

John 4:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

Analysis

Jesus declares 'I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour' acknowledging that others (prophets, John the Baptist) prepared the harvest. The disciples enter into 'labours' (Greek: *kopos*, exhausting toil) of predecessors. Reformed theology emphasizes that we build on the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Christ as cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20).

Historical Context

The disciples would soon enter ministry where they reaped from Jesus' own sowing. The early church later harvested from the apostles' teaching. Each generation benefits from previous faithful witnesses.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How should gratitude for those who preceded us in the faith shape our current service?

2. What 'labor' are we adding to for those who will come after us in gospel work?

Interlinear Text

ἐγὼ ἀπέστειλα ὑμᾶς θερίζειν ὁ οὐχ ὑμεῖς
I sent you to reap that whereon no ye
G1473 G649 G5209 G2325 G3739 G3756 G5210

κεκοπιάκασιν ἄλλοι κεκοπιάκασιν καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν
bestowed other men bestowed and ye into G3588
G2872 G243 G2872 G2532 G5210 G1519

κόπον αὐτῶν εἰσεληλύθατε
labours their are entered
G2873 G846 G1525

Additional Cross-References

John 1:7 (Parallel theme): The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

2 Chronicles 36:15 (Parallel theme): And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

Acts 4:4 (Parallel theme): Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

Acts 5:14 (Parallel theme): And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

Acts 6:7 (Parallel theme): And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.