

SBC – Aug. 8, 2021

Matt. 9:27-38 (NKJV)

*“Kingdom Miracles – Messianic Compassion”*

# 29

**Prayer:**

**Slide # 1**

**Theme:** *Christ the King*

**Outline:**

Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)

Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.

Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)

Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)

**Chps. 8-10 *The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)***

Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.

Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.

Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.

Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.

Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.

Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.

Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.

Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

Matthew presents Jesus as the Jewish Messiah who would be King. This Messiah would be a Deliverer and He would be a Ruler. He would be both divine and human in one person.

His Messianic credentials were kingdom miracles (also called signs) that were unique to Him in terms of scope and kind. They gave evidence that Jesus was indeed the promised Messianic King presenting the kingdom on the condition of national repentance and faith in Him.

Matthew 8-9 emphasize the AUTHORITY of Jesus as the Messiah. His authority over all sickness and disease, over the forces of nature, over demons, and over death all collectively serve to show Jesus is divine/human Messiah prophesied in the OT Scriptures.

There is no greater proof for the Bible than the Bible itself. It is a Spirit-inspired book. And the internal proof of this is great. It's wisdom, its beauty, its harmony, and how it all centers in the person of Christ is truly amazing.

Its not merely that Jesus did miracles, its how His whole life from every angle harmonizes perfectly with the totality of the prophetic Scriptures. The things that Jesus did fit perfectly with what the OT teaches concerning the coming kingdom and the prophesied Messiah.

We pick up our study today in Matt. 9:27...

### **Matthew 9:27(NKJV)**

**27 When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"**

In context Jesus had just raised a 12-year-old girl from the dead (evidently in Capernaum – cf. Mk. 5:22) and as He departed from there 2 blind men followed Him crying out, "***Son of David, have mercy on us!***"

Even though they were blind this showed some real spiritual insight. "Son of David" is a Messianic designation. God promised David that his throne would be established forever and thus the coming Messiah would be a descendant of David.

### **Slide # 2**

#### **2 Samuel 7:16 (NKJV)**

**16** And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. **Your throne shall be established forever.** ' ' "

#### **Isaiah 9:6–7 (NKJV)**

**6** For unto us a **Child is born [human]**, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, **Mighty God [Deity]**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**7** Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the **throne of David [David's descendant]** and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

**Slide # 3****Jeremiah 23:5–6 (NKJV)**

**5** “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will **raise to David [Davidic descendant]** a Branch of righteousness; **A King [Royalty]** shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

**6** In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS [**Deity**]

Not only does the OT present the coming Messiah as the “Son of David” but so also does the NT.

**Slide # 4****Romans 1:3–4 (NKJV)**

**3** concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was **born of the seed of David** according to the flesh [**humanity**],

**4** and declared to be the **Son of God [Deity]** with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

**Revelation 22:16 (NKJV)**

**16** “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the **Root [Deity]** and the **Offspring of David [humanity]**, the Bright and Morning Star.”

Because “Son of David” is a Messianic designation Matthew in the very first verse introduces this book by saying, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ , the Son of David...”. Jesus was a descendant of David by adoption through Joseph and by blood through Mary. From every angle He is through and through a descendant of David, but beyond that He is the most special descendant called THE SON OF DAVID. As we often like to say, He is the GREATER DAVID because He is actually a greater than David in that He not only David’s son but also his LORD – not only his offspring but the ROOT!

Since the genealogy of Jesus in Matt. 1:1 this is now the first mention of Jesus as the Son of David. This is the first recognition of Jesus as the Messianic Son of David in terms of His earthly ministry.

These blind men evidently knew that when the Messiah comes He would usher in the Messianic age which would be characterized as a time when the eyes of the blind would be opened.

**Slide # 5****Isaiah 29:18 (NKJV)**

**18** In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, **And the eyes of the blind shall see** out of obscurity and out of darkness.

**Isaiah 35:5 (NKJV)**

**5** Then **the eyes of the blind shall be opened**, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

**Isaiah 42:7 (NKJV)**

**7** **To open blind eyes**, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.

When John the Baptist began to question whether Jesus was really the Messiah, Jesus sent this message to him.

**Slide # 6****Matthew 11:4–5 (NKJV)**

**4** Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:

**5** **The blind see** 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.

You see these were Messianic credentials in keeping with the OT prophecies related to the coming King and His kingdom. These are miracles of the kingdom that only the coming Messianic king would bring about in the kingdom restoration.

