

(Matthew 9:35-38, NIV84)

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

There are any number of things we might occupy ourselves with as we are shut up in our homes. Perhaps getting at that home-organizing project we've been putting off for far too long. Maybe reading that book that we haven't had time to read up till now. You can fill in the blanks with whatever activities are at the top of your to-do list.

But how about praying? Spending quiet time alone affords us a perfect opportunity to pray. We might pray for those who are ill or struggling in this challenging time. We might pray for our nation, that this pandemic would quickly end and allow life to return to normal. We might pray for the success of God's word in the hearts and lives of people who previously have not known Jesus. You can fill in the blanks with whatever prayer-need the Lord impresses on your heart.

However, as you bring your requests to God, brace yourself. It just may be, in God's infinite wisdom, that His answer to your prayer is you!

In the above passage from Matthew 9, Jesus tells His disciples: "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Then in the very next verse we are told: "He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness" (Matthew 10:1). Jesus not only told His disciples what to pray for, but He also answered their prayers by commissioning them to go out and do the very work that they had prayed God to send workers to do. They were God's answer to their prayers!

When bringing our prayers to God, let's do so with the readiness and willingness to do the very things we ask Him to accomplish.

With you, tools in the hand of Christ,
Pastor Golm

May 7

Prayers Must Have Hands and Feet

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. Matthew 9:38

Go ye therefore and teach all nations. Matthew 28:19

A missionary preacher once said: "Prayer must have hands and feet." How true! We find this thought, implied in the two missionary imperatives quoted in the above texts: 'pray and "go"'.

On the one hand we are to pray to the Lord of the harvest that he will send laborers into his harvest-that is, send messengers out to proclaim his Gospel. And, on the other hand, we ourselves, who are his disciples, are to go-that is, we are to be active in harvesting the sheaves. Praying and going (being active) are essential parts in all missionary activity.

A noted churchman is said to have advised a friend: "Pray as if everything depended on God, and then work as if everything depended on you." That was good advice, not only for the man who received it but also for us. It is true, of course, that in the ultimate sense everything does depend on God; but it is also true that in a derived sense very much depends on us.

For instance, it will do no good for us to pray piously: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" and then to fold our hands in our lap and wait to see what happens. In a world of poverty and hunger, cruelty and injustice, we know what the will of our Lord is. Having prayed that his will be done, we are to do our very best to do it. As Martin Luther says, we are to be "little Christs", carrying out our Lord's will. In the words of the missionary preacher, we are to give hands and feet to our prayers. A well-known missionary hymn ends:

Raise up, O Lord, the Holy Ghost, From this broad land a mighty host,
Their war-cry: "We will seek the lost, Where Thou, O Christ, wilt come.

Are we Willing to be "raised up"? Willing to join the mighty host and go out to "seek the lost"? That would be giving hands and feet to our prayers. God grant it!