**Harvest**

***35****Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.****36****When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.****37****Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.****38****Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Matthew 9:35-38, NIV)*

 God’s harvest needs workers to gather it in.

 Greetings dear brothers and sisters as we gather to glorify the Lord of the Harvest today. It is God who established the seasons ever since Creation, and it is He that allows them to continue one after another. Today we find ourselves in the season of harvest, and I hope that you’ve had the chance to visit some fields and at least pick an apple or some fruit. Our Lord’s words are connected to this beautiful annual reality, and it is our topic today. Again, God’s harvest needs workers – so, let’s think out loud about this for a few minutes…

 Jesus’ deeds are the works of God’s harvest – and He needs others to work with Him in that endeavor. The Lord’s context for saying what He did was very clear: He wasn’t just talking but had already shown exactly what it was that He was referring to, when talking about the work of the harvest. In verses 18-26, we read of Jesus raising a girl from the dead; in vv. 27-31, He heals two blind people; in vv. 32-24, he heals a mute person. In our passage, we see mention of travelling from place to place, teaching the people in their places of worship, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and the healing of those who were sick and weak. Why did He used to do this? Matthew remembers that the people were living essentially without real leaders taking care of them. Those that were tasked with leading them were not doing their duty. And, if the harvest was truly that much, namely the work of bringing God’s people to the right spiritual walk, it meant that the call for workers to join in the harvest of God was also a condemnation of the dried-up, dead religious system of that day.

 It’s like a home that has been neglected for so long that when it is sold and the new owner walks through the doors, he or she sees the immense amount of work needed to get the place inhabitable again. The walls are falling apart, no heat, water is dripping on their face from the ceiling, and perhaps other issues. But the owner cannot fix such a giant project by themselves – workers are needed to join in and bring the place so the owner can live there.

 Today, the Lord’s call has not changed. He is still saying to us, “the Harvest is plenty, but the workers are few.” In the original Greek, the text says that the people were troubled and basically ignored. The spiritually thirsty were many and everywhere, but those who were supposed to teach them were few to be found. Those who needed to hear the Good News were many, but those sharing it were few. The sick and demonized were many and still exist until today, but those who are gifted with prayer to overcome such conditions are few, and those that accept their ministries are also few. In general, the people of this world (those not part of Christ’s flock) are scattered, each one living in their own world, their own ideas, and those that are supposed to gather them under Jesus’ banner are few.

 But to fulfill that great need, workers are needed today that are ready to fulfill these “Kingdom needs.” However, given that each person has been given a certain gift, it is not necessary that the preacher also be the miraculous healer, or that the organizer of people into meetings be the great writer of articles for the Christian newsletter or magazine. But the worders are needed, says the Lord. If those workers are not in their positions doing what they are gifted to do, the people that are ripe for the bringing into the kingdom will wither and die – and the Lord does not want even one person to be lost (to hell).

 Therefore, let us pray for the Lord to raise up preachers, but also that the Lord awakens within us those gifts of service, organization, travelling ministry, helping, teaching, and others, so that the work of the Kingdom is not left untended to or ignored. The harvest will always be plenty, and, unfortunately, the workers, for centuries, have been few.

 So, let us, in our unique situations, all participate in that work, and if we are already doing it, let us be renewed and refreshed by the Lord, and continue.

 God’s Harvest is enormous – and the workers are few – may we be those that do not reject working alongside Jesus for the Father’s Kingdom. The Lord Bless You All. Amen.