



**The Pastor's Portion**  
 June 14, 2020  
 Spiritual Nourishment for the Soul

WHERE THE DOORS OF THE CHUCH SWING OPEN ON THE HINGES OF LOVE AND PEACE

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Our nation is undergoing one of the most important periods of time in our history. The harmful effects of centuries of racism, and the damaging impact of policies and practices that have marginalized people of color are finally being vividly exposed and opposed like no other time in our country. This is a **GLOBAL MOVEMENT** for the eradication of racism. Will the church remain silent, or will we take up the mantle that is our mandate from Jesus to do what we can to oppose these vicious and vile practices and policies so that we can finally know justice and peace. **NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE!**

### BLACK LIVES MATTER

**VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS:** Are suspended for the next two weeks.

On June 21, and June 28, we will have guest preachers: Minister Vanessa Pugh will preach on June 21, and Rev. Misha Thomas will be our guest Preacher on June 28.!

**NEW LOG IN CREDENTIALS FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP AND WEDNESDAY PRAYER/STUDY.**

Join Zoom Meeting **BY VIDEO**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87330604676>

Meeting ID: 873 3060 4676

**BY PHONE:**

646-558-8656 **ACCES CODE** 87330604676#

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JOIN US FOR MID WEEK BIBLE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY AT 7PM

**BY VIDEO**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87567605330>

meeting ID: 875 6760 5330

**BY PHONE 646-558-8656 ACCESS CODE: 87567605330#**



## Matthew 9:35-10:8

*The Harvest Is Great, the Laborers Few*

*<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.*

*<sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup> therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*

***10** Then Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. <sup>2</sup> These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup> Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>4</sup> Simon the*

*Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.*

*<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup> but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>8</sup> Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers,<sup>[d]</sup> cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.*

On Christ the Solid Rock I stand! All other ground is sinking sand. In these times we are living in, we must stand on the solid rock of Christ and his teachings. The world is rapidly shifting around us, the ground is moving under our feet, and if we do not stand on the solid rock of Christ, we will be lost.

As I read this scripture, I got stuck on a few things that I want to lift up this morning.

The text says that when Jesus was going around teaching and healing, and when he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them. Compassion means to suffer with. He suffered with them.

Not a glance, not a quick look, the way many of us do when you see a large group of people, but he SAW THEM, he felt them, he knew them

and when he looked at them when he saw them, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless.

Who today can look at what is happening in our world, can look at the protestors, can look at those who are being harassed and marginalized and put upon by centuries of institutionalized and systemic racism and oppression, and not have compassion? Who could see the plight of Black and brown bodies and not have compassion for the ravages of centuries of policies and practices, the resurgence of hate filled speech and vile and vicious violence and not have compassion, who can look at the impact of 400 plus years of being told you were not enough, that you were lazy, genetically inferior, stupid, unworthy of love, unwelcome in certain spaces, consigned to stay in certain places that were designated as ghettos, unworthy of loans and high paying jobs, and health care and quality education, and NOT feel compassion.

Jesus looked and he felt compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless. There was no one who would see their humanity, no one who would recognize their equality, no one who would tell them that they are the beloved of God, that

God's spirit rests on them and that in them God finds favor.

And he turned to his disciples and he said, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. **THEREFORE PRAY! AND ASK THE LORD TO SEND OUT LABORERS INTO HIS HARVEST.**

He did not say, ask the Lord for more church members to sit idly by in the pews, he did not say ask the Lord for more tithing members, he did not say, ask the Lord for bigger buildings or better music, or entertaining sermons or flashy pastors who talk fast and bedazzle you with their brilliance. So often we think church is supposed to entertain us, to be just to our liking—to focus more on the trapping of church—the music, the format of the services, the things that have little or nothing to do with the message. And when we focus on those things, we miss the message. Jesus said ask the Lord for laborers to be sent out to the harvest, and he wasn't talking about plants and food in the garden! He was talking about the people who were harassed and oppressed. He said ask the Lord for laborers to be sent out to the **people**, to be sent out to heal and to affirm the humanity and to love and to cherish and to provide guidance to the **people**.

Church, this is our mission, this is our mandate. First, we must pray and ask the Lord for laborers in the vineyard. Jesus had compassion, Jesus suffered with the people, because he saw their plight, he saw their poverty, he saw their deep need, he saw how dejected, how angry, how frustrated they were and he had compassion for them. He did not turn away in disgust he did not ignore them, he went out and he went out into the harvest with his rag tag group of disciples, his tax collectors his hot heads, his sinner disciples who largely did not understand him or anything he said, and **HE LOVED THEM, HE HEALED THEM, HE MINISTERED TO THEM RIGHT IN THEIR PLACE OF PAIN AND DESPAIR AND ANGUISH.**

We have been talking lately about what discipleship is. We have been focused on our mission as followers of Christ. We must take our mission seriously. The church is not a building, the church is the people. The message of Jesus is a social justice message. And we have to take it seriously. It is our mandate. The church is a place where we are to gather in whatever way we can, not to be entertained, not to focus on minutia, like whether we live stream or use zoom, what music is played and how soft or loud it is, not to look at

who is there or who is not there in the service, but to be **edified to do the work that Jesus calls us to.** Now is the time, this is our moment to actually be the Body of Christ. **There has never been a more serious or important time in our human history.** The issues we face are serious and go to the very heart of the gospel message. We must be about the business of the work of Christ.

Amen.