marvelous ways. But Simon had become distracted and discouraged, not so much by the present, but by the past. Some nights he sat on his bed looking at his gang tattoos, and wondered, "Can God really use me, after all that I've done?" He was a classic example of a modern distracted and discouraged laborer.

As Simon sat in my office, tears filled his eyes. As I listened to his heart-cry, God gave me a word of hope for Simon. We don't have to stay where we are. We are not bound by what we used to be. Simon embraced the good news of God's word. That distracted and discouraged young man was renewed by the grace of God. He was empowered by the Spirit of God. Just a few weeks later, as Simon was sharing the good news about Jesus with others, God impressed Simon to give his testimony. Simon had been too ashamed to tell his story in public before. But not any more! At the end of his testimony, Simon gave a simple invitation, and fifteen people came forward to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.

A few days later, Simon received a call from a Christian mission organization, asking him to serve on a mission team in South America. Simon worked in the city of Salvador, in northeast Brazil. He visited people in parts of town where the locals were afraid to go, and where the police didn't even go! God even used Simon's old gang tattoos to earn him a little

respect among the local gang members! As a result of those meetings, five thousand people chose to become fully devoted followers of Jesus.

Simon has devoted his life to telling people the truth about Jesus. He still remembers his past. He still bears the scars. But he is rejoicing today that God can take distracted, discouraged, non-laboring laborers, and transform them into focused effective laborers in His harvest field.

And Simon isn't the only distracted, discouraged, non-laboring laborer that God has renewed by His grace, empowered by His Spirit, and sent out as an effective laborer into His harvest. Just this past week, I listened to the testimony of a member of the team here at Forest Lake Church. For 10 years, he served as a pastor in California. But he became discouraged. Finally, he quit. For several years, he just sat on the back row of the church. He never denied Jesus, or renounced his faith, but he was another example of a distracted, discouraged, non-laboring laborer. He could have stayed that way for the rest of his life. But I told you the good news, didn't I? God can take distracted, discouraged, non-laboring laborers and renew them by His grace, empower them by His Spirit, and send them out as effective laborers in His harvest.

That is exactly what has happened for Delwin. He became involved in a church plant in West Palm Beach, and then, after moving to Orlando, Delwin connected with the web church ministry of the Forest Lake Church. Today, Delwin Finch is our volunteer web church pastor and a vital member of our media ministry team! And I say, "Praise the Lord!" What do you say? Hundreds of people join us every week via our web church at www.forestlakechurch.org. We receive prayer requests from all around the world. God is opening our eyes to see that the harvest truly is great!

And even though there is a radical problem, that the laboring laborers are few, the good

news is that God can take distracted, discouraged, non-laboring laborers and renew them by His grace, empower them by His Spirit, and send them out as effective laborers in His harvest.

At the beginning of this message, I asked you to put a brown response sheet in your Bible. It says, “I want to be an effective laborer in the harvest with Jesus.” How many here feel that way today?

I want to invite you to take a pen or pencil and write your name and a contact phone number on that brown response sheet. If you’re already connected in a ministry for Jesus, just write “ALREADY CONNECTED” at the bottom of that sheet, and we will thank God in prayer that you are a laboring laborer in His harvest. If you would like to know how you can be involved, how you can be trained and equipped to be an effective laborer in God’s harvest field, just write your name and phone number on this sheet and write “NEED TO CONNECT” at the bottom. One of our ministry team will contact you. At the end of this service, I want you to place that response sheet here at the front of the church, or leave it on the table in the foyer.

And I want to invite you to join us next week, as we consider a radical prayer that Jesus asks us to pray. Because the harvest truly is great, and the laborers are few, Jesus asks us to cry out to the Lord of the harvest in a way that will change our lives forever! I hope that you’ll be with us for that life-changing message.

Let’s pray.

THE RADICAL PRAYER - PART 3

A Radical Prayer

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	Luke 10:2c
Subject:	What the followers of Jesus should do in the light of the fact that the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few
Complement:	beg the Lord of the harvest to throw out laborers into His harvest.
Exegetical idea:	Because the harvest is great but the laborers are few, followers of Jesus should beg the Lord of the harvest to throw out laborers into His harvest.
Homiletical idea:	Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg you to throw out laborers into Your harvest, and you have my permission to begin with me.
Purpose:	To encourage my hearers to respond to the appeal of Jesus and pray the radical prayer.

Introduction

Have you ever prayed a bold prayer? I'm not talking about the standard blessing at the meal table: "Thank you for the world so sweet, thank you for the food we eat," or the run-of-the-mill "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep." I'm talking about a bold prayer.

Like Elijah, when he stretched himself out three times over the lifeless body of the son of the widow of Zarephath and prayed, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." I Kings 17:21 (NKJV). That was a bold prayer.

Like Jesus, when He held a small lunch in his hands and prayed to His heavenly Father to provide food for a vast multitude. That was also a bold prayer. The Gospel writers don't give us the exact words of Jesus' prayer that day. But I know He wasn't just saying, "Thank you for the world so sweet, thank you for the food we eat." Jesus prayed a bold prayer.

Today, Jesus is going to challenge you to pray a bold prayer. A *radical* prayer. If you cry out to God in faith, this prayer will transform your life forever. We have been studying the words of Jesus, recorded in Luke 10, beginning with verse 2. First, we noticed a radical

perspective. Jesus says, “The harvest truly is great.” There are men and women, boys and girls, who are just waiting to be invited into the kingdom of heaven. The harvest truly is great!

Sometimes that harvest is obvious to us. But most of the time, we need to pray, “Lord, open my eyes so that I can see as you see.” From His radical perspective. That the harvest truly is great.

But then Jesus identified a radical problem. He says, “The harvest truly is great but the laborers are few.” We discovered in part 2 of this series that the real problem is not that there are too few laborers. The real problem is that there are too few laboring laborers. That’s the problem! Those called to be laborers have become distracted, discouraged.

And because of this radical problem, even though the harvest truly is great, Jesus challenges His disciples and He challenges us to pray a radical prayer. Let’s read Luke 10:2 again: “*The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; **therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.***” (Lk 10:2)

At first reading, this may not sound like a radical prayer. But a careful study of these words of Jesus will reveal that this is indeed a radical request. There are several Greek verbs that are translated “pray.” Is Jesus asking us to make a request? To express a desire? No! It’s more intense than that. The Greek verb used here, **deomai**, means “to beseech,” “to plead earnestly,” “to beg.” Do you sense the intensity of that word? It is so much stronger than simply “to pray.”

