

CALL TO PRAYER

PRAYER BREAKFAST

PREPARED BY
MAJOR DEBRA BLACKMAN



CANDIDATES
Canada & Bermuda

THEME VERSE:

**“THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL,
BUT THE WORKERS ARE FEW.
THEREFORE ASK THE LORD OF THE
HARVEST TO SEND OUT WORKERS
INTO HIS HARVEST-READY FIELDS.”**

(MATT 9:37-38 NET)

OPENING WORDS & PRAYER OF APPROACH

SONG: THE IMAGE (MATT REDMAN)





PRAYER PRACTICE

GO TO THE HARVEST

REFLECT:

IF JESUS HAD A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR HIS THREE YEARS OF TRANSIENT MINISTRY IT MIGHT BE MATTHEW 9:35:

*"THEN JESUS WENT THROUGHOUT ALL THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES, **TEACHING** IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES, PREACHING THE **GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM**, AND **HEALING** EVERY KIND OF DISEASE AND SICKNESS."*

THE OBJECTIVE WAS THE RESTORATION OF HUMANITY – SALVATION.

FROM LOST --- TO FOUND

FROM DEAD --- TO ALIVE

FROM GOD RESISTERS --- TO FAITHFUL GOD IMAGERS

BUT WHILE THE MANDATE WAS CLEAR ... THE REALITY OF HOW TO TRANSLATE IT INTO REAL LIVES, REAL PERSONALITIES, AND REAL STRUGGLES HAD TO BE INTERPRETED PERSON BY PERSON USING SPIRIT-LED EYES TO SEE WHERE GOD WAS AT WORK IN EACH SITUATION.

JESUS TRAVELLED BY FOOT. HE TRAVERSED THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES AT EYE LEVEL WITH THOSE WHO WERE RECEIVING HIS GOOD NEWS MESSAGE. HE SAW THEM. IN CHAPTER 9 ALONE, THERE IS A DIVERSE ARRAY OF HUMANS JESUS MEETS.

- V. 2 - A PARALYTIC, WHOSE FRIENDS WERE FULL OF FAITH FOR HEALING ON HIS BEHALF, BUT WHOSE DEEPEST NEED WAS FORGIVENESS.

- V. 9 - A WEALTHY, THOUGH UNSCRUPULOUS MAN WHOM JESUS SAW AS MUCH MORE THAN A POTENTIAL “DONOR” TO HIS MISSION. HE LOVED HIM ENOUGH TO SEE THROUGH TO HIS SOUL SICKNESS (SO WELL HIDDEN BY AFFLUENCE) AND INVITED HIM TO A 180 DEGREE “CAREER CHANGE” AS A FRIEND AND DISCIPLE OF JESUS.
- V. 14 - SOME WELL-MEANING RELIGIOUS FOLKS DOING THEIR VERY BEST TO “HOLD THE FORT” WHILE WAITING FOR GOD’S RESCUE BUT CONFUSING THE METHOD FOR THE MISSION - AND IN THE PROCESS MISSING THE PRESENCE OF THE LIVING GOD RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM.
- V. 18 - THE “BEYOND HOPE” PEOPLE. IN ONE CASE, A WOMAN EXPERIENCING LONG-TERM SUFFERING. IN ANOTHER A GIRL WHO HAD ALREADY BEEN PRONOUNCED DEAD. NEITHER OF THESE WERE “BEYOND HOPE” FOR THE LOVE OR POWER OF JESUS.
- V. 27 - THE BLIND MEN WHO LOUDLY AND RELENTLESSLY CRIED OUT FOR HELP HAVING FAITH JESUS COULD HEAL.
- V. 32 - THE MAN SO OPPRESSED BY AN UNSEEN POWER THAT HE COULDN’T EVEN ASK FOR HELP...BUT JESUS SAW HIS NEED.

JESUS WALKED AMONG THEM. HE SAW THEM. HIS PACE WAS SLOW ENOUGH TO CATCH.

