

AND YOU HAVE ENTERED INTO THEIR LABOR



To everything is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Even though it looked like just another day to everyone else, Noah knew that the time had come for him to take his family into the ark. There came a time for the Israelites to go over and take the Promised Land. And because they failed to move when that time came, that generation died in the wilderness. The times and the seasons that lie ahead of us are not for us to know. But God expects his people to know the time in which they live.

When you see a cloud rising in the west you say at once, a shower is coming, and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing you say, there will be scorching heat, and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

Luke 12:54-57

There is no lack of people who dabble in Bible prophecy. They love to speculate about which politician is going to be the Antichrist, or how long it will be before the armies of Gog sweep down from the north against Israel. They sit in their armchairs and draw maps and diagrams of the end times and dream about being raptured.

When our Lord tells us to interpret the signs and know the meaning of the hour in which we live, it's not so that we can play Bible games in our living rooms and send out warning videos on social media. He tells us so that we can fit into God's program, so that we can do the things that need to be done. What's the point of knowing it's going to rain if you don't get into the ark?

It's all very well to know that we're living in an hour of judgment... But if we aren't ordering our lives as men and women who are living in an hour of judgment, then, when judgment really begins to fall, we are as vulnerable and useless as the people who never knew.

And it's all very well to know that we're living in a time of harvest... But if we never take a step toward those harvest fields, what good is our knowledge or our warnings? They will rise up and condemn us.

The five foolish virgins in Matthew 25 knew that it was the time of the Bridegroom's coming. They were absolutely right to go out to meet the bridegroom.

But they never got around to translating their knowledge of the hour into real living, so they weren't able to sustain that hope while the bridegroom delayed, and their lamps went out.

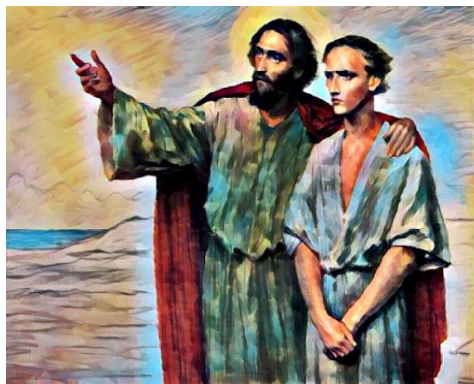


There are lots of people who, years ago, were singing “we'll see the face of Jesus” with tears running down their cheeks. They had a clear sense of the time... They knew the hour was late... They knew the Messiah's coming was near... And if he had come right away, they would have been all set. But they didn't have any oil in their lamps. They couldn't sustain that consciousness of the time they were living in. Now they're running all over the place trying to find oil for their lamps.

The words that Jesus spoke to his disciples by that well in Samaria have a special application for the church on earth at this hour.

Jesus is saying to his disciples, *“Don't you understand what time it is? Can't you read the obvious signs? You say there are yet four months then comes the harvest!... Open your eyes, harvest time is already here!*

Don't look at the fields, look at the people!... Look at them...Look at them.... they're ripe!... people just waiting to be reached for the Kingdom.”



“Why master, isn't that interesting. It reminds me of a book I just read on missions... very stimulating. As a matter of fact, Lord, everything you said about the harvest ties in with what brother Barnabas was saying at Bible study last week. What a wonderful thing to be living at this crucial hour! I'm going to go straight home and write a song about it.”

Jesus had just harvested A Samaritan woman for the Kingdom of God. What a joy to see this woman's heart melt and open and reach out for the things of GodOne soul turning from darkness to light. And now here she comes with a crowd of people whose hearts want whatever it is that Jesus gave to her.

They have to be harvested!

Don't talk about it.... don't sing about it.... don't read books about it... don't bemoan social decay on social media.... don't just endlessly pray about it...

... do it!

This is exactly the situation in which the church finds itself at this hour. The time in which we now live is harvest time. For all their confusion, their hostility, their cynicism about churchianity...

People are searching for the Christ their inmost hearts tell them must exist somewhere...

People are waiting for the truth to come and speak to them.

Don't say "We still have four months"...lift up your eyes. Don't say, "We need more time to prepare,"We don't have any more time to prepare...

The harvest is already here.



To harvest these people, do exactly what Jesus did with that Samaritan woman.

1. Jesus dealt with her personally.

He didn't say, "Madam, see if you can round up a church full of people for me to preach to. After all, I'm Jesus of Nazareth... I don't have time to mess with ones and twos." Jesus dealt with this woman as if she were the only living soul on earth. He wasn't in a hurry... he wasn't impatient... He didn't try to cram it down her throat. He took her seriously!

And God isn't keeping score of how many souls you are instrumental in saving. God is interested in whether you really care about that one person he sends across your path today.