Let’s consider some passages where this verb, **deomai**, is used. We find it twice in connection with this teaching of Jesus to pray to the Lord of the harvest. It’s also found in Luke 5:12 in connection with a leper who is begging for healing, in Luke 8:38 where a man who has been freed from a legion of demons is earnestly pleading to go with Jesus, and in Luke 9:38 where a man is pleading for his son’s deliverance from an evil spirit. Do any of those

occurrences sound like simply expressing a desire or making a request? What does it sound like to you?

Perhaps even more helpful for our understanding of this verb **deomai**, is the use of this verb in Luke 22:31-32. Here Jesus is praying: "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have *prayed* for you, that your faith should not fail." Peter was in danger of eternal loss. Satan wanted to sift him like wheat. How do you think Jesus prayed for Peter? The answer is in the text. The verb is **deomai**. It was an earnest prayer. Jesus *earnestly pleaded* with the Father on Simon Peter's behalf. That's how Jesus tells us to pray the radical prayer. Pray earnestly. Beg.

The Earnest Appeal of Jesus

Notice that this verb is in the imperative: "therefore *pray* the Lord of the harvest..." What is implied when an imperative is used? It's a command, or an appeal. An imperative expects an active response. If a firefighter runs into a public building and shouts, "Vacate this building immediately," that is not a polite suggestion. It's a command. If a teacher says to her students, "Turn in your homework at the end of class," that's not just tentative request! She expects an active response.

Similarly, when Jesus says to the disciples, and also to us, "Pray the Lord of the harvest," He is expecting an active response. But there's even more that we can learn from this appeal of Jesus. In Greek, the imperative can be stated in two ways. A present imperative has the idea of "keep doing what you're already doing." If you're running away from a mad dog, and I shout out "Run! Run!", I would use a present imperative. In other words, you are running. Just keep

on running! Similarly, when Jesus says in Matt 7:7, “Ask, and it will be given to you,” he uses a present imperative. So what would that mean? You’re absolutely right. Jesus is saying, “You are already asking. Continue to ask. Keep on asking.”

But in the Greek, there is also an *aorist* imperative, which implies “start doing something that you’re not yet doing.” If I’m standing in a ditch, leaning on my shovel, and the boss says, “Dig!”, he means, “Start digging. You’re not digging now. But you need to start digging.” That would be an *aorist* imperative in Greek. Similarly, when Jesus says to the people at Lazarus’ tomb, “Loose him, and let him go” (John 11:44), He uses an *aorist* imperative. “You’re not yet unwrapping him. Look at him. He’s all wrapped up and he can’t free himself. Start unwrapping him and let him go.”

Do you see the difference between a present imperative and an *aorist* imperative? In this appeal of Jesus for us to pray a radical prayer, Jesus asks us to pray earnestly, to plead, to beg. Jesus uses an *aorist* imperative. He is saying to us, “Start praying earnestly. You’re not yet praying as you should. You need to start earnestly pleading with the Lord of the harvest.”

At this point, you might be thinking, “Wait a minute! I don’t understand. Why do I need to beg the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers? Why do I need to start begging the Lord of the harvest like I’ve never prayed before? Doesn’t the Lord of the harvest already want to do this?” Absolutely. So why then do we need to beg? Let me suggest that it has more to do with changing *our* hearts than changing God’s heart. We are giving God permission to do something radical.

Throwing Out Laborers

What, then, is so radical about this prayer? As we dig deeper, we find the answer in the words of Jesus. We are to begin to earnestly plead with the Lord of the harvest to do what? “Send out laborers into His harvest.” That doesn’t sound very radical. But “send out laborers” is not an accurate translation of the Greek. The common verb in Greek for "send out" is the verb **apostello**, from which we get the noun **apostolos**, “apostle.” When the Gospels record that Jesus "sent out" the disciples, the verb **apostello** is used. But the verb used by Jesus in Luke 10:2 is much more radical.

“Send out laborers” isn’t even an accurate translation. It’s far too polite. The verb used here is **ekballo**. **Ballo** means “to cast” or “to throw.” **Ballo** is used when the disciples cast their nets out of the ship (John 21:6). **Ballo** is used when the enemies of Jesus picked up rocks to throw at Him (John 8:59). **Ballo** is used when John the Baptist was thrown into prison (John 3:24). **Ballo** means to throw or cast. But that still doesn’t capture the complete meaning of this radical prayer.

The Greek verb used by Jesus in Luke 10:2 is **ekballo**. The prefix *ek* means “out”. So **ekballo** means "to throw out," or "to cast out." On numerous occasions in the Gospel record, **ekballo** is used for casting out demons. This verb **ekballo** is also used when Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the temple (John 2:15). As you can see, this is not a weak verb, and Jesus is not asking you to pray a weak prayer. What Jesus is asking you to do is earnestly plead with the Lord of the harvest “to throw out” laborers, “to hurl out” laborers, “to cast out” laborers into His harvest. That is a radical prayer!

A Personal Request

You can't possibly pray this radical prayer unless you're willing to be a part of the answer to that prayer. Let me put this radical prayer into simple words:

“Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg you to throw out laborers into your harvest, and you have my permission to begin with *me*.”

Jesus Himself was willing to be thrown out! Matthew records that immediately after His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Jesus came out of that wilderness to begin His active ministry, in fulfillment of the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah. The Gospel writer Mark, on the other hand, records that Jesus was “thrown out” by the Spirit. Most translators don't translate the Greek accurately. The verb that is used in Mark 1:12 is **ekballo**. Jesus was willing to be thrown out into God's harvest field.

Perhaps you're thinking, “What will happen to me if I give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw me out into His harvest field?” That is God's responsibility, not yours. He will throw you out where He wants you to be. It may be to a distant land, or it may be right where you currently live. Your assignment, my assignment, is to be willing, to be ready, to pray the radical prayer, to earnestly plead: **“Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg you to throw out laborers into your harvest, and you have my permission to begin with *me*.”** Are you willing to respond to the appeal of Jesus?

Nathan's response

A young man in Allentown, Pennsylvania, had the courage to pray this radical prayer.

