



# ***Preparing for the Harvest***

**By**

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# Introduction

These are notes from a brief series we taught at our church in 2012. The focus of our study was to emphasize the importance of putting heart, head, hands and feet into the harvest that our Lord has called us to work.

The way we presented the series to our church was as a three-week special study for large group, followed by special study for small group.

We have included the notes from both the large and small group studies during the series.

We invite you to use these study notes with your local church or study group. The objective is to fulfill Christ's call for more laborers for the harvest.

In Christ's Love and Grace,

Mark McGee

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# Heart for the Harvest

This is what Jesus taught His disciples about preparing for the spiritual harvest of souls. What is He teaching us?

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” Matthew 9:36-38

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.’” Luke 10:1-3

“Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.’” John 4:34-36

“But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.’” Matthew 13:29-30

“And He said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’” Mark 4:26-29

# Head for the Harvest

Jesus Christ is Lord of His Harvest and Head of His Church. Our Mission, if we choose to accept it, is to **labor** in His Harvest and **teach** people to do what He says, **feel** what He feels, **think** what He thinks, and **believe** what He believes.

The process of making disciples is **pointing** newborn children in the **direction** of **spiritually healthy growth** – which is in the **direction of Jesus Christ**.

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.” Romans 8:5-6

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Corinthians 1:10

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. For ‘who has known the mind

of the LORD that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 2:14-16

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” Romans 12:2-3

# Hands and Feet for the Harvest

Jesus Christ is Lord of His Harvest, Head of His Church, and Shepherd of His sheep. Our Mission is to **labor** in His Harvest, **obey** His every Word, and **teach** believers how to serve Christ with their **heart, head, hands, and feet.**

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*” Romans 12:1

“And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’” 2 Corinthians 6:15-17

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.* For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he

who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.” 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.” Romans 13:12-14

“Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.” Ephesians 4:28

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” Galatians 5:16-17

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

“So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.” Romans 12:10-13

“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.” Hebrews 12:12-13

“But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more [in brotherly love]; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.” 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.” 1 Timothy 2:8-10

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who

bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:14-15 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” Philippians 4:6-8

# Study Group Reading - Week One

We have spent more than two years studying and sharing about Christian Discipleship. Our emphasis this year is *Making Disciples*. As we prepare our hearts and lives for this amazing mission, let's remind ourselves what it means to "follow" Jesus Christ from the Gospel of Matthew.

## Matthew 4

"Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him."

## Matthew 8

"And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, 'Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head.' Then another of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.'

## Matthew 10

"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to

death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.”

“A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master.”

“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies *will be* those of his *own* household.’ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”

## **Matthew 16**

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.’”

## Matthew 19

“The young man said to Him, ‘All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.”

Write four things about discipleship you see in these verses and how it applies to people today. We’ll share our findings Sunday morning when we meet in the Worship Center at 9:30am.

1.

2.

3.

4.

## Study Group Reading - Week Two

As we share in God's Heart for the unsaved and pray to the Lord of the Harvest, He will give us a harvest of souls. These people will be precious "new creations in Christ" and God wants us to love them, shepherd them and lead them to become faithful followers of Christ. One of the first things they will need to understand about their new relationship to Christ is how He desires to change their thinking about everything.

### Ephesians 1

"And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

### Colossians 1

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

## Ephesians 4

“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

## Colossians 2

“Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.”

## Romans 8

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the

things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.”

## **Romans 12**

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

“Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.”

## **Romans 15**

“Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## **Colossians 3**

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

## Philippians 2

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.”

## 2 Timothy 1

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

## 1 Peter 1

“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

**List four things these Scriptures teach us about Christ and how our relationship with Him should affect our thinking.**

1.

2.

3.

4.

## Study Group Reading - Week Three

We have a new “heart” and new “mind” in Christ. As we share in how Christ feels and thinks about His Harvest, we will also want to follow His lead in how we “handle” His Harvest. Jesus taught and demonstrated to His followers that making disciples is hands-on and very personal. They “caught” the importance of that style of ministry and modeled it for others.

### Mark 1

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.”

### Mark 8

“Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, ‘I see men like trees, walking.’ Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.”

### Mark 10

“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’

And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.”

### Acts 3

“Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.”

### Acts 5

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.”

### Acts 8

“Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

### Acts 13

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.”

## Acts 20

“Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

## 1 Corinthians 4

“For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We *are* fools for Christ’s sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.”

## James 4

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your*

joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

**List four things these Scriptures teach us about how our relationship with Christ should affect how we use our hands in ministry to others.**

1.

2.

3.

4.

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