

## Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Reflection

Matthew 9: 35 – 10: 8

### The Harvest Is Great, the Labourers Few

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

The title which has been given to this passage is the cry of many a farmer as the seasonal workers who used to come from Eastern Europe to work in our fields are not able to come to the country to work. There is a call for people to respond to the challenge; a Land Army is needed again! When I was a child my mother used to go pea picking and strawberry picking in the local fields, as did Anita's mum. Her parents used to join the people "exodus-ing" London to go the hop-fields of Kent to work for a couple of weeks to supplement the family income whilst on holiday.

Just before Lockdown Martyn had told us about Stanleys Farm shop; we went on a quick visit and thought about going back later in the year to PYO. I am not sure we will get around to that this year.

It is easy to expect others to pick our food for us and think nothing about the people who bent their backs and got their hands dirty that we might eat, often on minimum wage and sleeping in poor conditions – and they are the lucky ones not being exploited as modern day slaves.

Jesus of course was using the image of the field ready to harvest because it was familiar to the people at the time. The disciples would have looked out and seen the fields fit for harvest but without the labourers in the field. He, though, was not speaking about corn and wheat; he was referring to lives for the kingdom.

As church it is so easy to place the responsibility for church growth and others coming to faith in the hands of the "Professional pickers." "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few," you are to be a harvester, to join the land army, to be involved in PYO or whatever term you might like to use.

During the period from Ascension Day to Pentecost you were invited to join in with the "Thy Kingdom Come" prayer "event". Praying for 5 friends and showing to them love and care. This was obviously harder to do as we were not able to meet up as would have been hoped when the material was put together; continue to pray for these people and when we can meet up perhaps revisit the "Jesus Loves all" material afresh.

We have heard a lot about the "R" number in recent times. When R is greater than 1 the virus spreads and increase, when it was at 3 the spread and growth of the disease was frightening. As the R falls the restrictions on life will be lifted and we will be able to move about more.

For many years the R figure in the church has been well below 1. I am not talking virus here but bringing people to faith in Jesus. If every person in Church brought one other to Church, and to faith, each year the growth would be incredible. At the end of year 1 there would be twice as many people; year 2 four times as many, year 3 eight times as many.

Some of you will remember the Chris Bowater song – part of which I quote here – look up the words in Mission Praise 229;

Here I am, wholly available  
As for me, I will serve the Lord  
The fields are white unto harvest  
But O, the labourers are so few  
So Lord, I give myself to help the reaping  
To gather precious souls unto You.

Will you join the harvest? Will you pray for a friend and follow God's guidance that you might bring them to faith and so join Christ's Church?