

# WITH CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Thoughts on Our Training for the Ministry of Intercession

BY REV. ANDREW MURRAY, the author

Lord, teach us to pray.

## “PRAYER PROVIDES LABORERS”

### NINTH LESSON—MARCH 8, 2015

*Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38)*

The Lord frequently taught His disciples *that* they must pray and *how* they should pray. But He seldom told them *what* to pray. This He left to their sense of need and the leading of the Spirit. But in the above Scripture He expressly directs them to remember one thing. In view of the abundant harvest, and the need for reapers, they must ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers.

Just as in the parable of the friend at midnight, He wants them to understand that prayer is not to be selfish—it is the power through which blessing can come to others. The Father is Lord of the harvest. When we pray for the Holy Spirit, we must pray for Him to prepare and send laborers for the work.

#### **IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ABOUT PRAYER:**

Why does He ask His disciples to pray for this? Could He not pray himself? Would not one prayer of His achieve more than a thousand of theirs? Is God, the Lord of the harvest, not aware of the need? Would He not, in His own good time, send laborers without the disciples' prayers?

Such important questions lead us into the deepest mysteries of prayer and its power in the kingdom of God. The answer to such questions will convince us that prayer is indeed a power on which the gathering of the harvest and the coming of the kingdom do in very truth depend.

#### **EVERYTHING JESUS SPOKE WAS THE TRUTH:**

The Lord Jesus was Himself the truth—everything He spoke was the truth. It was "When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mat. 9:36), that He called on the disciples to

pray for laborers to be sent to them. He did so because He really believed that their prayer was needed and would help.

The veil that hides the invisible world from us was wonderfully transparent to the human holy soul of Jesus. He had looked long and deep and far into the hidden connection of cause and effect in the spiritual world. He had noted in God's Word how God called men like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and Daniel, giving them authority over people in His name. God also gave these men the authority to call the powers of heaven to their aid as they needed them.

Jesus knew that the work of God had been entrusted to these men of old and to Him for a time here upon earth. Now it was about to pass over into the hands of His disciples. He knew that when they were given responsibility for this work, it would not be a mere matter of form or show. The success of the work would actually depend on them and their faithfulness.

### **JESUS AS A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL:**

As a single individual, within the limitations of a human body and a human life, Jesus feels how little a short visit can accomplish among these wandering sheep He sees around Him. He longs for help to have them properly cared for. He therefore tells His disciples to begin to pray.

When they have taken over the work from Him on earth, they are to make this one of their chief petitions in prayer—that the Lord of the harvest Himself would send laborers into His harvest. And since He entrusts them with continuing His work and makes it to a large extent dependent on them, He gives them authority to apply to Him for the laborers they will need and makes the supply dependent on their prayer.

### **NEED FOR LABORERS:**

How little Christians really feel and mourn the need for laborers in the fields of the world, so ripe for the harvest. How little they believe that our labor supply depends on prayer and that prayer will really provide "as many as he needs". The lack of laborers is known and discussed. Efforts are sometimes made to supply the need. But how little the burden of the sheep wandering without a Shepherd is really translated into faith that the Lord of the harvest *will* send forth the laborers in answer to prayer. Without this prayer, fields ready for reaping will be left to perish.

The Lord has surrendered His work to His Church. He has made himself dependent on them as His body, through whom His work

must be done. The power that the Lord gives His people to exercise in heaven and earth is real. *The number of laborers and the measure of the harvest does actually depend on their prayer.*

### **TWO REASONS WHY WE DO NOT OBEY THE MASTER:**

Why do we not obey the Master's instruction more heartily and cry more earnestly for laborers? There are two reasons.

One reason is that we do not have the compassion of Jesus that gave rise to this request for prayer. To live entirely for God's glory in their relationships with others believers must learn to love their neighbors as themselves. (Mark 12:31) The second commandment to God's redeemed ones is that they accept those who are perishing as the charge entrusted to them by their Lord. Accept them not only as a field of labor, but as the objects of loving care and interest. Do this, and soon compassion towards the hopelessly perishing will touch your heart, and your cry will ascend with a new sincerity.

The other reason for the neglect of the command is that we believe too little in the power of prayer to bring about definite results. We do not live close enough to God to be capable of the confidence that He will answer. We have not surrendered entirely to His service and kingdom. But our lack of faith will be overcome as we plead for help. Let us pray for a life in union with Christ, so that His compassion streams into us and His Spirit assures us that our prayer is heard.