This is why the writer to the early Church in Hebrews says this...

**Slide # 7****Hebrews 6:5 (NKJV)**

**5** and have **tasted** the good word of God and **the powers [miracles] of the age to come, [kingdom]**

The miracles that Jesus did were unique to Him because they were signs that He was the Messiah. Technically these miracles belong to the Kingdom Age of which Christ’s miracle was a foreshadowing. And there is only ONE Messiah. Only He did these kingdom signs on this level and scope.

To claim to do what Jesus did in terms of sign miracles is to claim to be able to do kingdom signs indicating you are the Messiah. That is heretical! Jesus did what only God can do – what only the God-Man can do – what only the Messiah can do.

These blind men called on Jesus as the Messiah (the Son of David) and they called on Him to have mercy on them. Note they didn't cry for justice but rather for mercy. This shows humility! They could have been bitter and jaded saying, "why did this happen to us, make it right". But no, they cried out for MERCY.

The idea of MERCY is to have compassion and sympathy toward those in misery. It is the idea of taking pity on someone and "can be characterized as compassionate treatment on those in distress." (*Gotquestions*). In the OT various words are used that are translated as "mercy". However, consistently it is the idea of caring for those in distress who are helpless to help themselves. Mercy cares and acts to relieve misery.

When the Son of David brings in the kingdom it will be a time of relief, a time of mercy, a time of healing, a time of restoration. That is what the kingdom is all about. And with this in mind these blind men called on Jesus for mercy!

**28 And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."**

Jesus waited until they were in the house to address them. It is thought this was probably Peter's house which was perhaps Christ's "home base" in His adopted hometown of Capernaum which became the ministry headquarters for His Galilean ministry (cf. Mt. 4:13; 9:1).

In the "privacy" of the house Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to this?" They in effect were calling Him Messiah in referring to Him as the Son of David. Again, the OT Scriptures inferred this is something the Messiah would be able to do in conjunction with the kingdom. In essence Jesus was asking them if they really believed He was the Messiah which would be evidenced in Him healing blindness.

As far as recorded miracles of healing – healing the blind is addressed more than any other specific miracle.

There is a physical reality, but it corresponds to a spiritual reality. Jesus is able to give sight – both physically and spiritually. But in asking this question Jesus was dealing with spiritual realities in terms of what they believed about Him. Their response was a “Lordship” response. They said, “Yes, Lord” which in this context related to “believing” would probably indicate they believed in His deity.

Lord is sometimes used as polite address in the sense of “sir” but when used in faith of the Lord it means MASTER – really the sense of GOD-MASTER. Lord has the idea of “one who has authority over”. They were recognizing that Jesus as Lord had authority over their blindness.

**29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.”**

Jesus did not always require faith to heal people. Certainly when He raised the dead those people had no faith. But in this case Jesus did base His healing on their faith saying, “***According to your faith let it be to you.***”

In terms of spiritual application people see in connection with their faith. Theologically we might ask: Do people see and believe, or do they believe and see? This is the age-old issue regarding the mystery tension between sovereignty and responsibility. Apart from God no one ever sees the truth on their own.

There is what I like to call “the light of conviction” for which people are accountable to respond. We see this early in the Bible in Genesis 4:7 as God reasons with Cain about the issue of sin which was lying at the door of his heart. We see it in Isa. 1:18 as God says, “Come now, let us reason together says the LORD, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow”.

### **Slide # 8**

#### **2 Peter 2:20–21 (NKJV)**

**20** For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world **through the knowledge** of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

**21** For it would have been better for them not to have **known** the way of righteousness, than having **known** it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

**Hebrews 10:26 (NKJV)**

**26** For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

People are accountable for the light that is given and ultimately by the grace of God those who come to believe do so because they have responded to the light of the gospel.

So do people believe to see, or do they see to believe? In a qualified sense both are true. We see what God shows us. As Romans 1:19 says, ***“what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.”*** God in conviction shines the light of truth, but if people reject it they remain in darkness and are accountable for their rejection.