RESPOND:

WITH A PARTNER CHOOSE AN AREA OF YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD TO WALK AROUND PRAYERFULLY. (*NOTE: IF THIS IS NOT PRACTICAL FOR YOUR GATHERING, PLEASE INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO THINK ABOUT THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD/TOWN/CITY. YOU COULD ALSO INCLUDE PHOTOS FROM YOUR TOWN/CITY ON EACH TABLE.*) IF YOUR CITY IS ANYTHING LIKE MINE YOU MAY FIND THAT EACH NEIGHBOURHOOD HAS A DISTINCT FLAVOUR, PEOPLE, AND SPIRITUAL PRESENCE.


AS YOU WALK (OR SCAN THE PHOTOS ON THE TABLE) BEGIN WITH THIS PRAYER:

"JESUS, GIVE ME YOUR EYES TO SEE MY NEIGHBOURHOOD."

AS YOU WALK TAKE CUES FROM WHAT IS AROUND YOU.

- DO YOU SEE CHILDREN'S TOYS, PARKS OR SCHOOLS?
- RETIREMENT HOMES
- HOSPITALS & EMERGENCY SERVICES
- PLACES OF WEALTH AND PLACES OF POVERTY
- ETHNIC/CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS
- CHURCHES
- PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH EVIL OR SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

WHO LIVES HERE? WHAT EXPERIENCES OR CHALLENGES MIGHT THEY BE FACING?



PRAYER PRACTICE

WHERE ARE THE SHEPHERDS?

REPENTANCE & RENEWAL

READ: MATTHEW 9:36; EZEKIEL 34:1-6

REFLECT:

JEWS IN JESUS TIME HAD BEEN THROUGH A LOT. ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW THEY WERE DESCENDANTS OF THE PROMISES GOD MADE TO ABRAHAM, AND THEN LATER TO THE WHOLE NATION THROUGH THE LAW OF MOSES, IT HAD BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE THEY WERE A UNITED PEOPLE. YEARS IN EXILE, THE CONSTANT TURNOVER OF EMPIRES – EACH MORE OPPRESSIVE THAN THE NEXT – MADE THOSE PROMISES SEEM FAR OFF UNDER THE WEIGHT OF EVERYDAY SUFFERING.

JESUS SEES THE CONFUSION AS HE INTERACTS WITH THEM: ***“WHEN HE SAW THE CROWDS HE HAD COMPASSION ON THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE BEWILDERED AND HELPLESS, LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD.”***
(MATTHEW 9:36 NET)

A QUICK SURVEY OF LEADERSHIP IN FIRST CENTURY SAW THAT ISRAEL’S LEADERSHIP HAD FRACTURED INTO SECTS – EACH TRYING TO DEAL WITH THE ROMAN EMPIRE’S AUTHORITY OVER THEIR LIVES DIFFERENTLY.

THE ESSENES WHO SAW THE MISUSE OF POWER AND WITHDREW FROM SOCIETY FOCUSING ON AN ASCETIC LIFESTYLE AND THE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE AND RITUAL.

THE ZEALOTS WHO SOUGHT TO FORCE THE “KINGDOM OF GOD” THROUGH VIOLENT REVOLT.

THE SADDUCEES WHO WERE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE PLAYING A “PRIESTLY ROLE” AT THE TEMPLE BUT COMPROMISED WITH THE WORLDLY POWERS TO BARTER FOR PRIVILEGE AND POWER.

THE PHARISEES WHO WERE LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS WHOSE EMPHASIS ON ABSOLUTE HOLINESS AND PIETY THAT THEY BELIEVED WOULD RESULT IN GOD’S SUPERNATURAL RESCUE OF THE PEOPLE. JESUS OFTEN CRITICIZED THE WEIGHT THIS LEGALISM PUT ON A SUFFERING PEOPLE.

THESE CATEGORIES MAY SEEM FAR OFF TO US – BUT THE PRESSURES OF LEADERSHIP CAN PUSH AND PULL MANY OF US OFF COURSE IN ONE DIRECTION OR ANOTHER BEFORE WE EVEN REALIZE IT.

MOST LEADERS DON’T SET OUT TO CAUSE HARM OR COMPROMISE THEIR COMMITMENT TO GOD BUT LIKE THE PROVERBIAL FROG IN BOILING WATER THE SLIP CAN HAPPEN INCREMENTALLY.

