

Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

The Plenteous Harvest

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. (Matthew 9:35-38)

Apostle Paul was transformed into one who became a gatherer of precious redeemed souls into the Kingdom of God, whereas until that amazing turn around he had been a scatterer of souls, acting as a sorter in that he according to his knowledge of God considered himself justified in determining who God wanted and who God didn't want. Faith now drove him to a new way of life in that he wrote thus: *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* (Galatians 2:20)

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20: 22)

Paul had come to freedom, coming to the death of himself, which meant that he now saw things as God sees them, his desire for all to be saved became concert with God's desires, and his flesh now being dead no longer had dominion over him. How did he then approach his calling towards his fellow humans?

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

The harvest is great, the laborers are few. We are those who have been gathered into His kingdom and as a result our hearts burn with desire for those who have not yet been gathered unto Him. May we consider the greatness of the harvest and the need for laborers as we continue to present our bodies as living sacrifices unto the Lord for His purposes. May it be that when we hear the voice of the Lord saying, *"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?",* that we reply with the Prophet Isaiah, *"Here am I! Send me."* But where shall we go? ? What shall we do? *And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14:23)*

Pastor Orval Wirkkala