

Introduction:

- The church has been given a clear mission to make disciples. If we are going to accomplish that mission, it must be fueled by intentional, evangelistic prayer – much like we find in Matthew 9:35-38.

3 Characteristics of Our Great Commission Prayer:

Point #1: Pray with the proper motivation (v. 36)

- Although the scribes and Pharisees were supposed to be the spiritual shepherds of the people, they were uncaring and unloving and burdened the people with rules they could not keep. Indeed, they were sheep without a shepherd, and Jesus recognized that fact.
- Just like Jesus had compassion for those around Him, that same compassion is what will compel us to pray and boldly proclaim the gospel today.
 - However, we will only have compassion for the lost when we see them the way Jesus sees them, as blind to their true spiritual condition (2 Cor. 4:4)
- Application:
 - We must pray with the proper motivation of compassion for the lost.

Point #2: Pray with the proper understanding of the needs (vv. 35, 37)

- V. 35 serves as a summary of Jesus' ministry. Notice that at this point, Jesus has been the only one involved in the ministry. His disciples have only been spectators thus far.
- Although Jesus was fully divine, He was also fully human. As a man, He could only be in one place at a time, and He could not physically meet all the needs by Himself.
- This reality is what led to His observation in v. 37 that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. In fact, up until this moment, there was only a single laborer.
- After 2,000 years, things haven't changed much.
 - The harvest is *still* plentiful, and the workers are *still* few.
 - (*Note: look up lostness statistics for your county to share with your congregation*)
- Application:
 - When God gives us a deep love and compassion for the lost, and when we understand how great the need is for more workers, we must fall on our knees and cry out to the Lord.

Point #3: Pray with the proper goal (v. 38)

- The goal is more workers sent into the harvest fields so that more people can become disciples of Jesus Christ.
- The word translated as "pray" basically means to beg the Lord to drive out more workers into the harvest.
- Application:
 - Today, would you pray for the Lord to send out more workers into the harvest?
 - And would you also consider that you might be one of those workers?
 - Notice that the people that Jesus commanded to pray in Matthew 9 are the very same people that He sent out in Matthew 10. Perhaps you're the answer to your own prayer!
 - If God is calling you to serve Him in vocational ministry, will you respond today?