### **DESIRE FOR AN INCREASE IN LABORERS:**

There will first be a desire for an increase in the number of those entirely given up to the service of God. That there are times when no one can be found for the service of the Master as ministers, missionaries, or teachers of God's Word is a terrible blot upon the Church of Christ. As God's children make this a matter of supplication in their own circles or churches, laborers will be given.

The Lord Jesus is now Lord of the harvest. He has been exalted to bestow the gifts of the Spirit. He wants to make gifts of people filled with the Spirit. But His supply and distribution of these gifts depend on the cooperation of the Church with Him. Prayer will lead to such cooperation and will stir those praying to believe that they will find the men and women who are needed- and the means necessary for the work.

The other blessing will be equally great. Every believer is a laborer. As God's children, we have been redeemed for service and have our work waiting. It must be our prayer that the Lord would fill all His people with the spirit of devotion, so that no one may be found

standing idle in the vineyard.

Wherever there is a complaint about the lack of fit helpers for God's work, prayer has the promise of a supply. God is always ready and able to provide. It may take time and import unity, but Christ's command to ask the Lord of the harvest is the pledge that the prayer will be heard. "I say to you,...he will rise and give him as many as he needs." (Luke 11:8)

### **POWER TO SECURE LABORERS:**

This power to provide for the needs of the world and secure the servants for God's work has been given to us in prayer. The Lord of the harvest will hear. Christ who taught us to pray this way will support the prayers offered in His Name and interest. Let us set apart time and give all of ourselves to this part of our intercessory work.

Doing such will lead us into the fellowship of that compassionate heart of His that led Him to call for our prayers. It will give us the insight of our royal position as children of the King, whose will counts for something with the great God in the advancement of His kingdom. We will feel that we really are God's co-workers on earth, that we have earnestly been entrusted with a share in His work. We will become partakers in the work of the soul. But we will also share in the satisfaction of the soul as we learn how, in answer to prayer, blessing has been given that otherwise would not have come.

### ***LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY:***

***Blessed Lord! Once again You have given us another wondrous lesson to learn. We humbly ask that You let us see these spiritual realities. There is a large harvest that is perishing as it waits for sleepy disciples to give the signal for laborers to come. Lord, teach us to view it with a heart full of compassion and pity. There are so few laborers, Lord.***

***Show us what terrible sin the lack of prayer and faith is, considering there is a Lord of the harvest so able and ready to send them forth. Show us how God does indeed wait for the prayer to which He has promised an answer. We are the disciples to whom the commission to pray has been given.***

***Lord, show us how You can breathe your Spirit into us, so that Your compassion and the faith in Your promise will rouse us to unceasing, prevailing, prayer.***

***O Lord! We cannot understand how You can entrust such work and***

*give such power to disciples so slothful and unfaithful. We thank You for all those whom You are teaching day and night to cry for laborers to be sent.*

*Lord, breathe your Spirit into all Your children. Let them learn to live only for the kingdom and glory of their Lord and become fully awake to the faith in what their prayer can accomplish. Fill our hearts with the assurance that prayer offered in living faith in the living God will bring certain and abundant answer. Amen.*

**HOMEWORK:**

- 1) The Lord frequently (often) taught His disciples
  - ☞ \_\_\_\_\_ they MUST pray and
  - ☞ \_\_\_\_\_ they SHOULD pray. But He seldom (rare, not often) told them
  - ☞ \_\_\_\_\_ to pray.
- 2) Jesus left [what to pray] to their [disciples'] \_\_\_\_\_ of need and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Jesus expressly directs you to remember one thing. Name one thing you remember what?
  
- 4) The story from last week about a friend who knocked the door for the loaves of breads: that PRAYER is not to be selfish—PRAYER is the \_\_\_\_\_ through which blessing can come to others.
- 5) Who is the Lord of harvest? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) When you pray for the Holy Spirit, you MUST pray for Him to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ laborers for the work.

**IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ABOUT PRAYER:**

- 7) Such important questions lead us into the deepest mysteries of prayer and its power in the kingdom of God:
  - ☞ Why does Jesus asks His disciples to pray for this?
  - ☞ Could Jess not pray for Himself?
  - ☞ Would not one prayer of His achieve more than a thousand of theirs?

