TITLE: Fulfilling our Calling

TEXT: 1st Jn. 5:11-13; Mt. 9:37-38; Mk. 16:15;

Mt. 28:18-20; Lk. 15:3-10; 1st Co. 9:19-23

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about fulfilling our calling. a universal truth that we find in the world that we live in today and something that is the central truth that we find in Scripture. That universal truth of the world in which we live and the central truth of Scripture is that “People need the Lord..

 Just as we need air to breathe, food to eat and water to drink to sustain life, we need the Lord Jesus Christ--or we need to make Jesus Christ our Lord.

**1Joh 5:11 (NIV) And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.**

**12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

**13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.**

Just as we need air to breathe, food to eat and water to drink to sustain and maintain life in the physical we need Jesus Christ to sustain and maintain life in our spirit. Life that is eternal. A life that will transcend this physical life..

 Jesus is not a commodity in life, but He is a necessity for life…

 Yet how often do we, by our actions, embrace Jesus more as a commodity in life then a necessity for life?

**Commodity** is defined as “something useful that can be turned to commercial or other advantage.”

How often do we view or embrace Jesus as just someone that can be useful or advantageous to us?

 I think a good test of this is to reflect on our own personal prayer life.

 How is it that we pray? What is the primary focus of most of our prayers?

 Lord, bless me and mine. Get me this job. Provide me with this need or that one.

 Not that there is anything wrong with praying for our own needs or the needs of our loved ones or friends, but if that is always the primary focus of our prayers, the only thing that we pray about, then are we using Jesus more as a commodity in life then a necessity for life?

 If we really grasp that Jesus is a necessity for life and not just a commodity in life, then it should radically effect how we pray. It should radically affect every aspect, every area of our life.

 Jesus tries to instill this truth in His Disciples when He says in:

**Matt 9:37 (NKJV) Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly [is] plentiful, but the laborers [are] few.**

**38 "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

When we truly start to see Jesus as a necessity for life rather than just a commodity in life then we will start to pray for lost souls…

 And not just pray for lost souls in some abstract sense but pray that God would use us to bring the life-giving message of Jesus Christ to them.

 Pray that God would send someone, anyone across our path so that we might introduce them to Jesus and that they would receive life, real life, eternal life in Him.

 Jesus said: **"The harvest truly [is] plentiful, but the laborers [are] few.**

**38 "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

What plentiful harvest is Jesus talking about? The harvest of lost souls.

 Lost souls are plentiful.

 They are all around each of us every day. We live in a world that is full of them.

 There is not one of us here this morning that doesn’t know someone, probably several people who are lost.

 Those who are separated from God by un-repented, un-forgiven sin and headed for hell…

 So, Jesus tells us what is to be the main focus of our prayers, the main focus of our lives as a Christian…

**Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

Who is the Lord of the harvest? Jesus is the Lord of the harvest..

 Who are the laborers that Jesus says to pray that He will send out into the harvest field? You are, I am…We are the laborers that Jesus is talking about.

 It goes back to the great commission…

Mark 16:15 (NIV) He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

**Matt 28:18 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**

**19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**

**20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."**

This isn’t a command to just the original Disciples of Christ! It is not just a command for the pastor or evangelist. It is a command to His Church!

To Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation and make disciples of all nations…

 We are to be praying that the Lord of the harvest send out laborers into His harvest."

 We are those laborers! So, we are to be praying that Jesus send us out into the harvest field for the sole purpose of harvesting lost souls for Him.

 That is not just a purpose, but it is the primary purpose for our being here as a Christian.

 To bring in the harvest-- To lead others to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ..

 When our job is completed here on earth, when our work is done, we won’t be needed here any longer and Jesus can just take us home to be with Him.

 But for now, Jesus says that there is work to be done. There is a harvest that is lying in the field ready to be harvested.

EXAMPLE: We live in a farm community. Some of you farm or come from a family that has farmed. You know what farming is all about.

 A farmer doesn’t plant a crop and then when it is ready to be harvested just leaves it in the field to rot.

 The highest priority of any farmer in Iowa is to bring in the harvest when it is ripe.

 As Christians we have all been called by Christ to be His farmers. He is the master farmer, and we are His laborers.

 The harvest is ready.. There is a harvest of lost souls ripe in His fields ready to be harvested right now.

 The question is are we faithful laborers that will bring in the harvest or are we just sitting back and watching the crop rot and perish in the field?

 Let me challenge us with this question this morning…

 How often do we pray to be used by God to minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a person, any person who is lost and separated from God and headed for hell?

 If we don’t pray daily to be used by God to minister Jesus to the lost then we are not being obedient to Christ and we are not being obedient to our calling as a Christian.

 How many people have you personally shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with and led them to a saving relationship with the Savior sense you became a Christian and signed on as a laborer for Christ?

 1000, 500, 100, 50, 25, 10, 5, 1, 0…. If you have never shared Jesus Christ with someone, never helped lead someone to Christ, why not?

 Jesus says that the fields are ripe for harvest!

 There are people dying in their sins every day!

 People who we come into contact with everyday need Jesus. They need to hear about His love for them. They need to be introduced to Him. They need to be harvested for God….

 Yet, how often do we just sit back and do nothing?

 We become so caught up in our own lives that we become oblivious to the crop of lost souls that is already ripe for harvest all around us.

 One of the biggest excuses that we use for not being a laborer for Christ and becoming a harvester in His harvest field is that we may feel that God hasn’t equipped us for that task?

 That He has called and equipped someone else for that task, not us…

 That is exactly what Satan wants you to think..

 But it is Nonsense! He has equipped us with the same thing that He equipped the original disciples with. He has given each of us everything that we need to fulfill just that purpose in our life..

 He has given us His Holy Spirit. It is the same Holy Spirit that was given to the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul and Mark and Luke and John and Barnabas and Timothy and all the great soul winners that have ever walked upon this earth.

 The exact same spiritual weapons and abilities that He gave to them He has given to us.

 When you are only one day old in Christ you have everything that you need to be a laborer for Christ.

 You have been given everything that you need to be an effective witness for Jesus.

 You have been given His Spirit to reside within you..

 He has made His Spirit alive within you..

 And that is all that we really need to be an effective witness and laborer for Christ.

 Sure, with maturity in the faith we can become better and more effective for Christ, but the point is, we are all given all that we need to start being a laborer and witness for Christ the moment that we are saved.

 Church, it is Satan that is telling you that you are not equipped to be a laborer and harvester for Christ..

 It is Satan that whispers in your ear that you have not become good enough to share Jesus with someone.

 It is Satan that tries to tell you that people don’t really want to hear about Jesus. That the harvest is not ready..

 Well, what are you doing listening to the Devil anyway?

 Scripture says that he is a liar! That he is a deceiver! That he is a destroyer! And that it is his will that no man should be saved!

 Folks, the high point for the Church shouldn’t be its potluck dinners. The high point for the Church shouldn’t be its concerts or retreats. The high point for the Church shouldn’t even be what we do here on Sunday mornings!

 The high point for the Church should be harvesting lost souls for the Kingdom of God!

 The high point of our week as a Christian should be telling someone who doesn’t know Jesus about Him!

 The high point of our existence on this planet should be leading someone else to life-- Eternal life in Christ…

The San Diego Union-Tribune reported the story of a young man named Nicholas. On his night job at Taco Bell, 17-year-old Nicholas was taking orders at the drive-up window. He heard a woman scream, turned, and saw a very pregnant lady standing in front of him.

 The high-school student pulled off his headset, called the paramedics, and tried to make the woman comfortable. But the baby wouldn't wait.

 "The baby's head just popped out into my hands," Nicholas said. Paramedics finally arrived and took baby and parents to the hospital. Nicholas cleaned up, "washed my hands about a thousand times," and finished his shift.

 Nicholas says that event changed his perspective on life. "Things have been pretty bad in my life lately, and then I got to do this. I'm really glad."

 This young man experienced what real joy is… Being a part of bringing new life into the world.

 It changed this young man’s whole perspective on life.

 How much more joy and satisfaction when you have the privilege of leading someone to Jesus Christ.. Played an active role in leading someone into eternal life! Literally snatching them from the flames of hell and delivering them safe to God…

**Luke 15:3-7 (NIV) Then Jesus told them this parable:**

**4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?**

5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders

**6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, `Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'**

**7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.**

 Church this is what each and all of us have been called to as Christians. To be a laborer for Christ and to bring in His harvest --To seek and save the lost..

 We have all been called to become fishermen. Jesus said that we have been called to become fishers of men.

 Example: Years ago, before I went into the ministry, I heard a story that has really stuck with me about being a fisher of men.

 A Christian man worked in an office building. He shared with his pastor that he had an unsaved co-worker that God had given him a burden for and that he was witnessing to him. He said that the man was a hard sell but that he would not give up until this man received Christ.

 After several months of witnessing to this man at every opportunity this Christian one night called his pastor and said, Pastor, can you come over to my house right now.

 This man that I have told you about, the man who I have labored over for months now is ready to accept Christ and can you come over and lead him to Jesus.

 The Pastor was quiet for a moment and then replied, land your own fish!

 The joy and satisfaction for a fisherman is in landing the fish!

 Does any fisherman worth his salt go out and work all day trying to catch a fish and then when the big one strikes he hands his pole over to someone else and says I have done all the work, I have got him hooked, now you bring him in!

 Not the guys I ever fished with! In fact, they would be more likely try to take the pole from you and you would fight with all that is within you in order to land that which you have worked so hard to catch!

 Why? You want the reward! You want to receive the fruit of your labor! You want to experience the thrill and the joy of the catch!

 How much more when we are talking about the souls of men!

 Each of us has been called to be fishermen or fisherwomen for Christ Jesus.

 As such we need to go to where the fish are, we need to bate our own hook, throw out our own line and when the time comes, land our own fish…

 Why? Because once we experience the joy of the catch it will motivate us to go out and repeat the process so that we can keep experiencing the joy of the catch.

 The joy of seeing others come to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and knowing that God has used us, in all of our weaknesses and shortcomings, to play a vital part in their coming to eternal life.

Church this is what it all comes down to--this is what it is all about:

 People Need The Lord!

 From the song people need the Lord by Ray Boltz

 *“ We are called to take His light*

*To a world where wrong seems right*

*What could be to great a cost*

*For sharing life with one who’s lost*

*Through His love our hearts can feel*

*All the grief they bear*

*They must hear the words of life*

*That only we can share”*

*People Need The Lord!*

 You see, God has chosen us, you and I, to reach a world of people with the life-giving message of Jesus Christ.. People who are lost and separated from Him by their sin and headed for an eternity in hell.

 God has chosen to use you and he has chosen to use me for that task. That’s His plan A, and He has no plan B if you or I are not willing and obedient to do it.

 The implications of this are that if we are not willing and obedient to that calling to be His witnesses, personally sharing Jesus with the lost around us, then there will most likely be some of the lost that will slip through the gap and be lost forever.

 The stakes can’t get any higher than an eternity without God.

 Are we being obedient to the calling that God has placed upon our life this morning?

 Are we being His witness in the part of the world in which we live today sharing Jesus with those whom God brings across our path?

 Are we praying for God to open our eyes to those around us that God has for us to share Christ with?

 This is a prayer I believe that God will always answer because it is a prayer that is always within His will.

Are you willing to give of your substance to send others to those far away places that you cannot go to with this Gospel message, partnering with them in their ministry of missions, so that they can go and spread the message of Jesus to those places that we cannot, leading people to the Lord?

 Have you come to the place in your faith in Christ that the Apostle Paul came to in his faith in Christ when he said:

**1Cor 9:19 (NIV) Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible….**

**22 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.**

**23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.**

 Do you have a share in the blessings of the Gospel of Christ this morning?

 Are you storing up for yourself heavenly treasure?

 The treasure of helping lead lost souls into Gods eternal kingdom?

 For it is to this task that we have been called..

 Are we being faithful to that calling?