

## Impacting Our World

John 4:35

What do you suppose Jesus Christ would say today if He were to stand in this pulpit, and speak to those of us here in this service? **What do you think He would say?** Do you think He would talk about His *Second Coming*? Would He try to get you really excited about the fact that His coming is closer today than ever before in the history of the Church? Do you suppose He would say as He did in Luke 19:10, “(I) have come to seek and to save that which was lost”? Or maybe He would say as in Matthew 11:28, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Suppose today that Jesus were to come to this earth, was able to get on Face book, and Twitter, and all the News outlets, and the local T.V. Stations, and was able to speak for only 30 seconds. And for 30 days it had been publicized to all humanity! What do you suppose He would say? I don't believe for a minute He would speak to the *lost world*. I believe He would speak directly to the *Church!* And of all the Bible He could quote in 30 seconds I think He would say, “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”

According to the Southern Baptist Convention's website there are more than 42,000 Southern Baptist Churches in the United States, and 70% of those churches are either *plateaued* or on the *decline*. Of the 16 million members only a little over 6 million regularly attend Worship Services on Sunday.

Let me ask you something today, “Why is it we are not making an impact on the world around us?” “What are we waiting for?” What excuses are we using for *not bringing people to a saving knowledge of Christ today?* Would we say, “We don't have the workers?” or “We don't have the money?” or “We don't have the Spirit?” or “We don't

have this or that?” But Jesus had a *sense of urgency* in His voice! Listen to me Church – if there is one thing we need in the Church today, it is *a sense of urgency*!

Ladies and gentlemen, we don't have *time* to wait on all these things! It seems to me, the Church is never quite ready to do God's Will. It's always, “We need something else.” Or “Next year will be better.” But Jesus said, “We don't have until next year!” Jesus looks at the Church and says, “Look around folks, there is a harvest just outside the doors that urgently needs to be harvested because time is of the essence!”

Some years ago I was preaching a revival in Georgia and the church was in a big farming community and it was *harvesting time*. They had huge tractors running long hours of the day, and I asked one of the farmers, “How long can you wait before you have to harvest your crop?” He answered, “Some of our crops have to be harvested in a matter of days or they will rot in the field.” There was a *sense of urgency* in his voice!

And I am afraid there are many churches that have passed the *day of harvest* in their fields, and they will never reap the harvest. Jesus says we have sat here, in many of our *fields*: just going along, *coasting*, just in our *spiritual laziness*, having one *up-heavel* after another, and in our *complacency*, while millions (including friends and family) are going to Hell without Jesus as their Savior!

And the reason the *harvest* was left in the fields was *they had no vision*! Jesus said, “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields...” The word “look” means, “to see with foresight.” Proverbs 29:18 warns, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” It is the *burning effect* of “**vision**” that causes us to escape *mediocrity*!

I tell you when I look at what is happening in our nation it breaks my heart. We seem to be on a “fast track” of *learning how to hate each*

other. The news is filled with outburst of anger, flare-ups of anger and temper tantrums. There is an all-out assault on faith, absolutes, and any mention of God in public. Moral standards have been rejected, marriage has been redefined, and millions of unborn babies are killed each year! And beloved, unless somebody today gets a vision of America being lost, we are going to send a generation straight to hell.

All over the world there are buildings just like this one. Some of them have a steeple with a *cross* on top to indicate there might be something *spiritual* going on inside. And there is a group of people that gathers inside of these building, who say, “We are Christians... We have been baptized... We are followers of Jesus Christ... We want to be like Him.” And we meet inside of these buildings to *pray*, to *sing*, to *testify*, to be *fed* on the Word of God, to be *motivated*, to be *inspired*, and to *teach* the Word! And it is to this group of people that Jesus said, “Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”

Let me ask you today, “Why isn’t the Church harvesting this great harvest Jesus talked about?” Why do we seem to be hindered from reaping the “harvest” that is ready to be reaped? Why is it that this Church that meets in here is not affecting that group out there that Jesus refers to as the “harvest”? Now watch this – that group out there called the “harvest” doesn’t need a *revival*, they need to be saved!! And if we ever have a revival in here that group out there will know it! They will see it on our faces, they will hear it in our voices, they will sense it in our love. Here is the problem as I see it – we are trying to win the world to Christ through dead churches, and it cannot be done!

For the next few minutes, I want to share with you what I believe God has shown me why the Church isn’t making an impact on the world around us.

The first reason we are not impacting the world around us is Satan keeps us off balance. 1 Peter 5:8 gives us this warning, “Be

sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” He is constant in his great plan to never allow the Church to unite into *one great force!* **Therefore, the Spirit of God is weakened within this great body.** You will never find the Spirit of God moving in a Church that has *division* in it!

**So Satan keeps the Church from uniting.** He appeals to our flesh as he starts little bickerings, and fusses, and little groups. And then he causes us to choose “sides.” **And he uses all of those things to cause confusion inside the Church!** Listen, if people can’t get along following *Jesus*, how do you think they would do trying to follow some *Deacon*, or some *Pastor*? 1 Corinthians 14:33 reminds us, “God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”

**Therefore, Satan appeals to our “flesh” to cause ruptures in the fellowship of believers!** And this “grieves” the Holy Spirit and causes churches to become *cold* and *indifferent* to the things of God. And when that happens *we lose our focus* and *the “harvest” is neglected!*

**The second reason we are not impacting the world around us is we have come to believe the excuses we use for not following God’s will for our lives.** Luke 9:57-62 reveals excuses are nothing new, “Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.” And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

**Child of God, stop listening to the enemy and to the people he is using to hinder you from fulfilling God's will for your life!** Listen to this promise found in Philippians 2:13, "It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 6:1, "We are workers together with Him."

**Child of God – you can reach to lost; you can bring people back to Christ; you can see the sick healed, broken hearts and homes mended by His power; you can see miracles performed!** You might be thinking, "How do you know for sure?" Because God says in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And Jesus said in Mark 9:23, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

Jesus has given us this ministry, as seen in Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." **Like anything else in the Christian life, faith is the key to obedience.** Faith is more than fact – faith is action. That is why we have been told in 2 Corinthians 5:7 to "walk by faith, not by sight."

**If you know Jesus as your personal Savior, you know the joy of being forgiven and the peace of salvation!** My question to you today is this – why not share that great experience with someone else? Why not be an encourager to someone who has been saved but fallen by the wayside?

If you have never been saved, why not today?

**Stand for prayer.**

Father,

Your Word is true. It is Your will that all men everywhere be saved.

Give me the courage to walk by faith and not by sight as I become an instrument in reaching others for the cause of Christ.