

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	ὕμᾱς	θερίζειν	ὃ	οὐχ	ὕμεῖς	
I	sent	you	to reap	that whereon	no	ye	
G1473	G649	G5209	G2325	G3739	G3756	G5210	
κεκοπιάκασιν	ἄλλοι	κεκοπιάκασιν	καὶ	ὕμεῖς	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.