**Slide # 9****John 3:18–19 (NKJV)**

**18** “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**19** And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Jesus asked the blind men if they believed and they said, ***“Yes, Lord”***. Jesus then touched their eyes saying, ***“According to your faith let it be to you.”***

A word about faith. In the Bible faith always has an object – namely the Lord Himself and His Word. Faith in faith is no faith at all. It doesn't matter what you believe if it is just random stuff it is attached to nothing and counts for nothing. When Jesus said, ***“Do you believe that I AM able...”*** the focus is on “I am able” – meaning Jesus is able. The whole issue surrounds WHO He is as the “Son of David” WHO He is as “Lord”. It was their faith in WHO Jesus is as the divine Messiah that was honored.

If they would have just believed they could be healed if they just had enough faith that would have missed the point. The issue was FAITH in Jesus for WHO He is. This is always the issue. Faith always has as its object God and His Word.

Faith in faith is empty faith. Faith must be in the Lord and in His Word!

**30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See that no one knows it.”**

Immediately their eyes were opened only to hear Jesus sternly warn them, “**See that no one knows it.**” This is a most interesting command. How could these formerly blind men keep their healing a secret? They couldn’t lie about it – not ethically.

There is a pattern in Christ’s ministry at this point. In chapter 8 He healed a leper and then said, “**See that you tell no one**” (Mt. 8:4). After Jesus raised the 12 year old girl from the dead as seen in Mt. 9:24 the parallel passage of Mark 5:43 says that Jesus, “**commanded them strictly that no one should know it**”. And now here upon healing these 2 blind men in the somewhat privacy of the house He sternly warned them, “**See that no one knows it.**”

Why this emphasis on don’t tell? There may be a couple of things in view here. Again, this is the first time the term “**Son of David**” is used in public reference to Jesus and at this time that was a Messianic term charged with political connotations. There was a lot of Messianic fever and the thought was the Messiah would politically take over and throw off the burden of Roman oppression. Recall in John 6 when the people so liked the free food that they were seeking by force to make Jesus their king and so He departed (cf. Jn. 6:15).

Jesus did not want the general populous to get the wrong idea about Him being the Messiah. Oh, He was the Messiah, but they needed to see Him for WHO He truly was and not according to their preconceived ideas about what they thought the Messiah should be or do. It seems Jesus did not want a wrongful Messianic enthusiasm to overwhelm His ministry.

The other thing is Jesus did not want the attention to be on the sensationalism of the miracle. People love the idea of miracles. They can kind of go miracle crazy – especially when real miracles are happening. But that is to miss the point. The miracles that Christ did were really all about pointing to Him. **He is the point of the miracles – not the miracles in and of themselves.**

We have an entire movement in Christianity that is absorbed with supposed miracles and healings – even though so much of it is based on falsehood. Imagine, the out-of-control enthusiasm if real miracles were happening? Now of course the miracles were wonderful – but again they were not an end in themselves – the intention is that they point to Christ. The attention is to be on Jesus and WHO He is – not merely on the miracles.



There is this weird phenomenon where people get more wrapped up in the gift than the giver. The focus must always be on the giver of the gift. The focus must always be on the LORD Himself. That is the point.

**31 But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.**

**But** is a contrast word. In contrast to what Jesus said they went out and spread the news about Jesus throughout the whole region. So much for obedience.

Some have tried to give them the benefit of the doubt saying perhaps they didn't really talk about the healing, only about their newfound belief that Jesus was the Messiah. But it is pretty hard to separate WHO He is from what He did – which was the point as we saw earlier. The plain sense would seem to be they disobeyed and went and told everyone – which probably made the mission of Christ all the harder as it only fed a wrongful Messianic fever that was misguided.

**32 As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed.**

As the healed blind men departed a man who was mute and demon-possessed was brought to Jesus. The word translated as mute (Gk. *kophos*) literally means “**dull**” and can refer to either dullness in speech or hearing. It can refer to being deaf and not able to speak at the same time (cf. Mt. 11:5).

The Bible makes a clear distinction between that which is just physical illness and demonically caused affliction. Sometimes its hard to know the difference. I see these people walking around making all kinds of contortions and spewing out all manner of nonsensical talk and I wonder if there is demonic activity involved or if this is strictly a mental or physiological problem. Often its hard to tell.

The world out here seeks a “natural explanation” for everything and refuses to recognize the reality of the supernatural. But in truth demons are real and demon possession is a real thing that affects people in different ways. The world has no clue and the best they can do is basically sedate these people.