Nathan worked in a foundry in Macungie, Pennsylvania. Just a few months before I met Nathan, God had miraculously saved his life. Nathan accidentally put his hand on a live monorail at work and 440 volts of electricity surged through his body! Nathan should have died that night. When the doctors examined him, they found the entry point of the electricity on his hand but they couldn't find an exit point. Try to explain that. I can't. God miraculously spared Nathan's life that night and his life was spared for a reason.

A few months later, Nathan knelt with me under the starry heavens and prayed a radical prayer. In his own words, he cried out, **“Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg you to throw out laborers into your harvest, and you have my permission to begin with *me*.”** Nathan prayed in simple faith, and God heard his prayer!

As a result of that earnest prayer, God set into motion a sequence of events that would change Nathan's life forever. First, God asked Nathan to part with his most cherished possession: a BMW motorcycle. Nathan loved that machine, even though Satan had tried to use that motorcycle to take his life, urging him to take a suicide ride on back roads at well over 100mph. Finally, Nathan became convicted that God wanted him to part with his beloved BMW, and he found the courage to let it go. His radical prayer was being answered.

Then God answered Nathan's radical prayer through the lives of other followers of Jesus. Two families in his home church were moved by the Spirit of God to help sponsor Nathan to go to college. Those families made significant financial sacrifices to join the Lord of the harvest in throwing a laborer out into His harvest field. One of those sponsors sleeps in Jesus today, but before he died, he laid up some treasure in heaven.

Four years after Nathan prayed that radical prayer, a former foundry worker graduated

from college with a degree in theology as president of his senior class. Today Nathan is still a devoted follower of Jesus. He is serving as a local church pastor and is deeply committed to mission work. In fact, it was on one of those mission trips that he met his beautiful wife. God always gives us more than we deserve! Do you think Nathan regrets praying that radical prayer? No! Now, instead of just making a living, God is using Nathan to make a difference in the world!

I know from personal experience that this prayer is radical! I began to pray this prayer some years ago, and God took me from a teaching position at one of our universities and threw me across the United States to pastor a church in southern California. After several years, while we were building a beautiful home in southern California, God threw me out to Florida! We never got to live in our new home! But we have seen God work here at Forest Lake church more powerfully than we have ever seen in 30 years of ministry. I continued to pray this radical prayer this past summer when I was invited to assume a ministry position at one of our colleges. And God threw me out right here. In basketball, they call that a slam dunk! God was clearly saying, “You’re exactly where I want you to be!” But every day, I want to give God permission to throw me out into His harvest—wherever, whenever, however.

I’m not suggesting that everyone who prays this radical prayer should become a pastor. I’m simply encouraging you to earnestly pray this radical prayer and see what the Lord of the harvest will do in your life:

“Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg you to throw out laborers into your harvest, and you have my permission to begin with *me*.”

I challenge you to cry out to the Lord of the harvest today and every day. Say to Him, “Whatever You want me to do, I’ll do it. Wherever you want me to go, I’ll go. If you want me to enter into a full-time ministry, I’m willing. If you want me to be a laborer for you at my work, at my business, in my home, I’m willing, Lord. If you need me to give sacrificially to help send other laborers into your harvest, I’m willing. Just show me what you want me to do, Lord. I give you full permission. I yield fully to you. Throw out laborers into your harvest, and you have my permission to begin with *me*.”

Will you respond to the appeal of Jesus? Will you pray this radical prayer? If the answer is yes, I want you to slip to your knees, wherever you are. On campus. In your home. If your driving a car, find a place to pull over and bow your head in prayer. Then cry out to God.

“Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg you to throw out laborers into your harvest, and you have my permission to begin with *me*.”

I’m going to give you a chance to share what God does as a result of praying that prayer. But I want to encourage you to join us for the next message in this series on the Radical Prayer, because you need to be aware of the radical challenges that you will surely face.

THE RADICAL PRAYER - PART 4

Encountering Radical Challenges

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	Luke 10:3
Subject:	What we experience when we are thrown out in the harvest
Complement:	we feel like lambs among wolves.
Exegetical idea:	When we are thrown out into the harvest, we feel like lambs among wolves.
Homiletical idea:	Jesus will never leave you or forsake you!
Purpose:	To warn my hearers about the challenges that lie before them when they are thrown out into the harvest.

Introduction

Have you prayed the radical prayer? Because the harvest is great, but the laborers are few, Jesus appeals to us to pray a radical prayer: to cry out to the Lord of the harvest to throw out laborers into His harvest and to give Him permission to begin with us!

Whenever you pray this radical prayer, giving the Lord of the harvest permission to throw you out into His harvest field, get ready for the adventure of your life! However, I must warn you that you will also encounter radical challenges.

Let's turn to the words of Jesus that we have been studying together. Luke 10, beginning with verse 2. "....." But then Jesus gives this warning, recorded in Luke 10:3: "Behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves." Lambs among wolves! That sounds dangerous. Jesus is painfully honest with us. When you cry out to the Lord of the harvest to throw you out into His harvest field, you need to be prepared to face radical challenges. We will discover in our study today that those radical challenges will be both internal and external.

An immediate internal challenge that many of us must confront is our lack of maturity and experience in the work of God. We are just "lambs". Sheep aren't known to be the most intelligent or the strongest members of the animal kingdom. I doubt if anyone here got up this

morning and said, “I’m feeling as strong as a sheep today!” Or “I’m feeling as courageous as a sheep today!” Or “I’m feeling as wise as a sheep today!” We talk about being as strong as an....OX. Or as courageous as a....LION. Or as wise as an OWL. I never figured that one out. But I’m sure that an owl is wiser than a sheep! And the image that Jesus uses isn’t even a fully mature sheep. He describes those thrown out into the harvest as lambs. Weak, immature lambs. It’s true that we have heard the promise of Jesus when He said, “Greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father” (John 14:12). We believe that promise in theory, but many of us have not yet tested that promise in real life. When you give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw you out into His harvest field, you may come face to face with the painful realization that you are just a lamb. Joining the Lord of the harvest in His harvest field is a radical challenge for lambs.

