

June 14, 2020 (2nd Sunday after Pentecost)
Psalm 116:1–2, 12–19, Matthew 9:35–10:8
The Qualities of a Good Worker

INTRODUCTION

1. Berry Producers Face Potential Losses Due to Lack of Workers (Paul Palmeter, CBC, Jun 01, 2020)



- One Nova Scotia farmer says he'll be looking at big losses this summer and it's all because of COVID-19.
- Millen Farms in Great Village, N.S., relies on seasonal foreign workers to get the work done in its berry fields.
- But due to COVID-19 he was without his workers for a month at a critical time.

• "We know there's probably 25% or maybe even 40% of our crop that will stay in the field this year," said Millen.

2. Jesus Faces Potential Losses for His Kingdom Due to Lack of Workers

• To a farmer, the harvest represents a year's worth of sowing, reaping, and gathering crop.

• To Jesus, the harvest represents his life's work of teaching, proclaiming, and healing.

• He commissioned the disciples to become his partners in these activities and said, *"The size of the harvest is bigger than you can imagine, but there are few workers"* (Mt 9:37, CEB).



• It's hard to imagine the size of the harvest. But Jesus could lose 25% or even 40% of his harvest due to a lack of workers. We would be the few workers for the kingdom of God today.

Theme: What are the qualities of a good worker for the kingdom of God?

BODY

1. QUALITY #1: COMPASSION-ORIENTED

1.1. 15 Traits of The Ideal Employee (Ken, Sundheim, Forbes, Apr 2, 2013)

• When hiring for any size business, it's not about what the candidates know today. Information can always be taught. The most intelligent companies hire on future success and heavily weigh personality when determining the most apt employees.

The perfect
Employee

• Regardless of industry, pay, age or sex, all ideal employees share some common traits. These include:

hard worker
 team player
 skilled
 loyal
 honest

- Action-oriented
- Display Leadership
- Hard working
- Honest

1.2. Compassion-oriented

• When hiring for the business of God's Kingdom in saving human beings, Jesus would consider one's personality when determining the most apt workers.



“Jesus traveled among all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were troubled and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (v.35-36, CEB)

• Jesus took notice of the crowds that followed him, the souls in the cities and villages, and the people in every synagogue. He saw the blind, and lame, and sick. He expressed compassion that sprang from the deepest part of his being.

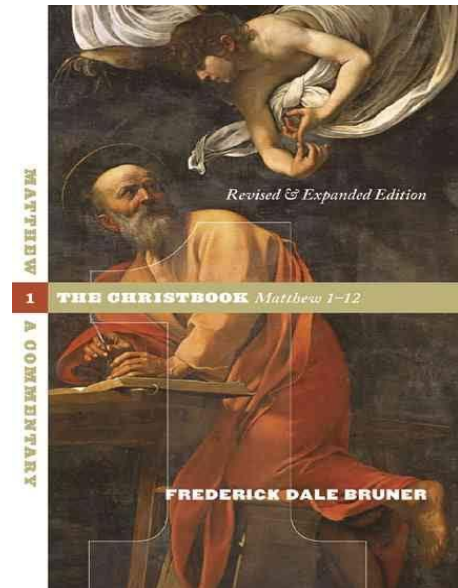
• Compassion-oriented: The perfect employees for Jesus would show compassion to other souls.

- We can show our compassion to other souls by donating to our local food bank.
- We can show our compassion to other souls by donating our blood.
- We can show our compassion to other souls by reaching out to seniors and refugees.

2. QUALITY #2: PRAYER-ORIENTED

2.1. Jesus' Realism

"So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields." (Mt. 9:38, NLT)



- Frederick D. Bruner, an American biblical scholar, interprets this verse in his book, Matthew: Volume 1. (The Christbook, Dallas, 2007)

- We expect Jesus to call the disciples to start work. Instead he says, "Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest." The action is in the hands of "the Lord of the harvest" (v. 38).

- "We can be encouraged by Jesus' realism: the task is overwhelming.... But statistics and quantities are not ultimate realities. The only reality worth taking with ultimate seriousness is the Living God."

2.2. The Rise of Online Prayer and How It Helps Your Church

- Traditionally, group prayer happened either in person or through a prayer chain over the phone. However, online prayer is now on the rise.

