

Reading: Matthew 13:3-8,18-23

“Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season” (2 Tim 4:2)

In spite of acceleration and intensification of evangelistic efforts, the results are not satisfactory. Today we will look at two reasons for the poor harvest.

We will reap what we sow. The quality of seeds decides the nature of the harvest. Interpreting the parable of the sower the Lord Jesus said, “The seed is the Word of God” (Lk 8:11). The Gospel content in most of today’s evangelistic preaching is deplorably low. Narration of stories and personal experiences takes precedence over the preaching of the pure Gospel. Foreseeing the trend that folks would “turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables,” Apostle Paul charged the young preacher Timothy to preach “the Word!” (2 Tim 4:2,4). The Gospel message is adulterated and diluted according to the consumer demand.

In many citywide evangelistic crusades, the people are simply entertained rather than evangelized. The prosperity gospel invented by materialistic countries has brought forth more Ishmaels than Isaacs into the Church. It’s impossible for a pulpit evangelist to preach the pure gospel when his mind is on his projects and people’s purses (2 Pet 2:14b,15).

Though it is absolutely essential that the seed be good, that alone does not guarantee a good harvest. The type of soil plays a vital role. Jesus listed six kinds of soil in the parable of the sower — the wayside soil, the rocky soil, the thorny bushy soil, the thirtyfold yield soil, the sixtyfold yield soil and the hundredfold yield soil (Mt 13:3-8). Though we must be optimistic in our evangelistic endeavours, we should come to terms with the ground reality. We need not be frustrated if we don’t see positive results everywhere.

The Church is also late. The agents of Satan have gone even to the remotest places before a Christian missionary could step in there. The first resistance to the gospel usually comes from magicians and sorcerers. The very first encounter of the first batch of missionaries in the early Church was with a sorcerer (Acts 13:4-8). Missionary Paul interprets this condition as, “the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine on them” (2 Cor 4:3,4). We must earnestly pray that the Lord would “open” the hearts of Lydias in the field (Acts 16:14). There is a promise we can claim: Zechariah 4:7, “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.”

MAY 16

PRAYER

Subject: Missions

Reading: Mt 13:3-8, 18-23

Memorising: 2 Tim 4:2

Gracious Heavenly Father,

We worship You as the Lord of the Harvest. We worship You as the One who loves mankind. We thank You for the Gospel which is Your power for Salvation to everyone who believes. We thank You for sending Your anointed messengers all over the world to sow the precious seeds of Your Word. We thank You for counting us faithful and entrusting us with the task of sharing the Gospel with our fellowmen.

Father God, we thank You for the ministries You have raised in our times to reach the regions beyond with the liberating message of Your Gospel. We rejoice over the fields where there's rich harvest. Nevertheless, O Lord, it saddens our heart to observe that the harvest is not plentiful in many mission fields. We know that Your Word will not return void, without fulfilling the purpose for which it goes forth. Help us, however, O Lord, to reevaluate our message and reexamine our methods. Forgive us for diluting the pure Gospel for convenience. Grant us boldness to present Jesus as the only Way to come to You. Help us to be forthright in our preaching. Let us not be intimidated by the threats of the opposers.

Father God, help us to be patient with the ignorance of people whose minds are blinded by Satan. Let us not slow down our proclamation endeavours if the results are not immediate. Help us keep on praying for the perishing souls. Help us keep on sowing in virgin soils. Help us keep on watering the plants. Help us keep on preaching the Gospel both in conducive and adverse circumstances. Thank You, Lord, for the promise that our labour in You for Your kingdom is never in vain.

We pray specially for the fruitless fields and those who labour there for years. Help them overcome disappointments and negativism and keep pushing on leaving the results in Your hand. We thank You for the pioneer Missionaries of the yesteryears whose persistent labour was responsible for our conversion and that of our forefathers.

Send us, O God, the former rain and the latter rain so we may witness a rich harvest. We long to see the greatest ingathering of souls in our time.

In the Name of Jesus the Light of the World, Amen!

*(Lk 8:11; 10:2; Rom 1:16; 3:22; Mt 28:19,20; 2 Tim 1:12; 4:2; Jn 4:35; 14:6; Isa 55:11;
2 Cor 4:4; 1 Cor 3:6; 1 Tim 2:1-4; Zech 10:1)*