So we must avoid both mistakes. Not every affliction is because of demonic activity, but on the other hand demonic affliction is a very real thing.

But the point of the text is that Jesus had AUTHORITY over every realm. Whether it was just plain sickness or demon possession Christ had the power to bring deliverance because of WHO He is as the divine/human Messiah!

**33 And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!”**

In contrast to other miracles where people were said to be “healed” here the demon was cast out. This was a “power encounter” and Jesus threw the demon out of the man’s life (literally). And then the mute man spoke. And we wonder: What did he say?

The multitudes marveled in awe saying, **“It was never seen like this in Israel!”** And in this they were right. No one in the history of Israel had ever done things like this before. Christ’s authority and power were without parallel. The scope and authority of Christ’s ministry was totally unique. How to account for it? Clearly it was supernatural. Clearly, He had the power to cast out demons.

The multitudes marveled...

**34 But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.”**

The Pharisees knew that biblically there are only two sources of spiritual power. There is the God-side of supernatural power and there is the dark side ruled over by Satan.

But a KEY point here is that Christ’s worst critics (the Pharisees) did not deny His power over demons. They couldn’t deny it so they came up with a diabolical explanation – namely they said He does it by the power of Satan the ruler of demons.

It is true that Satan is the ruler over the demons (cf. Mt. 10:25; 12:22-37). The Bible speaks of **“the devil and his angels”** (Mt. 24:41; Rev. 12:9). It is clear from passages like Eph. 6:12 that there is a whole hierarchy of demons that are organized under Satan. Satan is called **“the ruler this world”** (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11); and **“the god of this age”** (2 Cor. 4:4).

However, a careful study of the Bible reveals that while Satan also has supernatural power – the way it is used is completely different from that of God. Satan uses his power for destructive purposes -not beneficial or benevolent purposes. He binds people instead of freeing them.

**Slide # 10****Revelation 9:11 (NKJV)**

**11** And they had as king over them [**Satan**] the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon [**Destroyer**], but in Greek he has the name Apollyon [**Destroyer**].

Everywhere you look in Scripture Satan is a DESTROYER. He does not come to help people. He never has a benevolent ministry. In contrast Christ's ministry was GOOD and BENEVOLENT on a massive scale! It was completely contrary to the character of Satan.

**Slide # 11****Acts 10:38 (NKJV)**

**38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Christ went about doing good but in contrast the devil oppresses people. To claim that Christ's power to FREE people from demons was by the power of Satan is completely contrary to the nature and function of Satan.

Satan sometimes is allowed to do miracles, such as through the magicians in Pharaoh's court (cf. Ex. 7-9) or such as he will do through the Antichrist.

**Slide # 12****2 Thessalonians 2:9 (NKJV)**

**9** The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

Satan has power but it is consistently DECEPTIVE and not for the true GOOD of people. It isn't good and it doesn't align with truth (cf. 2 Cor. 11:13-15).

**Slide # 13****John 5:43 (NKJV)**

**43** I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

When Jesus says He came in His Father's name this means He comes in accordance with what the Bible reveals about the character and nature of God. He comes in accordance with what the God says in the OT. He came in perfect harmony with glorious wholesome kingdom standards presenting the truth that He is the King presenting the kingdom. Jesus' life and ministry aligned perfectly with God and His Word through and through.

In contrast the Antichrist (empowered by Satan) comes doing powerful things in a vacuum – just drawing attention to Himself. He is not fulfilling Messianic prophecy – just doing deceptive signs and wonders that are totally self-oriented. His life will not align with the character or the Word of God in terms of being the true Messiah.

Thus, ascribing Jesus' power over demons to the ruler of demons was completely and totally inconsistent with Scripture. They completely butchered and slandered the nature of Christ's ministry. And that too is consistent because the name devil means "slanderer" (cf. 1 Pet. 4:12-14; 5:8-9). And as Jesus said of the religious leaders in John 8:44, "**You are your father the devil...**".

#### **Slide # 14**

This verse should serve as a reminder that all the "proofs" offered cannot convince the wicked in his heart. The problem the unregenerate have in not accepting Christ is not so much a matter of not having proof of Jesus' power, authority, and truth but having a darkened heart that is unwilling to believe. – **Ed Glasscock**

As a matter of refuting the depraved insanity of the Pharisees' charge Matthew presents a summary of Christ's exceedingly GOOD, BENEVOLENT, and EXTENSIVE ministry in verse 35.

**35 Then Jesus went about all the cities [walled towns] and villages [unwalled communities], teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.**

The gospels record three Galilean tours in Jesus' earthly ministry (cf. Mt. 4:18-20; Matt. 8-11; Matt. 14). Matthew tends to write with a thematic purpose in view. It seems that Matt. 4:23 and Matthew 9:35 are "**bookends**" saying essentially the same thing as an overview.

#### **Slide # 15**

**Matthew 4:23 (NKJV)**

**23** And Jesus went about all Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing** all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

**Matthew 9:35 (NKJV)**

**35** Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing** every sickness and every disease among the people.

Sandwiched right in the middle of these two “bookends” is the “Sermon on the Mount” in chapters 5-7 which contains a collection of Christ’s kingdom ethics; which is then followed by a collection stories related to Christ’s authority to heal, etc. So, what we have is a 5 chapter unit (chps 5-9) which highlight first Christ’s kingdom teaching and then second typical examples of Christ’s healing ministry all of which serve to demonstrate that Jesus was the King presenting the truth and power of the kingdom.

**Slide # 16**

**Bookend:** Matt. 4:23 – teaching – preaching – healing

Matt. 5-7 – Kingdom ethics

Matt. 8-9- Kingdom authority on display

**Bookend:** Matt. 9:35 – teaching – preaching - healing

Thus, Matthew thematically in “block” fashion presents examples of Christ’s kingdom teaching ministry and His kingdom power showing clearly that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah Who has kingdom authority.

The word ***gospel*** means “***good news***”. Jesus came preaching the good news of the kingdom. He presented the same Messianic kingdom prophesied in the OT. He was the KING presenting the kingdom on the condition of repentance. He was the KING presenting samples of the kingdom restoration in His healing ministry which provided evidence that indeed He was the prophesied Messiah/King on the scene.

Alas, the leadership of Israel rejected this “***gospel of the kingdom***” put forth by Christ and the kingdom was put on hold, but the presentation of it was real.

And the ministry of Jesus was extensive – not merely a hit and miss claim here and there. It was so HUGE and convincing that even the Pharisees could not deny it. The Jewish historian Josephus said that in Galilee there were 200 cities that had at least 15,000 people living in them. If that assessment is true, it would mean that Galilee had a population of more than **3 million people** and that Jesus had an extensive ministry that touched a huge portion of this population. Jesus' Galilean ministry was wide, broad, and undeniable!

How ludicrous to think this was the work of Satan with all the GOOD that Jesus did far and wide. That whole view is insanely wicked! And in contrast to Satan Jesus actually cared about people! Satan comes to harm, kill, and destroy (cf. Jn. 10:10). Jesus came bringing healing and kingdom restoration. And Christ's ministry was in stark contrast to the religious leaders who did nothing but oppress the people with their hypocritical legalism (cf. Mt. 23:4; Lk. 11:46).

**36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.**

The idea of compassion is that of deep empathy that cares deeply. It with great emotion feels sympathy. He saw them as weary and scattered which is better translated as “distressed and downcast”. He saw them in spiritual misery.

### **Slide # 17**

**Weary** (Gk. Skullo) means “distressed, harassed, severely troubled”.

**Scattered** (Gk. Rhipto) means “downcast, thrown down utterly helpless”.

But the qualifier “***like sheep having no shepherd***” explains the root problem behind their miserable condition (cf. Num. 27:17). People need shepherding, they need spiritual care. “*Sheep are neither strong, nor smart, nor swift.*” (Phillips). They tend to go astray and get lost (cf. Isa. 53:6). “*Not possessing fangs, claws, or powerful muscles, they have no weapon for self-defense and need a shepherd for protection.*” (Glasscock)

These people, with their hypocritical, legalistic, proud, self-oriented, religious leaders had no real shepherding care and they were distressed and downcast because of it. In chapter 10:6 Jesus calls them “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Many commentators think Jesus may well have had Ezekiel 34 in mind as He said this.