IN EZEKIEL 34 THE PROPHET BRINGS SOME FIRM REBUKE AGAINST THE LEADERS OF ISRAEL IN HIS TIME ACCUSING THEM OF EXPLOITING THOSE THEY WERE CALLED TO SERVE, OF MISUSING THE WEALTH ENTRUSTED TO THEM ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE, OF LEADING WITH AUTHORITARIAN POWER INSTEAD OF GENTLE GUIDANCE & NURTURE.

CULTIVATING ACTIVE REPENTANCE AND HUMILITY IS A PATHWAY TO RENEWED, GODLY LEADERSHIP.

A CORPORATE PRAYER FOR LEADERS:

SPEAKER:

JESUS, SHEPHERD OF MY SOUL, GUIDE ME BY YOUR GENTLE STAFF OF CORRECTION.

GROUP:

"O LORD, YOU HAVE SEARCHED ME AND YOU KNOW ME."

SPEAKER:

LORD, FORGIVE MY RETREATING.

MY SILENCE WHEN I SHOULD HAVE SPOKEN.

MY FEAR WHEN I SHOULD HAVE FAITH.

THE PLACES I HAVE HIDDEN WHEN THE LEADERSHIP FELT HEAVY:

MY COMPUTER, MY ADDICTION, MY COMFORT, MY ROUTINES.

GROUP:

"O LORD, YOU HAVE SEARCHED ME AND YOU KNOW ME."

SPEAKER:

LORD, FORGIVE MY SELF-DETERMINATION:

THE TIMES I HAVE CHARGED AHEAD WITH CONVICTION BUT
WITHOUT PRAYER.

THE TIMES I USED POWER IN WAYS THAT HARMED.

THE WAYS MY WORDS HAVE CAUSED VIOLENCE.

GROUP:

"O LORD, YOU HAVE SEARCHED ME AND YOU KNOW ME."

SPEAKER:

LORD FORGIVE MY COMPROMISE:

FORGIVE ME FOR THE TIMES I PRIORITIZED PLEASING PEOPLE OVER
PLEASING GOD.

FORGIVE ME FOR TUNING INTO THE WORLDS VALUE'S OVER THE
WORD'S VALUES.

FORGIVE ME FOR THE TIMES I ALLOWED PRIDE, GREED OR
AMBITION TO MAKE A CHOICE THAT SERVED ME MORE THAN
THOSE I LEAD.

GROUP:

"O LORD, YOU HAVE SEARCHED ME AND YOU KNOW ME."

SPEAKER:

LORD FORGIVE MY ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL YOU WITH RELIGION:

FOR EVERY TIME I HAVE LED A MEETING, WORSHIP, TEACHING
RELYING ON ROTE ROUTINE WITHOUT FIRST ABIDING IN CHRIST.

GROUP:

LORD, FORGIVE ME.

SPEAKER:

FOR EVERY TIME I HAVE CATEGORIZED SOME WORK AS "HOLY"
AND SOME WORK AS "MINE"

GROUP:

LORD, FORGIVE ME.

SPEAKER:

FOR EVERY TIME I HAVE CHOSEN “KEEPING UP APPEARANCES” OVER
HUMBLE REPENTANCE.

GROUP:

LORD, FORGIVE ME.

SPEAKER:

FOR EVERY TIME I HAVE NEGLECTED TO CULTIVATE FRIENDSHIP AND
INVITE OTHERS INTO THE CARE OF MY SOUL.

GROUP:

LORD, FORGIVE ME.

ALL:

SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART!
TRY ME AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS!
AND SEE IF THERE BE ANY GRIEVOUS WAY IN ME,
AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING.

SONG: LORD, I NEED YOU (MATT MAHER)



The background of the entire image is a photograph of several hands reaching out from the sides, set against a backdrop of a golden field of grain under a clear blue sky. The hands are positioned as if they are about to grasp something in the center. A semi-transparent, light blue rectangular overlay with a fine grid of small white dots covers the central portion of the image, serving as a background for the text.

PRAYER PRACTICE

**MANY HANDS
FOR HIS WORK**

PRAYERS FOR THE BODY