Wilbur was just a lamb when he gave the Lord of the harvest permission to throw him out into His harvest field. Wilbur had been a Christian all of his life, but he was immature and inexperienced as a worker in the Lord’s harvest field. In March, 2002, Wilbur was invited to preach a series of sermons in Kenya, Africa. His reply was terse and to the point: “You know I don’t preach!” He could have said, “I’m just a lamb! Choose a mature sheep like Billy Graham!” Surely God would choose someone more experienced, more spiritually mature than him. Wilbur decided to ask God for a sign. After all, Gideon had asked for a sign to know that it was indeed God who was directing him to lead the army of Israel. So Wilbur knelt in prayer and said, “God, I have never asked for a sign before, but I need to know that this is what you want me to do.” Immediately, these words came to Wilbur’s mind: “Why are you asking for a sign? I have asked you to go into all the world and I will be with you!” The answer was so clear. All

this 70+ year-old “lamb” could say was “Thank you, Lord.”

A few weeks later, Wilbur e-mailed the local coordinator in Kenya and asked, “How many do you expect will be attending the meetings?” He was shocked by the response. They were expecting approximately 5000 people during the week and 10,000+ on the weekends. When Wilbur read those numbers, he was confronted again with the painful realization that he was just a “lamb”. He said to his wife, “There is no way that I could face that many people and preach those sermons.” Wilbur wanted to serve God. He was willing to pray the radical prayer, giving the Lord of the harvest permission to throw him out into His harvest field. But Wilbur was struggling with the radical internal challenge of being an immature and inexperienced lamb. Many of us can relate to Wilbur’s sense of inadequacy.

Perhaps more radical than the internal challenges that we will face when we are thrown out as lambs into the harvest are the external challenges: “Behold, I send you out as lambs *among wolves*.” Not only are you sent out as a lamb, but you are sent out as lambs among wolves. You will face adversaries when the Lord of the harvest throws you out into His harvest field. You will face predators. These adversaries are not mild-mannered or timid. They are wolves. On another occasion, Jesus describes these wolves as “ravenous” (Matthew 7:15). The apostle Paul calls them “savage” (Acts 20:29). And notice that there is not just one wolf. Jesus said, “I send you out as lambs among wolves.” There are many wolves. These predators hunt in packs. They look for vulnerable targets and seek to destroy them.

The challenge is even more radical due to the fact that you are sent out *among* these ravenous, savage predators. You are in the midst of them. It is not the nature of lambs to go out looking for trouble. Lambs do not go wolf spotting or wolf hunting. It is the wolves who are

hunting for lambs. When you give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw you out into His harvest field, there will be times when you will find yourself surrounded by these savage, ravenous wolves.

To meet these radical challenges, both internal and external, you must heed the counsel of Jesus, recorded in Matthew 10:16. When Jesus sent out the Twelve, He said to them, “I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” The Greek word that is used here, translated “wise”, refers to practical wisdom, discernment, prudence. It is the same wisdom that Jesus calls for at the end of His sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 7:24) This same Greek word is frequently found in the Greek translation of the Book of Proverbs. Such practical wisdom helps us to know when to be silent (Proverbs 11:12), when to withdraw (Proverbs 14:16), and how to diffuse angry words (Proverbs 15:1).

You need practical wisdom when you are thrown out as a lamb among wolves. But what does Jesus mean when He says, “Be wise as serpents?” In the ancient Near East, the serpent was considered a symbol of wisdom and cunning. Serpents are alert and cautious. They do not seek unnecessary contact or conflict with a predator. They do not provoke attacks.

Jesus was a perfect example of a lamb among wolves. He was the lamb of God, and Satan knew it. And Satan attacked Jesus with every weapon in his evil arsenal. Jesus was surrounded by ravenous wolves. But Jesus demonstrated wisdom in His interactions with His adversaries. Many of the religious leaders were continually looking for ways to trap Jesus and to destroy Him. He manifested a wisdom that comes from heaven by avoiding confrontation. On many occasions, Jesus realized that if He spoke the truth openly, His enemies would pounce on Him, accuse Him of blasphemy, and seek to destroy Him. Therefore, He taught in parables so

that His adversaries would see but not perceive, and hear but not understand (Matthew 13:14).

Immediately after Jesus cleansed the Temple, the religious leaders tried to trap Him with this question: “By what authority are You doing these things?” (Matthew 21:23) If Jesus had answered them with plain speech, they would have surely stoned Him for blasphemy. It was true that Jesus had cleansed the Temple by His own authority as the Son of God, the Word made flesh. But He showed wisdom in His response to the religious leaders who were confronting Him: “I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: ‘The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?’” (Matthew 21:24-25) In other words, “You answer my question and I will answer yours.” The wise response of Jesus threw the proverbial “ball” back into their court. Now, the religious leaders were facing a dilemma of their own. If they answered that John’s baptism was from heaven, they would be speaking condemnation upon themselves because they had refused to listen to John. If they answered that John’s baptism was from men, the multitude would mob them because John was widely accepted as a prophet of God. After conferring together, the religious leaders came up with this “wise” answer: “We do not know.” Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.” (Matthew 21:27)

You need similar practical wisdom when dealing with the savage and ravenous wolves that will inevitably surround you. But remember that such wisdom only comes from above. James reminds us that “if anyone of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all *liberally* and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). The Lord of the Harvest does not rebuke His lambs for their lack of maturity and experience. Rather, He encourages you to seek the practical wisdom that you will surely need to meet the radical challenges that you will

encounter. And He offers to give you that practical wisdom liberally when you ask Him.

When you are thrown out into the Lord's harvest field as a lamb among wolves, you also need to be as harmless as a dove. The Greek word translated "harmless" literally means "unmixed". The same word is used to describe pure gold. Laborers in God's harvest field are to demonstrate moral purity and integrity

In the ancient Near East, the dove was a symbol of purity and faithfulness. You are called in your interaction with others, including the savage and ravenous wolves, to be above reproach in speech and conduct. The apostle Paul admonishes us, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). Laborers in the Lord's harvest field should never adopt the ethics or mimic the behaviors of their adversaries. Like the dove, you are a symbol of peace, hope, and the presence of God's Holy Spirit in a world that is filled with savage, ravenous wolves.

As I was thinking of this image of the lamb being thrown out into the harvest, in the midst of wolves, I asked myself this question; What is the lamb's greatest resource? It's not her strength. It's not his courage. The lamb's greatest resource is the shepherd! Every lamb needs to remember these words of the Shepherd, recorded in Deut 31:6, "Be strong and of good courage. Do not fear or be afraid of them. For the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

Never forget this vital truth: The lamb's greatest resource is the shepherd. When the Lord is your shepherd, you shall not want! When the Lord is your shepherd, He will enable you to lie down in green pastures, even in the midst of ravenous wolves. When the Lord is your

shepherd, He will lead you beside still waters. When the Lord is your shepherd, He will restore your soul. When the Lord is your shepherd, He will lead you in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. When the Lord is your shepherd, you will fear no evil even when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Why? Because the Good Shepherd is with you!

It's true. When you give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw you out into His harvest, you will face radical challenges. Those challenges will be internal and external. But you can have the blessed assurance that Jesus is with you. Jesus will never leave you or forsake you.

Perhaps you are wondering how a lamb like Wilbur survived after he was thrown out into the far away country of Kenya. In spite of internal and external challenges, Wilbur faithfully preached night after night, and when he gave his first invitation for people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, over 400 people came forward! He was totally amazed! The final weekend of the meetings, attendance was estimated to be over 25,000 and nearly 2,000 individuals made commitments to become fully devoted followers of Jesus!

Wilbur learned by experience a lesson that we all need to learn. When we give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw us out into His harvest, we may be thrown out as a lamb among wolves, we may face radical challenges that are both internal and external, but we are not alone. Jesus is with us. Jesus will never leave us or forsake us!

When our son Christopher was a in high school, I think he was still in 9th grade, he went with some friends to downtown Chattanooga to sing some Christian songs and talk to people about Jesus. They didn't have any experience with street witnessing. They were just lambs. But their hearts were willing, and God blessed their laborers. Part way through the afternoon,

Christopher needed to use the restroom, so he went into the IMAX theater lobby and found a men's bathroom. While he was there in the men's bathroom, an older teenager came in and began to verbally attack him. "I think it's stupid to love Jesus!" Christopher was feeling a little intimidated. All of a sudden, the door of one of the toilet stalls opened, and a very large man walked out. "I love Jesus!" he said! The older teenager looked startled and left. Now he was the one who felt intimidated! When Christopher told us the story, there was a sparkle in his eye. He had never met the tall stranger before, and he has never met him since. But I have no doubt that God used that tall man to remind Jesus that even though you're just a lamb among wolves, you don't need to be afraid! Jesus will be with you. He will not leave you or forsake you!

Isn't that good news? I hope that you will prayerfully consider how you will respond to the appeal of Jesus. Will you pray this radical prayer? I assure you that your life will be changed forever! If you have already prayed this radical prayer, keep praying. It's not a one time commitment. It's a day by day commitment: Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg you to throw out laborers into Your harvest, and You have my permission to begin with me." And pray with the blessed assurance that Jesus will never leave you or forsake you! Be strong and of good courage. Do not fear or be afraid of them for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you!

THE RADICAL PRAYER - PART 5

Laboring in Radical Dependence

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Luke 10:4-11
Subject: How we should live as we are thrown out into the harvest
Complement: in radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.
Exegetical idea: When we are thrown out into the harvest, we should live in radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.
Homiletical idea: **The Lord will provide!**
Purpose: To encourage my hearers to depend fully on the Lord of the harvest as they join Him in the harvest.

Introduction

Have you prayed that radical prayer yet? Because the harvest truly is great but the laborers are few, Jesus appeals to us to pray a radical prayer. You have a sample of that radical prayer on the bookmark that you received as part of this series. Let's read it together:

“Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg you to throw out laborers into Your harvest
And you have my permission to begin with me.”

When you give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw you out into His harvest field, he throws you out as a lamb among wolves, but you have the sweet assurance that Jesus is with you! Today, we are going to continue our series on The Radical Prayer. We will learn from the teachings of Jesus that when we are thrown out as laborers into His harvest, we are to labor in radical dependence on Him.

Listen to the radical instructions that Jesus gives to those who are willing to be thrown out into the harvest. We can read the words of Jesus in Luke 10:4, “Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals.” Those instructions don't make much sense from a human perspective. When you go on a journey, it is customary to take provisions with you. Experienced travelers advise you to take more money than you think you'll need! But Jesus gives the exact opposite

advice: “Carry no money bag.” In His instructions to the Twelve, Jesus is even more specific: “Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper” (Matthew 10:9).

Why does Jesus instruct His followers to carry no money bag? What is the reason for this radical instruction? Surely when you are thrown out as a laborer into the Lord’s harvest field you will need resources in order to accomplish your mission? Doesn’t this approach seem a little careless or irresponsible? Apparently, the Lord of the harvest doesn’t want you to depend on your own resources. Rather, He wants you to labor in radical dependence on Him.

I learned a vital lesson about radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest in the summer between my junior and senior years of college. I had traveled to Sweden to plant trees. My summer work plans were carefully designed to accomplish my personal goals for the coming year. But the Lord of the harvest invaded my private world and challenged me to allow Him to throw me out into His harvest field.

Through a remarkable sequence of events, I found myself in the north of Sweden, selling Christian books. That was the last assignment that I had considered doing for the summer! But the Lord of the harvest had other plans. I memorized a brief sales presentation in Swedish and started knocking on doors. To my surprise, the first few days went well. The families that I visited took pity on me! By the end of my first week of sales, I began to feel rather self-confident. Even haughty. That’s when my troubles began.

The following Monday I worked for ten hours and sold nothing—not one single book. “These people have problems,” I said to myself. I blamed the local residents of that city when I should have been looking in a mirror. I worked all day Tuesday and again I sold nothing. By Wednesday morning, I had lost all of my self-confidence. I was so discouraged that I was

actually knocking on doors and secretly hoping that no one was home. It was pitiful!

Thoroughly dejected, I finally sat down on the side of the road in a very exclusive housing development in the north of Sweden and I gave up. I complained to the Lord of the harvest: “Lord, I can’t do this! I can’t even give these books away!” I felt like a complete failure. What I didn’t realize was that in reality I was on the verge of making a major breakthrough in my relationship with God.

“Lord,” I continued, “I know that You brought me here for a reason. I have sensed Your leading. But I can’t do this work.” Then I hesitantly added, “But if you want to work through me, Lord, I’m willing!” It was a simple prayer. A confession of radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.

The Lord of the harvest invites you to radically depend upon Him. If you are depending on your own resources, you might not even give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw you out at all. You might say, “As soon as I have the resources that are needed for such an enormous task, then I’ll give You permission to throw me out.” Or you might allow the Lord of the harvest to throw you out, but then look for a small task to do that seems manageable with your meager resources. In order to emphasize the need for radical dependence on the Lord of the Harvest, Jesus instructs you to leave your money bag behind.

In addition to leaving your money bag behind, Jesus also instructs you not to carry a “knapsack” (Luke 10:4). Now, what is this knapsack that should also be left behind? The Greek word translated “knapsack” (NKJV), “scrip” (KJV), or “bag” (NIV), is only found 6 times in the New Testament. Each reference, including the passage in Luke 10:4, deals with going out as laborers into the Lord’s harvest field. Is this knapsack the equivalent of a 21st century rolling

suitcase? Is Jesus simply saying, “Don’t take any money and don’t take any luggage?” I don’t think so. This Greek noun has a more specialized meaning—a beggar’s bag. According to the writings of the Hellenistic philosopher Crates of Thebes, itinerant teachers carried these beggar’s bags with them. It was an overt message that they were depending on others for their support. Today, we might say, “If you love Jesus, call this 800 number and use your credit card to send me some money!” Imposing on others to provide the resources that we need.

Jesus, however, instructs His followers to leave the beggar’s bag behind. We are not to beg from others. Radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest means first that we don’t trust in our own resources and second that we don’t impose on those around us to provide the resources that we need.

Even at the time of the sending out of the seventy, the Lord of the harvest had already demonstrated His ability to provide the resources that were needed. In reference to the sending out of the Twelve, Jesus said, “When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?” (Luke 22:35) “Nothing,” they replied. The disciples did not depend on their own resources or impose on those around them to provide the resources that were needed. Rather, they demonstrated radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest, and they lacked nothing. The Lord of the harvest will also provide the resources that you need in His harvest field as you labor in radical dependence on Him.

The patriarch Abraham gave the Lord permission to throw him out of his home town of Ur. The author of the book of Hebrews tells us that Abraham “went out, not knowing where he was going.” (Hebrews 11:8) Abraham realized that this world was not his final resting place. He was waiting “for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Hebrews

11:10) On his life journey, Abraham came to know the LORD God as YHWH Yireh, Jehovah-Jireh, the LORD will provide. (Genesis 22:14) That can also be your experience as you labor in radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.

The Lord of the harvest has already provided salvation through Jesus Christ, our Lord (Romans 10:9,13). He provides power and guidance through the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8; John 16:13) And the Lord of the harvest will supply all of your other needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19) As you labor in radical dependence on Him, you will discover personally that the Lord of the harvest will provide for you! He has a thousand ways to care for you as you labor in radical dependence on Him!

One way that the Lord of the harvest will provide for you is through the generosity of those whose hearts are willing. Listen to the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:5-6. “.....” If a family provides hospitality for you, not because you begged, but because the Lord of the harvest touched their hearts, Jesus says, in Luke 10:7 “remain in the same house, eating and drinking such as they give you, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house”. Accept the resources that the Lord of the harvest provides. Don’t go from house to house looking for a better offer. Be content with the resources that are provided.

Jesus also instructs laborers who are thrown out into the harvest field not to get bogged down with excess baggage. The instruction to carry no sandals (Luke 10:4) doesn’t mean that laborers should be barefoot. Jesus doesn’t say, “Don’t wear sandals,” but “Carry no sandals.” In other words, “Don’t be burdened down with excess baggage.” The verb translated “carry” literally means to “bear a burden.” The same verb is used for bearing a cross. Carrying an extra

pair of sandals may not seem like much of a burden, much of a hindrance. However, in addition to an extra pair of sandals, you might decide to take an extra pair of clothes, and an extra walking stick. Carry no (extra) sandals. Travel light. Don't be bogged down with excess baggage.

As you travel on your journey, Jesus also directs you to "greet no one along the road" (Luke 10:4). Why does Jesus give this instruction? Does He want his followers to be anti-social? No! This is a hyperbole—an exaggeration for effect. Jesus is saying, "Don't get distracted! Stay focused on your mission!" Similarly, Jesus told those who would be His disciples, "Don't even go back and say goodbye to your family. Don't look back once you have put your hands to the plow." (Luke 9:62, paraphrase). Stay focused on your mission and don't let anything or anyone distract you.

What, then, is your mission as a laborer in the Lord's harvest field? "Heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you'" (Luke 10:9). Previously, Jesus had given these instructions to the Twelve: "As you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:7-8)

Did you notice that this mission assignment given to those who are thrown out into God's harvest field is also a description of Christ's own ministry while He was here on earth? In the report sent to John the Baptist, Jesus said, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 'The blind receive their sight and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them'" (Matthew 11:5). This ministry was only possible because, as Jesus testified, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to

preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD” (Luke 4:18).

As laborers in the Lord’s harvest field, we are called to demonstrate radical dependence as we reproduce the ministry of Jesus, walk in His footsteps, and serve in His name. It is not by might or by power but by God’s Spirit that the harvest will be gathered in. Jesus testified that “you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Only as we have freely received can we freely give. And we give to others in constant awareness of our radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.

As I sat on the side of the road in that exclusive housing development in the north of Sweden, I was painfully aware of my own inadequacies. I had tried to depend on my own wisdom, my own strength, and I had failed miserably. But after I had prayed a simple prayer of surrender, a radical prayer that gave God permission to throw me out into His harvest field, then the Lord of the harvest began to work in a miraculous way. I got up from the side of the road and made my way to the next house. When the lady opened the front door, I sensed in my heart that the Holy Spirit had been there ahead of me! That family bought a set of books. And that story was repeated over and over again during the next five weeks.

Several days after I had prayed the radical prayer, and made the commitment to labor in radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest, I experienced another miracle. At one home, I was impressed to give my testimony. That may not sound unusual to you, but may I remind you that I didn’t speak Swedish. However, as I responded to the conviction of God’s Spirit, something remarkable happened to me. I felt a freedom to begin communicating in a language

that I had not studied and did not speak. I gave my testimony...in Swedish! Perhaps you're thinking, "How do you know that you were speaking Swedish?" Because the lady of the house obviously understood what I was saying. God was giving me the gift of tongues and He was giving her the gift of understanding. He is YHWH Yireh, Jehovah-Jireh! When I left that house, I was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Lord of the harvest was able to do more than I could even ask or think if I was only willing to labor in radical dependence on Him!

