

## 2009-2010 WORLD MISSIONS SERMON OUTLINE

### A HEART FOR THE HARVEST

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#### TEXT

*To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do this for the sake of the gospel that I might share in its blessings (1 Corinthians 9:22-23).*

*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 (John 4:35, NKJV)!*

#### INTRODUCTION

Serving in Nebraska District Women's Ministries back in the 80s helped me get acquainted with the work of wheat harvest. Also at that time, my husband rented a section of land and hired someone to farm it. So I learned about the critical and urgent circumstances surrounding harvest. I saw the love the landowner had for his field. I saw the concern the harvesters had for the weather, the field and the equipment they used. And most of all, I saw the intensity expressed by all that not one grain of wheat be lost. All these things reminded me that the Holy Spirit uses the allegory of grain harvest to illustrate His plan for reaching the world for Christ.

All four Gospels speak of the harvest: Matthew 9:37-38; Mark 4:26-29; Luke 10:2; and John 4:35-38.

The farmer's translation of John 3:16 would read, "God so loved His field that He invested everything, even suffered all the indignities of the field, because of the anticipated joy ahead; the joy of a bountiful harvest."

Throughout the writings of the apostle Paul, we see that he had a heart for the evangelization of the world. He was not deluded into thinking that all would come to know Christ as a result of his witness, but he was determined that everyone would have an opportunity to know Christ. 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that the Lord was not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Paul was ready to do whatever it took to touch the lives of those with whom he came into contact. According to 1 Corinthians 9:22-23 (The Message), Paul entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view in an attempt to lead those he met into a God-saved life. He didn't want to just talk about it, but wanted to be in on it.

Paul had a heart of love for the Lord of the harvest. He had a heart of concern for the laborers in the harvest, and he had a heart of compassion for the lost to be included in the harvest.

- I. Paul had a heart of love for the Lord of the harvest.
  - A. *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God (1 Corinthians 1:1).*
    1. He preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified, 1 Corinthians 2:1-2.
    2. He preached without remuneration, 1 Corinthians 9:12.
    3. He preached out of necessity for the special reward of exercising good stewardship, 1 Corinthians 9:16-17.
  - B. *Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1, NKJV).*
    1. Though he was an apostle, he made every effort to keep from hindering the work of Christ, I Corinthians 9:1.
    2. Though he was an apostle, he did not hesitate to take the stance of a servant, I Corinthians 9:19.
- II. Paul had a heart of concern for the laborers in the harvest.
  - A. He knew that a great harvest called for great laborers, Luke 10:2.
    1. His concern for his own ministry compelled him to live by the fruit of his own labor, although he knew that the Law entitled him to remuneration for his work. 1 Corinthians 9:1-6.
    2. His concern for spiritual leadership prompted him to be a good example of living righteously before God and man, 1 Corinthians 9:25-27.
    3. His concerns kept him on track to always seek the well-being of others, 1 Corinthians 10:23-24.
  - B. He wanted to identify with the laborers as being one of them, 1 Corinthians 9:23.
    1. He was running in the race, 1 Corinthians 9:24.
    2. He was determined to be well qualified, 1 Corinthians 9:27.
- III. Paul had a heart of compassion for the lost to be included in the harvest.
  - A. He expressed sorrow and compassion for the lost, Romans 9:2-3.
    1. Winning others was the seal of his apostleship, 1 Corinthians 9:1-2.

2. Reaching the lost was God's mandate he could not refuse,  
1 Corinthians 9:16.
  3. Becoming all things to all men was his avenue of sacrifice for the  
good of immortal souls, I Corinthians 9:22.
- B. He did not seek his own profit, but that of others to be saved,  
1 Corinthians 10:33.
1. He became a Jew to win the Jews, and a Gentile to win the Gentiles,  
1 Corinthians 9:20-21.
  2. He became weak to win the weak, 1 Corinthians 9:22.

#### CONCLUSION

Paul did not want his motives to be misunderstood. His was a heart for the harvest. Paul actually made himself a slave of all men to win some to Christ.

When Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:22, "I have become all things to all men," he did not mean what it might mean in our culture; i.e., "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Paul was not speaking of any weak compliance with wrong actions and immoral practices. To avoid offending other people, he felt that as a preacher of the gospel, it might be wise to refrain from various things which, in themselves, might be innocent.

He had the qualities expected of a present-day harvester. He was obedient and committed to the task. He was responsible to the One over him. He knew his equipment, his crew and the challenges ahead. He was a person of integrity and accountability — innovative, creative and a team worker.

Paul had a heart of love for the Lord of the harvest. He had a heart of concern for the laborers in the harvest. He had a heart of compassion for the lost to be included in the harvest. He believed in the ministry to which he was called and fulfilled that ministry in every way possible for the glory of God.

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