

Luke 10:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Analysis

Jesus tells the seventy: 'The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.' The 'harvest' metaphor represents people ready for salvation. 'Great' harvest with 'few' laborers creates urgency—much work, insufficient workers. The solution isn't recruiting but praying—God must 'send forth' (Greek 'ekbalē,' ἐκβάλῃ, thrust out) workers. The Greek verb implies forceful sending, suggesting God must compel workers into His harvest field. Prayer, not human strategy, mobilizes workers. The harvest belongs to God ('the Lord of the harvest'), not human organizations.

Historical Context

This preceded Jesus sending seventy disciples (some manuscripts say seventy-two) on a preaching mission (vv. 3-16). Harvest imagery was common in Jewish thought, often referring to judgment (Joel 3:13, Matthew 13:39) but here to evangelistic opportunity. First-century Palestine was agricultural—hearers would know harvest's urgency. Ripe grain left unharvested rots, making laborers critically important. Jesus' ministry demonstrated this pattern—He prayed all night before choosing the twelve (Luke 6:12), and here instructs praying before the seventy's mission. Effective evangelism requires God-sent, God-empowered workers, not merely volunteers pursuing their own agenda.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does the great harvest with few laborers teach about evangelistic opportunity and the urgent need for workers?
2. Why does Jesus prioritize prayer for workers rather than human recruiting strategies or organizational expansion?

Interlinear Text

ἔλεγεν οὖν πρὸς αὐτοῦ Ὁ μὲν θερισμὸν πολὺς οἱ
said he **Therefore** **unto** **them** ^{G3588} **truly** **The harvest** **is great** ^{G3588}
^{G3004} ^{G3767} ^{G4314} ^{G846} ^{G3303} ^{G2326} ^{G4183}

δὲ ἐργάτας ὀλίγοι· δεήθητε οὖν τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ
but **labourers** **are few** **pray ye** **Therefore** ^{G3588} **the Lord** ^{G3588}
^{G1161} ^{G2040} ^{G3641} ^{G1189} ^{G3767} ^{G2962}

θερισμὸν ὅπως ἐκβάλλῃ ἐργάτας εἰς τὸν θερισμὸν
The harvest **that** **he would send forth** **labourers** **into** ^{G3588} **The harvest**
^{G2326} ^{G3704} ^{G1544} ^{G2040} ^{G1519} ^{G2326}

αὐτοῦ
them
^{G846}

Additional Cross-References

Mark 16:15 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

1 Thessalonians 5:12 (References Lord): And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

2 Timothy 4:5 (Parallel theme): But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Mark 13:34 (Parallel theme): For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

2 Thessalonians 3:1 (Prayer): Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

Acts 22:21 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

1 Timothy 4:10 (Parallel theme): For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

Acts 13:2 (References Lord): As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 20:28 (Parallel theme): Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Acts 11:19 (Parallel theme): Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.