Not every miracle of provision will be the same. But when you make a commitment to allow the Lord of the harvest to throw you out into His harvest field, and labor in radical dependence on Him, you too will witness God's remarkable provisions as He works in you and through you. **The Lord will provide!**

You will discover the truth contained in that old gospel song:

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus
Just to take Him at His word
Just to rest upon His promise
Just to know "Thus saith the Lord!"
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus,
Oh, for grace to trust Him more!

THE RADICAL PRAYER - PART 6

Experiencing Radical Joy

Dr. Derek Morris

- Preaching passage: Luke 10:17-20
- Subject: What is our source of joy as we serve the Lord of the harvest in His harvest
- Complement: not only that God is working through us but also that our names are written in heaven.
- Exegetical idea: When we see the Lord of the harvest working through us, we not only rejoice in what He has done through us but also that our names are written in heaven.
- Homiletical idea: **You will experience radical joy as you join the Lord of the harvest in His harvest field.**
- Purpose: To motivate my hearers to allow the Lord of the harvest to throw them out into His harvest, that they might know the joy of joining Him as a laborer in His harvest.

Introduction

We've been on an amazing journey over the past six weeks! The words of Jesus, recorded in Luke 10 have come alive! We began with the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:2. "....." We have seen a radical perspective, that the harvest truly is great. We have also learned of a radical problem—there are too few laboring laborers. And we have heard the appeal of Jesus to pray a radical prayer. Our artist, Ginny Miller, has helped us to see the big picture of what it means to pray the radical prayer! We have learned that we will face radical challenges, and need to radically depend on the Lord of the harvest.

Today, in the last message in this series, we are going to talk about radical joy! Can you imagine how the disciples felt when they returned from their missionary tour? They had given the Lord of the harvest permission to throw them out into His harvest. Even though they felt like lambs among wolves, they had learned to radically depend on the Lord of the Harvest. And they had experienced that He is Jehovah-Jireh, the LORD will provide! The sick had been healed in Jesus' name. Those in bondage had been set free. The good news about Jesus had been boldly

proclaimed. Luke records that “the seventy returned with joy...” (Luke 10:17) Radical joy!

That will be your experience when you give the LORD of the harvest permission to throw you out into His harvest! You will experience joy! Radical joy! Rachel experienced radical joy as she gave the Lord of the harvest permission to throw her out into His harvest. Immediately after college, Rachel ended up in Monteverde, Costa Rica, serving as a volunteer teacher in a small Christian school. But before she even left for Costa Rica, Rachel began to encounter radical challenges. The friend who was supposed to serve with her in Monteverde had a family crisis and couldn't go. Rachel wondered whether she should just stay home too, but she sensed the Lord of the harvest speaking to her heart: “Go. Trust me and go.” Rachel obeyed the Lord of the harvest, allowing Him to throw her out into His harvest field.

When she arrived in Costa Rica, she faced more challenges. First, she waited more than an hour and a half at the airport and no one came to meet her. Then she realized that she didn't even know the address of her final destination, and she had no contact phone numbers at the school. This was either a time to become hysterical or a time for radical dependence on the Lord of the harvest.

Finally, Rachel connected with a young man who transported her to the mission school. But when she arrived at the school, she encountered more challenges. There was no director to talk to and no real program in place for volunteers. Someone sat her down, and with the help of a translator, said, “We don't have an English program at all! So we want you to develop one, right now!”

Rachel was completely overwhelmed! She had been told that there was a complete English program in place and so she had not brought any resources with her. She had one week

to plan an entire English language program and she didn't even know where to begin.

In spite of many radical challenges, the Lord of the harvest provided for Rachel. He is YHWH Yireh, Jehovah-Jireh! After several months of struggling, Rachel connected with a wonderful Christian teacher named Lindy, who lived in a nearby town. Lindy was an amazing woman of God who had served as a teacher since she was 14 years old. Lindy stepped in and helped Rachel to design a very creative curriculum. It was obvious to Rachel that her students were actually beginning to enjoy their lessons!

When Rachel came home for a break halfway through her mission assignment, she diligently gathered extra teaching supplies that she could take back with her. The English program at the mission school was flourishing but she was determined to make it even better! However, when she returned to Monteverde after her break, she discovered that other workers at the school had burned many of the books that she had been using. They weren't trying to be malicious. They just didn't think she needed them! That's when Rachel decided that the school needed a designated space especially for the English language program.

There was an unfinished building on campus that had been started by a high school mission team. Rachel determined that, in addition to her teaching responsibilities, she was going to supervise the completion of that building so that the English language program could have a home of its own! She wrote to her family, and they, along with members from her local church, assured her that they would raise the \$2,000 needed to complete that classroom as an English language lab!

But before any funds had arrived from back home, Rachel had to move forward in complete dependence on the Lord. She found an honest local builder who put his other projects

on hold and began to complete the project! She paid the builder with funds from her own bank account. These were the funds that she had saved from the past summer that were supposed to last for the whole year. Rachel remembers the day when she completely emptied her bank account in order to pay the builder for his work. The promised funds still hadn't arrived from back home. She can still remember the tightness in her chest. She had no money now. No resources. All that she could do was completely depend on the Lord of the harvest.

Before Rachel left Costa Rica, she was able to see that classroom completed! It was not only well built. It was beautiful! One whole wall was covered with shelving to store the new English language curriculum, along with all the books and supplies. There was even a lock on the door so no one could come in and burn the books! Rachel rejoices that the Lord of the harvest provided in miraculous ways during her time in Costa Rica and she is filled with joy. Radical joy.

I know that Rachel's testimony is true, because Rachel is here with us today! She is continuing to give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw her out into His harvest! She is singing today as part of this service because she is continuing, day by day, to give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw her out into His harvest. And as she does that, she is experiencing joy—radical joy!