- ☞ Is God, the Lord of the harvest, not aware of the need?
- ☞ Would He not, in His own good time, send laborers without the disciples' prayers?
- ✓ The ANSWER to such questions will \_\_\_\_\_ us that prayer is INDEED [truly] a \_\_\_\_\_ on which the gathering of the harvest and the coming of the Kingdom do in the very truth depend.

**EVERYTHING JESUS SPOKE WAS THE TRUTH:**

- 8) T F: Jesus Christ Himself is the truth?
- 9) T F: Everything Jesus spoke was the truth?
- 10) Jesus called on the disciples to pray for laborers to be \_\_\_\_\_ to them [lost souls]. Jesus did so because He REALLY BELIEVED that their prayer was \_\_\_\_\_ and would \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11) Who was this 'the veil that hides from the invisible world from us was wonderful transparent to the human body'?
- 12) T F: Jesus had looked long and deep and far into the hidden connection of cause and effect in the earthy world.
- 13) Jesus knew that when they [the disciples] were given responsibility fro this work, it would not be a mere [absolute] matter of form or show. The success of work would actually depend on them and their \_\_\_\_\_.

**JESUS AS A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL:**




- 14) When the disciples have taken over the work from Jesus Christ on earth, what is the disciples' one of top petition in prayer?

**NEED FOR LABORERS:**

- 15) What does this "How little Christians really feel and mourn the need for laborers in the fields of the world, so ripe for harvest" means to you? Discuss with group.
- 16) Without your prayer, fields [deaf people] ready for reaping will be left to perish in where? \_\_\_\_\_

- 17) YES NO NOT SURE: Is your Lord surrender His work to your church?
- 18) YES NO NOT SURE: Is He Himself depends on you as His body through whom His work must be done?
- 19) T F: The power that the Lord gives His people to exercise in heaven and earth is unreal.
- 20) What does this 'the number of laborers and the measure of the harvest does actually depend on their prayer' means to you? Discuss with group:

**TWO REASONS WHY WE DO NOT OBEY THE MASTER:**

- 21) ONE REASON: we, the deaf church, do not have the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus that gave rise to this request for prayer.
-  You, believer, learn to love who? \_\_\_\_\_
-  You accept them as the objects of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
-  Do this, and soon compassion towards the hopelessly perishing will touch your heart, and you cry will ascend with a new sincerity.
- 22) SECOND REASON: for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the command is that we believe too little in the power of prayer to bring about definite results.
- 23) YES NO NOT SURE: If your church people continue to pray for the deaf lost souls and more results are more deaf lost souls became saved because of your constantly praying for them.
- 24) YES NO NOT SURE: If your church people do not pray for the deaf lost souls, will many deaf lost souls became saved?

**DESIRE FOR AN INCREASE IN LABORERS:**

- 25) The Lord Jesus is now Lord of the harvest. Jesus wants to make gifts of people filled with the Spirit. But His supply and distribution of these gifts depend on the cooperation of the Church with Him. \_\_\_\_\_ will lead to such cooperation and will stir those praying to believe that they will find the men and women who are needed—and the means necessary for work.
- 26) YES NO NOT SURE: Are you a laborer for the Lord?

27) If yes, it means you entirely \_\_\_\_\_ to the service of God.

28) If you complaint about the lack of fit helpers at your church, your prayer has the promise of a \_\_\_\_\_.

**POWER TO SECURE LABORERS:**

29) This power to provide for the needs of deaf community here in Portland and secures the servants for God's work has been given to us in what? \_\_\_\_\_

30) Let us set apart time and give all of ourselves to this part of our \_\_\_\_\_.

31) YES NO NOT SURE: You as a child of King feel that you really are God's co-worker here in your church here to reach out to the deaf community?

32) YES NO NOT SURE: Do you believe that your church really needs your help?

33) YES NO NOT SURE: Are you willing to lay aside your leisure time and give yourself to the part of the intercessory work for your church?

Joel 2:17 says, "Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, "SPARE YOUR PEOPLE, O Lord, and give not Your heritage to the reproach, that the nations should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, 'Where is your God?"

Luke 19:41 says, "And when Jesus was come near Jerusalem, He looked at the city, and wept over it."