### **Slide # 18**

#### **Ezekiel 34:1–6 (NKJV)**

**1** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

**2** “Son of man, **prophesy against the shepherds of Israel**, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who **feed themselves!** Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

**3** You eat the fat and clothe **yourselves** with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock.

**4** The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but **with force and cruelty you have ruled them.**

**5** So they were **scattered because there was no shepherd**; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.

**6** My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and **no one was seeking or searching for them.**”

So, what does God say He will do to remedy this situation?

### **Slide # 19**

#### **Ezekiel 34:11 (NKJV)**

**11** ‘For thus says the Lord GOD: “Indeed **I Myself** will search for My sheep and seek them out.

God in effect says He Himself will come in the person of the Messiah to provide the shepherding care that is needed. Indeed, Jesus came as the good shepherd Who laid down His life for the sheep (Jn. 10). In the Bible Jesus is called “the good shepherd” (Ps. 22; Jn. 10:11); “the great shepherd” (Ps. 23, Heb. 13:20); and “the chief shepherd” (Ps. 24, 1 Pet. 5:4). Christ’s shepherding ministry will come to a climax in the kingdom.

### **Slide # 20**

#### **Isaiah 40:11 (NKJV)**

**11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd**; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

**Micah 5:4 (NKJV)**

**4** And He shall stand and **feed His flock** In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth;

Jesus Himself is the ultimate shepherd Who ultimately will tend to His flock in the coming kingdom. But in the meantime God's program calls for using people to help Him in the work of bringing people to faith so they too can have a place in the kingdom. God could just supernaturally do any and everything without the help of anyone. And indeed, even though God uses human instruments to carry out His plan all the glory goes to God alone.

But the point is God wants to use people in the process of bringing in the harvest of souls. This is His plan and mode of operation. He uses people and He uses prayer! He uses people who pray.

**37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.**

Jesus here changes metaphors from that of "sheep" to that of "harvest". People are like sheep gone astray and they need to be brought in like a ripe harvest. Workers are needed. Indeed, Christ said, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

What is needed is not more harvest but more laborers. For to long we have said, "*The Church doors are open why don't the people come.*" Instead we should realize we have to go and make disciples as Christ commissions us at the end of the book (cf. Mt. 28:18-20). There is no end of work. The harvest is plenteous! I am evangelistically seeking to make disciples and so are many of you. There is no end to this work. The harvest is plentiful – what is needed is more workers.

They say that 90 percent of the work in the Church is done by 10 percent of the people. I would like to think that figure needs to be adjusted here at SBC, but it is true that a minority often do the majority of the work. And no one can do everything. We need more laborers and ministry is labor! It is work! It's easy to become a spectator – but God never intended Christianity to be a "spectator sport". And frankly there are a lot of "spectator Christians". How in the world do we expect to hear the Lord say, "well done" if it wasn't done? Become a worker in the harvest! We need you!



**Someone has defined** a football game as 22 men on the field desperately in need of **rest**, and thousands of people in the stands desperately in need of exercise!

Sadly, that often describes the condition of the Church. Consistently we have situations where the harvest of ministry is great, but we lack workers.

So what should we do about it? Grip, complain, develop a critical spirit? No, Jesus said...

**38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

Jesus told His disciples to PRAY to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. We need to pray about this! That is the first thing to do. Before doing anything pray about it.

Perhaps one of the difficulties in motivating people to the mission fields is our dependence on human inspiration rather than divine. Sincere prayer will be more effective than professional recruiting.

– ***Ed Glasscock***

Many OT texts present YHWH as the Master of the harvest at the end of the day (cf. Isa. 18:4-5; 27:12; Hos. 6:11; Joel 3:13; Matt. 3:12). The Lord of the harvest here I believe refers to Jesus. In the flow of thought chapter 10 goes on to show how Jesus sent out the 12 (cf. Mt. 10:1-6).

And note that often we ourselves become the answer to our prayer. Here in chapter 9 the disciples were told to pray about the needed laborers and then in chapter 10 they are sent out. Thus, they became the answer to their own prayers.

Perhaps we have too few laborers because we have too few prayers! Jesus connects the provision of laborers to the activity of prayer. God works through prayer! The harvest is plentiful! We just need more workers. And how do we get them? It happens through prayer!

"You can do more than pray  
after you have prayed, but you cannot do  
more than pray until you have prayed."

– ***John Wesley***