



Sunday, October 21, 2018

Dr. Ron Cline

Intro to Matthew 9:35-38

There are two things that any preacher can preach on that will convict the congregation: prayer and evangelism. These are two things that we all know we need to be disciplined in as Christians, but for a host of reasons, we struggle with them. As Dr. Cline noted, often it is the fear of man that prevents us from being disciplined in evangelism. We want to share Christ with people, we want to tell people that God loves them, but inevitably our fear of rejection or humiliation or some other response prevents us. What can we do?

One big thing is, as Dr. Cline said, to remember that the harvest is indeed plentiful. People are professing faith in Christ all the time just in the U.S., and we are one of the countries where Christianity is growing much slower than other places! Remembering that God answers our prayers for conversions and that He is already at work in people's hearts is one key way. Another is to remember that we are not ultimately responsible for someone's conversion. Our job is to be faithful to announce the gospel—to make it known to others. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict them of their sin and to bring them to genuine faith and repentance. So, by God's grace, may we become more disciplined in evangelism!

Context

Matthew 9 serves as a book-end of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. In Matthew 4:23, we read that Jesus began His ministry of teaching, preaching and healing in Galilee. His teaching is summarized in the monumental Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7). His healing ministry is summarized in various episodes around Galilee (chapters 8-9). The section concludes with the same summary statement in 9:35. Immediately following this call to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send out workers, Jesus will send out His own 12 disciples to join Him in His ministry in Galilee (10:5).

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Matthew 9:35-38

“The Harvest Is Here”

Key Ideas

- 1) God is doing amazing things all over the world...just ask a missionary!
- 2) Good news! The harvest is plentiful in China. There are already 180 million Christians—the largest evangelical population in the world.
- 3) Many Iranian churches are led by Chinese missionaries.
- 4) Good news! The harvest is plentiful in India. There are 1.3 billion people there and they are eager to hear the gospel.
- 5) God brought 800,000 Rohingya refugees out of a closed country into Bangladesh where Christian NGOs can share the gospel.
- 6) Good news! The harvest is plentiful in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world. Over 2 million people registered their I.D. cards as “Christian.”
- 7) You’re a worker (Matt. 9:37). You know Jesus. Who have you told?
- 8) You’re equipped with knowledge of the Bible. Are you reading? What are you doing with it?
- 9) You can offer hope, peace, and life! If you know you have access to God in prayer, are you praying for those who don’t?
- 10) It’s time to get off the bench and into the game!

Discuss

- 1) What was the most impactful part of the mission conference? Did you get to connect with any of the missionaries? What did you learn?
- 2) Why is it so difficult for us to be disciplined in evangelism?
- 3) Who is one person you interact with on a regular basis who is not a Christian? How would you characterize your relationship with that person? (If you can't think of someone, what might you do to build a relationship with a non-Christian?)
- 4) Are you disciplined in praying that that person would come to genuine faith in Jesus? If so, how have you cultivated that discipline? If not, where do you think you could get started? How can we keep each other accountable?
- 5) How do you plan to introduce the gospel to them? Is there a natural way to bring it up in conversation? Or perhaps you could invite them to the "Lansing Talks" event at the church on November 3 with Mark and Ginger Whitacre and talk with them afterward?