

WEEKLY REFLECTION

John Piper writes in his book, *Let the Nations Be Glad!*, that “Missions exists because worship doesn’t... When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions... The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God.”

Nowhere is this better exemplified in this week’s passage of Matthew 9:35-38, as Jesus Himself goes throughout the cities and villages to teach and proclaim the good news of God’s Kingdom. He does this because he is so moved by compassion for the crowds, seeing how harassed and helpless they are, like sheep without a shepherd (v. 36). Other translations note that the people are distressed and downcast (NASB) or confused and helpless (NLT)—nevertheless, Jesus’ compassion moves Him to respond in kindness.

As Jesus continued to preach, teach, and heal amongst the crowds, He noted that “the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” (9:37) He saw the spiritual and physical need of the peoples around Him, and what He saw moved Him to action. He knew there was a great need, and He could not do it alone. But He knew that as He prayed earnestly to the Father, He would move to send out laborers into His harvest. Jesus Himself commissioned the disciples to go as well (10:1-15).

The question for us then is not just what is mission, or how we can do mission, but will we do mission. The natural state of the human heart tends towards self-comfort and self-prioritization, to the point where we try not to see others’ sufferings or allow it to move us. But if our Savior, who emptied and humbled Himself to be amongst us (Phil. 2:3-11), was so moved by compassion for our need to pray and to go—then how much more should we?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

Share about a time when you felt brokenhearted, either from unrequited feelings, a betrayal of trust, an unfortunate situation, or something else entirely. How did you respond to what happened? How do you wish others had responded? Did you experience compassion and sympathy from God, or others in that situation?

QUESTION TWO:

Can you identify any people around you, or in our city of Hong Kong who might be harassed and helpless, or distressed and downcast? How much compassion do you think they might be receiving from those around them? Has the church been able to reflect Jesus to them? If not, how can we start?

QUESTION THREE:

Do you think the harvest is plentiful around the world today? Has the situation of workers changed? Why or why not?

Jesus' solution to the harvest that must be reaped is to (1) pray earnestly; and (2) to go. Can you think of two to three people that the Lord is putting on your heart today? How can you pray for and go towards them?