

The Laborer Are Few

Text : Matthew 9: 35-38 , Mark 4: 26-29

INTRODUCTION :

A. This is Labor Day weekend.

1. A holiday to celebrate the accomplishments of organized labor. (*Sept. 1894*)
2. The holiday was raced through congress in only 6 days hoping to quell labor unrest.

B. Labor Day is different than any other American holiday.

1. It is not a religious Holiday like Christmas or Easter.
2. It is not connected with a war like Veterans Day.
3. It does not commemorate a great event like Independence Day. (**July 4**)
4. It is not in honor of any man like President's Day.

C. It started as a political holiday and remains political.

1. It had its roots in a labor dispute that started in Pullman, Illinois.
 - a. In 1893 the Pullman Palace Car Company fell on hard times.
 - b. Fearing bankruptcy, they cut the salaries of their workers.
 - c. A wildcat strike ensued.
2. Other unions began to take actions in support of the Pullman workers.
 - a. They refused to switch Pullman cars.
 - b. Fundamentally all rail traffic in the west was disrupted.
 - c. It became the first nationwide labor problem.
3. When the delivery of the mail was interrupted, Pres. Cleveland sent in the military.
 - a. The union strikers would not give up without a fight.
 - b. 13 men were killed and 57 were wounded.
 - c. Hard feelings continued after resolution, so a labor holiday was quickly approved.

D. While we are celebrating the accomplishment of labor in America, only 45 % of American workers are satisfied with their jobs.

1. 64% of workers would like to change jobs.
2. They sing the Disney song ... I owe, I owe, It's off to work I go, I owe, I owe
3. **Sadly**, many Christians let their attitude toward serving their employer spill over into their attitude toward serving God.

With this lesson we want to see that :

- **Man was created to work.**
- **Christians are created to work.**
- **When one faithfully serves, he is not responsible for the results.**

I. Man was created to work.

A. The first couple was put in the garden to work there. (*Man was created for earth.*)

1. **Gen. 2:5-** Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate (*to till, to work, to serve*) the ground.
2. **Gen. 2:15-** Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.
3. From the beginning of time, it was God's plan for man to work.

B. Misconception : work is punishment ... Work was not the curse for sin.

1. **Gen. 3:17-19** Then to Adam He (*God*) said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. **18** Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; **19** By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."
2. The curse was to make Man's work more difficult.
 - a. He was already required to work to earn his living.
 - b. The curse was on the ground ... Favorable conditions were removed.
3. When Cain sinned, the ground was again cursed, but just for him. (**Gen. 4: 11-12**)

C. Thus, seeking to avoid work is rebellion against God's will for mankind.

1. Industriousness is a Godly characteristic.
 - a. **Prov. 12: 27-** *A lazy man does not roast his prey,
But the precious possession of a man is diligence.*
 - b. **Eccl. 9: 10-** *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might;
for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.*

2. One's attitude toward work affects his relationship with God.
 - a. **Phil. 2: 14-15** Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,
 - b. The Christian is contrasted with other people in the work place. (*Light - vs- Dark*)
3. Whatever a Christian does for his employer, he does for God.
 - a. **Col. 3: 22-25** Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.
 - b. God will hold us accountable for how we performed for our employers.

Note : *Retirement is cultural, not biblical. Heaven is the Christian's retirement.*

II. Christians are called from the world to do a specific task for God.

A. Every person on earth is a servant ... of God or of Satan.

1. We are created beings placed on the earth by God to serve Him as stewards.
2. When one becomes a Christian he returns his loyalty to serving his creator.

Rom. 6: 16-18 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

B. Those who are "called" to perform service to their new Master.

1. **I Pet. 2: 9-** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
 - a. Chosen race ... to proclaim
 - b. Made priest ... to proclaim
 - c. Made holy ... to proclaim
 - d. Possessed by God ... to proclaim

Those who do not proclaim rebel.