2. Jesus offered her life.



"Lady you're a sinner and if you don't change your ways you're going to go to hell!"... none of that. She knew that already. Jesus said, "Ask me, and I'll give you living water." That's what we have for those fainting ones out there... living water to satisfy forever the thirst of their inmost hearts.

"If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

John 4:10

And people will come to that living water that flows from your heart and be brought to life. You're not going to be standing there holding an empty bucket. You go out there offering living water and God will give that living water...

God will make it flow.

People will come to you and say, "Give me this water," and God himself will answer their prayer by bringing them into living communion with Jesus himself.

3. Jesus manifested God's presence to this woman.

When Jesus is through talking to this lady, she knows more clearly than she ever knew before that God really does know everything about her... it's awesome! And she knows that God desires her worship. And that's exactly what will happen to the people we minister to in the name of Christ... they will suddenly realize that God does know them, and that God does want their worship.

Once there was this little old man who kept walking by us down on Woodward Ave. Every time he swears and says "Don't come around here with those fairy tales....there is no God!" But he keeps coming back. What that man's heart is saying is, "Please tell me that God does know me... please tell me that God does want me... please keep telling me these things until I know them once more."

4. Jesus so blessed this woman that she had to share it with others

Come see a man who told me all I ever did! Is not this the Christ?

John 4:29

When Jesus sends us out to harvest, He equips us to touch their lives in such a way that they will be unashamed to admit they have been touched by the Christ. If my drinking problem has suddenly ended ... if my depression has lifted... if that load of guilt has vanished from my mind... if that sickness has gone from my body... if that prison door in my circumstances has blown open, do you think I'm going to be ashamed to give Jesus the credit?

People will start giving God glory as they experience his grace through your ministry.

One more thing to remember: when Jesus sent the disciples out he made clear to them that they hadn't prepared those fields for harvesting. They hadn't planted any seed... they hadn't weeded and cultivated. This was all done by other people. The disciples were being sent to enter into the labors of others who had worked so hard, who had shed their blood to prepare that harvest.

***I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor.
Others have labored and you have entered into their labor.***

John 4:38

So it is with us. We aren't starting some new thing. How ridiculous for believers who are seeing some results to think that they've started something new. "*Come and see what we've got going here... we know how to do it!*"

What an insult to those whose labors prepared the soil long ago... what an affront to the Lord whose blood and Spirit alone make it possible. Others have labored and we have entered into their labors.

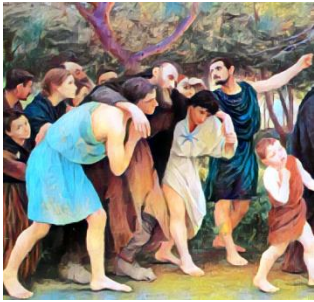
We have entered into the labor of our Lord himself who won the battle on the cross and is now sending us out with the news of his victory.

We have entered into the labors of countless brothers and sisters in Israel and in the church... little old ladies... eccentric men... solitary watchmen...forgotten servants of God who prayed and gave themselves to prepare the earth for this hour.

Yes, these sowers are with the Lord right now... they've been praying and waiting to see this day and they are rejoicing as we go out and minister to lives that they prepared long ago.

Soon, sowers and reapers will be rejoicing together, face to face before the throne.

Meanwhile, the harvest is there... it's ripe!... verily bending over in readiness.



God help us to interpret this hour.

God grant that it may be our meat and drink to do the will of Him who sent us and to accomplish His work.

God anoint us all with a double portion, yes, a measureless portion of His Spirit as we go out there and reap.

***He who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life,
so that the Sower and Reaper may rejoice together.***

John 4:36



Prayer: Holy Lord, we see the times we are in. We see the chaos, the twisted morals, the anger, the division, the coldness, the hardness of heart; We see nature out of control, and we see anger directed at the church. Lord, bring us out of our despair and our complaining and instead give us eyes to also see the harvest you have prepared. Help us to look beyond these things and to see the people, to really look at them and see they are ripe, they are ready to be filled with the Living Water you have sent us to give them. And yes, Lord anoint us with a double portion, a measureless portion of your Spirit for this task Give us the confidence and vision to know that you have tilled and sowed...prepared their hearts to be filled and to embrace hope and life instead of darkness. Help us to bring them the light and truth they so desperately need. Lead us to really care about them personally, to give them living water... true life, to bring them your very presence...your glory that frees them from bondage and makes their hearts sing with the joy of their release with their discovery of you the Living God. And yes, may we rejoice to be part of gathering this precious fruit...rejoice together with the Sowers and you the great Sower.. Amen.

Maranatha Mirror

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