- It shouldn't come as a surprise that people are praying online. After all, millions use social media every day to connect.

- Now, they're just getting social in a different way. This is actually a good thing because it shows that prayer is still important and they want to pray with others even when they're not in church.



- When things look discouraging, we should pray more.
 - We should pray for good preachers, talented musicians, and effective fundraisers.
 - We should pray for God to send more skillful, faithful, and wise workers into his harvest.
 - Moreover, we should pray for the common labourers.
 - While God can use talented people, most of God's work is done by ordinary people.

3. QUALITY #3: MISSION-ORIENTED

3.1. Someone Must Labour (Dana C. Stephens, Griffin, Georgia, "Kids of the Kingdom," Christian Reader, July/August 2000)

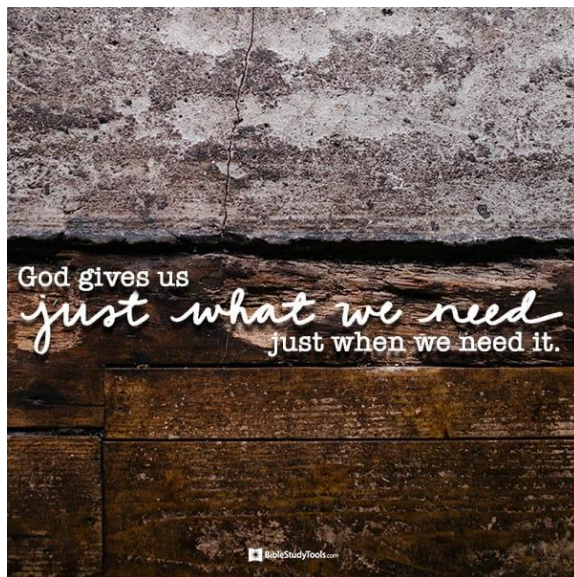
● During a stay with grandparents, my 5-year-old niece Michaela pulled corn on a neighbor's farm for the first time. Her grandparents used the experience as a teaching tool, explaining to Michaela that the corn was God's blessing to them.



At first, the work was great fun, but after only a few minutes Michaela looked at her grandmother and commented, "You know you can buy this in the grocery store, don't you?"

3.2. Jesus Gives Power to Labour

"Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness" (Mt 10:1, NLT).



● Jesus did not only call the twelve; He also gave them power to do what He had called them to do.

● When the Lord Calls, He Equips (Your Daily Bible Verse - Sep 23, 2019)

▪ Most of us are happy to step up to the plate when the task is easy. But when the Lord draws us out of our comfort zones and into the unknown, that is when we wrestle with His assignment.

▪ We may not feel worthy of God's call, but nevertheless, He makes us complete in every good work that aligns with His will and equips us with whatever is needed to carry out His divine purpose. We, too, might doubt God's abilities, but by His Spirit, we will be given exactly what we need at the exact time we need it.

CONCLUSION

- Most of us are not farmers. But we look forward to bringing the harvest from our gardens to our homes.

“(Matt 9:37-38). We are ALL called to play a part in the process of planting, watering, and reaping the harvest.”



TWEET THIS NOW

- We are all called to play a part in the process of planting, watering, and reaping the harvest.
- When we come to the end of a year, we want to have something to show for our labours.
- We want to gather the fruits of our labor, and we hope for an abundant harvest of souls.

- To do so we should have the qualities of a good labourer for the kingdom of God. These include...
 - Compassion-oriented quality
 - Prayer-oriented quality
 - Mission-oriented quality

(Psalm 116:1-2, NIV)

*1 I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.
2 Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.*

PRYAER

Living God, it is a blessing for us to know you are walking with us in our journey. We are grateful that we can come to you in times of joy, anxiety, and harvest.

Lord, we pray that you give us compassion for those who are weary.

We ask for your presence to those who feel lonely.

We believe you give us abilities to accomplish the work you have begun in us.

We pray for farmers, seasonal foreign workers, refugees, and health-care workers who suffer from the pandemic here and around the world.

Remind us to share your love with them so that they hold tight during this pandemic.

We rejoice because of your care in our lives.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen