



You're Not Ready Until You Pray
The B.L.E.S.S. Series – Matthew 9:36-38
May 10, 2026

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Matthew 9:36-38

³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;

³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

MAIN THEME

In a world full of confusion, brokenness, and spiritual need, Jesus calls his people to engage—not with panic, but with purpose. When Jesus looked at the crowds, he didn't just see people—he saw their deep spiritual need. They were harassed, helpless, and without true leadership.

That same reality exists today. People are searching, wandering, and often being misled. The need is not distant—it's right in front of us. In our neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities, people desperately need the hope of the gospel.

But before we act, Jesus gives us a clear starting point: pray. Not strategize first. Not rush ahead. Pray. Because prayer is where gospel impact begins.

Through prayer, God aligns our hearts with his, opens doors we could never open on our own, and sends out workers into his harvest. Even Jesus modeled this dependence. If the Son of God needed prayer to accomplish the Father's will, how much more do we?

The truth is simple but powerful: you're not ready until you pray.

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. The Need Is Real – And Prayer Is Where Gospel Impact Begins

Matthew 9:36–37; Matthew 23:4; Matthew 28:19–20

- What did Jesus see when he looked at the crowds?
- How are people today still "harassed and helpless" without Christ?



- Why is it easy to ignore or underestimate the spiritual need around us?
- What happens when we try to meet spiritual needs without first praying?

2. Pray for the Harvest

Matthew 9:37–38; Matthew 4:17; Romans 10:14–15

- Why did Jesus command his disciples to pray for laborers instead of just sending them immediately?
- What does it mean that God is the “Lord of the harvest”?
- How does prayer connect you to God’s mission in a deeper way?
- Who are specific people you can begin praying for by name this week?

3. God Uses Your Prayers to Reach People You Can’t

Matthew 9:38; Acts 4:29–31; Colossians 4:3

- Why is prayer essential in reaching people beyond your influence?
- How have you seen God answer prayers for someone’s spiritual life?
- What keeps you from consistently praying for others?
- How can you grow in faith that God is actively working through your prayers?

4. Even Jesus Needed Prayer to Do the Father’s Will

Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12–13; Matthew 26:36–46; Hebrews 7:24–25

- What stands out to you about Jesus’ prayer life?
- Why is it significant that Jesus prayed before major decisions and moments?
- How does Jesus’ example challenge your current prayer habits?
- What would change in your life if prayer became non-negotiable?

5. Begin with Prayer (B.L.E.S.S.)

Matthew 9:38; Colossians 4:2–6

- Why is prayer the starting point for sharing the gospel?
- How does prayer prepare your heart for evangelism?
- What would it look like for you to “begin with prayer” this week?
- What is one practical step you can take to build prayer into your daily life?

PRAY

Dear Lord, thank you for opening our eyes to the real spiritual need all around us. Forgive us for the times we rush ahead without seeking you first. Teach us to be people of prayer—to depend on you, trust you, and follow your lead. Give us hearts that see others the way Jesus does, with compassion and urgency. Help us to pray for opportunities, for boldness, and for those in our lives who need you. Use our prayers to accomplish what we never could on our own. Shape us into faithful laborers in your harvest. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

DIG DEEPER



For further study this week:

- Matthew 23:4 — The burden of false religion
- Matthew 28:19-20 — The Great Commission
- Mark 1:35 — Jesus praying early in the morning
- Luke 6:12-13 — Prayer before major decisions
- Hebrews 7:24-25 — Jesus intercedes for us

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

B.L.E.S.S. — Listen with Care