2. **II Cor. 5: 17-20** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! **18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19** namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. **20** We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

- a. As soon as one is reconciled to God, God gives him a ministry.
- b. Ambassador assigned to restore God's relationship with man.
- c. The scope of our ambassadorship is "**the world.**"

3. **Matt. 28: 18-20** And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Compare : **Luke 6: 46**)

- a. Jesus giving the command to proclaim Him is based upon His authority as God.
- b. To fail to proclaim Him is to deny His authority ... to reject His Lordship.

C. The very reason we exist as a Christian is to serve the one who saved us.

1. One does not serve God in order to be saved.

Eph. 2: 8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;
9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

2. HOWEVER , when God created us anew in Christ. (**born again**)
He did it so we would actively do things that HE wanted done.

Eph. 2: 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- a. God prepared the works and afterwards created Christians to do them.
- b. The gospel plan of salvation was prepared before the foundation of the world.
- c. Compare : **Matt. 25: 34** , **Eph. 1: 4** , **I Pet. 1: 20** , **Acts 2: 23**

D. The important point is that we are all called to be ministers ... servants of Christ.

- 1. The system which distinguishes between clergy and laity is NOT a biblical concept.
- 2. Every Christian is a servant of the same God working within the same body.
- 3. The body is only strong when EVERY member is function properly. (**Eph. 4: 16**)

III. Christians are not responsible for the hearer's response , just the proclamation.**A. Remember the parable of the soils which are hearts / Sower. (Luke 8: 4-15)**

1. Briefly Summarize
2. God provided the seed.
3. The sower was responsible to broadcast the seed. (*NOT place on selected*)

B. The gospel has power to melt the hardest of hearts.

1. Even in this earthly realm, seeds often grow in unlikely places.
 - a. Trees often grow out of the face of a stone cliff.
 - b. A small seed can send roots into a cement foundation and break it.
 - c. Likewise, the blood of Christ can soften to most harden of hearts.
2. How it works is a mystery to us.
 - a. **Mark 4: 26-29** And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; **27** and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. **28** The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. **29** But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

C. Whether accepted or rejected, the word of the Lord accomplishes HIS purpose.

1. **Isa. 55: 11-** So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.
2. All who hear are given an opportunity to receive it and be saved.
 - a. There will always be more who will reject it than those who accept it. (*choice*)
 - b. In the parable of the sower ... only 1 of 4 produced fruit.
 - c. **Matt. 7: 14-** For the gate is small and the way is narrow ... there are few who find it.

D. Once the seed is sown, it is God who gives the increase. (Noah preached 100 yrs.)

1. **I Cor. 3: 6-8** I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. **7** So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. **8** Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
2. The reward goes to those who faithfully plant and to those who water.

CONCLUSION :

A. By nature, it is the tendency for the thoughts of people to be drawn into an ever-tightening circle centered around his own life. (*earthbound thinking*)

1. What is the center of your life ?

a. How often do you meditate on Heaven ?

b. How often do you meditate on Heaven for other ? (*consequences of missing*)

2. We think about :

a. Job issues ... and money.

b. Family issues ... and money.

c. Health issues ... and money.

d. Church issues ... and money.

*** *And did I mention MONEY.***

B. Being so pre-occupied with earthly thoughts,

1. We give little attention to meditating on Heaven for ourselves.

2. And, we give even less attention to thinking about Heaven for others.

3. Sadly ... we seldom have even a passing thought about the alternative ... Hell.

C. While the people of the world are celebrating the fruit of their collective bargaining, let us celebrate what we have accomplished for Christ.

1. **I Cor. 15: 58** - Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

2. **Gal. 6: 7-9** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. **8** For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. **9** Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

3. **Col. 3: 23-24** Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, **24** since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

4. The last chapter in the bible :

Rev. 22: 12- Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

*** He'll reward that cup of cold water you gave. Matt. 10: 42 *Imagine for souls.***

Lesson Text :**Matthew 9: 35-38**

35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. **36** Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. **37** Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. **38** Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Mark 4: 26-29

26 And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; **27** and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. **28** The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. **29** But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Colossians 3: 22-25

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. **23** Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. **25** For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.