Wintley has also experienced radical joy as he has given the Lord of the harvest permission to throw him out into His harvest field. As a teenager, Wintley dreamed of being a famous singer—but he was trusting in his own ability, his own talent. Finally, he came to the place of complete surrender—the place of radical dependence. One day, when he was a 16 year old boarding student at a Christian school in Ontario, Canada, he prayed, “God, whatever you

want me to do, I'll do it. If you want me to be a garbage man, and the only music I'll ever know is whistling hymns on the back of a garbage truck, that's fine with me." Wintley didn't realize it, but, in his own words, he was praying the radical prayer!

The following day, two men walked up to Wintley and said, "Are you Wintley Phipps? We are from a singing group called the Heritage Family. We would like you to travel and do singing evangelism with us!" Wintley was dumbfounded. Speechless. He had never seen a prayer answered like that before. Wintley was about to be thrown out in the harvest. God would use Wintley's music ministry to impact thousands of people around the world for the Kingdom of heaven.

On one occasion, Wintley was singing in Baltimore, Maryland. When he came down off the platform, a young lady was waiting for him. She said, "Sir, I just heard you sing, and I'm really discouraged." She was about to be fired from her job. She said to Wintley, "I feel like I can talk to you. Do you have time?" Wintley said, "Sure." That young lady started coming to Wintley's home, and they would pray together. After praying with her one day, Wintley said to her, "Before you go today, God has impressed me to tell you that He's going to bless you. He is going to give you the opportunity to speak to millions of people." She said, "Do you think that God would do that for me?" The history of her life demonstrates that the answer to her question was "Yes!" She went on to become an internationally known communicator. Through the years, God has given Wintley the opportunity to have a friendship with one of the most influential individuals of our generation. That young lady who met with Wintley was Oprah Winfrey.

There have been other instances where God has given Wintley the opportunity to provide counsel. One such opportunity presented itself during the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Wintley

has sung at the White House on several occasions, and was personally acquainted with President Bill Clinton. The Lord impressed Wintley to send President Clinton a message. Wintley wrote, "Mr President, Read Psalm 69." You might want to read Psalm 69 today. It's a psalm of repentance. Some time later, Wintley was at another function at the White House, and one of President Clinton's cabinet members called him aside and said, "You don't know what happened, do you? The President read that psalm. He called a few of his closest cabinet members together and shared with us from Psalm 69. Then President Clinton went to his room and wrote out the first speech that he gave to the American people, admitting that he had sinned." Wintley was asked to be in the audience at the White House when President Clinton gave that speech.

Wintley's life and work continue to be abundantly blessed by God. His life has been filled with radical joy as he continues to allow the Lord of the harvest to throw him out into His harvest field.

I want to share one last testimony with you that is very close to home. My wife Bodil has prayed the radical prayer, giving the Lord of the harvest permission to throw her out into His harvest field. As a young mother of two small boys, Bodil noticed the way that young minds soak up and retain words and tunes. She observed that she still remembered nursery rhymes from her own childhood even though she didn't consider herself to have a particularly good memory. That's when she made the commitment to begin composing Scripture songs so that she could "hide God's Word" in her own heart and in the hearts of her two young sons, Christopher and Jonathan.

In order to be obedient to that conviction, Bodil had to overcome some radical

challenges. She felt poorly prepared and inadequate for the task. Bodil had taken music lessons as a child but felt frustrated by her inability to sight read notes quickly. “God has used my weaknesses,” she testifies. God did not leave her to face those challenges alone. Shortly after she began composing Scripture songs, Bodil met a gifted young Christian vocalist named Ashley Hold. They began to sing God’s Word together, and the ministry of Trilogy Scripture Songs was born! In the past 20 years, Bodil has composed more than 100 Scripture songs, and Trilogy Scripture Songs has produced 6 CDs. Bodil’s Scripture songs are now heard on more than 200 Christian radio stations across North America. Her ministry website, www.trilogyscripturesongs.com, has also enabled her to provide Scripture songs to countless families around the world.

Whenever Bodil hears testimonies from those whose lives have been transformed by the Word of God, her heart is filled with joy. Radical joy! Bodil recognizes that such a powerful ministry could not have been accomplished alone. She refers to Trilogy Scripture Songs as a “living example of the body of Christ working together for His glory.” She continues to experience radical joy as she allows the Lord of the harvest to throw her out into His harvest field.

Luke tells us in chapter 10:17 of his gospel record that “the seventy returned with joy!” Luke 10:21 tells us that Jesus also “rejoiced in the Spirit.” Literally, Jesus leapt for joy! He was so filled with joy that He was jumping up and down! But He reminded His followers, and He also reminds us, that the source of our joy is not just that we see Him working in us and through us in remarkable ways as we give the Lord of the harvest permission to throw us out into the harvest. The source of our joy is a personal relationship with Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

Listen to the words of Jesus, recorded in Luke 10:18-20. “.....”

What is Jesus saying here? Is it wrong to rejoice when we see the Lord of the harvest working through us in wonderful ways? Of course not! Jesus is using a hyperbole here. An exaggeration for effect. Jesus is saying, “Your greatest joy is found in Me, and your relationship with me. And because you are in relationship with Me as your personal Savior and Lord, your name is written in heaven.” And it’s that personal experience that gives power to our testimony. We are not speaking in second-hand language. We have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. And now we are giving the Lord of the harvest to throw us out into His harvest so that we can tell others the good news!

As we conclude this radical prayer series, I have asked Bodil to sing one of those Scripture songs that God has used to bless so many lives. The words are taken from the Scripture passage that we have been studying together. Luke 10:2 and John 4:35 from the NKJV. Lisa and Rachel will be singing with her. Yes, the same Rachel whose story I told just a few minutes ago! She is still giving the Lord of the harvest permission to throw her out into His harvest! If you know the song, I invite you to sing with them!

The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few, the laborers are few
The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.
Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers
Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers
into His harvest, into His harvest.
The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.
Do you not say, “There are still four months and then comes the harvest?”
Behold, I say to you, Lift up your eyes and look at the fields,
for they are already white for the harvest.
The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few, the laborers are few
The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.
Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers
Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers
Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers

Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers

Have you begun to pray the radical prayer? If you will courageously pray the radical prayer, you can be assured that you too will eventually have a testimony of radical joy! So, why not respond to the appeal of Jesus right now? Pray the radical prayer:

“Lord of the harvest, I earnestly beg You to throw out laborers into Your harvest, and You have my permission to begin with *me*.”