



MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church
Dr. Rob White – Senior Minister
<https://aulc.us>

TITLE: When The Time Is Right, Have Prayer Before Work

SERMON IN A SENTENCE: Jesus calls us to proclaim the good news, to cure the sick, to raise the dead, to cleanse the lepers, and to cast out demons, but first he calls us to pray.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 9:35 - 10:8 (9-23)

Today's scripture lesson comes from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 9 verse 35 to Chapter 10 verses 8 to 23.,,,

Starting at verse 35:,,,

Then Jesus went to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. ,,,

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with skin diseases, drive out demons. You have received free of charge; give free of charge.,,,

Don't take along gold, silver, or copper for your money-belts. ,,,

Don't take a traveling bag for the road, or an extra shirt, sandals, or a walking stick, for the worker is worthy of his food.,,,

"When you enter any town or village, find out who is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ,,,

Greet a household when you enter it, ,,,

and if the household is worthy, let your peace be on it. But if it is unworthy, let your peace return to you. ,,,

If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that house or town.,,,

I assure you: It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.,,,

“Look, I’m sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as serpents and as harmless as doves.,,,

Because people will hand you over to sanhedrins and flog you in their synagogues, beware of them. ,,,

You will even be brought before governors and kings because of Me, to bear witness to them and to the nations. ,,,

But when they hand you over, don’t worry about how or what you should speak. For you will be given what to say at that hour, ,,,

because you are not speaking, but the Spirit of your Father is speaking through you.,,,

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will even rise up against their parents and have them put to death.,,,

You will be hated by everyone because of My name. But the one who endures to the end will be delivered.,,,

When they persecute you in one town, escape to another. For I assure you: You will not have covered the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. ,,,

-- May the Lord add His Blessing to the reading of His Word!.,,,

-- Hello, I am Doctor Rob White with the A U L C Ministries with our message this week.,,,

-- I am happy that you can take a few minutes out of your busy week to be with us today!.,,,

Have you ever had the opportunity to plant a seed? If you have, you know that after the seed is planted there is a time of waiting. After what seems like a long time, we see a tiny bit of green sprouting out of the ground. Then, there is another long time of waiting and finally the plant grows, matures, and produces a vegetable or a flower, depending on what type of seed has been planted.,,,

This is what farmers do, planting large fields of flowers or vegetables and orchards of fruit trees. They care for their crops and after several weeks have gone by the crop is ready to be harvested. Do you know what it means to harvest something? When a fruit or vegetable has matured and is the best that it can be it is picked – harvested.,,,

In the Bible Jesus talks about a harvest and he is talking about people being harvested. He says, "**The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest**" .,,,

There is a time in everyone's life when they are ready to hear about God. Everyone has the opportunity to be the best they can be by accepting God's love. We, who have experienced the love of God, need to live our lives in a way that others, when they are ready, will see that Love in us. Christians are like laborers sent out to celebrate the harvest. ,,

What do you do when you see a desperate situation? I usually jump in where angels fear to tread. I start "fixing" the problem. Sometimes I succeed, but sometimes I just muddy the waters. Effective or not, I do something. It's too frustrating to sit and watch a disintegrating situation. I have to take action—whether or not it helps.,,

Which frustrates my wife terribly! As the author of Ecclesiastes reminds us, there's a time for everything under the sun. ,,

- There's a time for jumping in and a time for standing back. ,,
- There's a time for stirring the waters, and a time for letting the sediment settle. ,,
- There's a time for acting, and a time for listening. ,,

That's the word—LISTENING. My wife would be delighted if I would LISTEN instead of jumping up to fix the problem. I try! Sometimes I listen, but too often I just muddy the waters.,,

Unless the toilet won't stop running! If the toilet won't stop running, it's OK for me to jump up and fix the problem. The exception proves the rule!,,

Jesus was a doer! He "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." He had great compassion for the crowds, and he worked very hard to meet their needs.,,

But one man can't do it alone. Jesus needed help. He said to the disciples, "**The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.**" Do you remember what he said next? You would expect that he would say, "Go to work!" You would think that he would say, "Get busy!" You would expect him to say, "I'm counting on you." But that is not what Jesus said.,,

Jesus said, "**The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few.**" Next—listen carefully—he said, "**Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest.**" ,,

Isn't that interesting. Jesus said that the situation was desperate. The harvest was ready, but there weren't enough hands to bring it in. Most of us are so far removed from the farm that we have difficulty understanding the urgency of that. ,,

- The farmer spends the best part of a year getting ready for the harvest. ,,
- He spends the winter getting equipment ready and fences mended. ,,
- In the springtime, he plows and plants and fertilizes. ,,
- Then he irrigates and sprays weeds and fertilizes some more. ,,
- Then, at the end of the season, the crop matures and is ready for harvest. ,,

At that point, the farmer had better be ready! If the crop is not harvested when it is ready, it goes to seed—or rots on the vine—or falls to the ground—or is rendered worthless by the rain. A farmer can work hard all year and lose everything in a week—even in a day. ,,,

So the situation was desperate. "The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few." Jesus said, "Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest." In that desperate situation, Jesus didn't tell the disciples to work. He told them to pray! Isn't that amazing!,,,

Just imagine doing that at your job. Just imagine your boss saying, "This is a very important time in the life of this company. We are looking at the opportunity of a lifetime! This is a make it or break it situation! We really need to pull together and give it all we've got! So I am going to ask you—to pray." ,,,

That isn't what your boss says, is it! Your boss says, "These are the goals and this is the plan. Now let's go do it!" By which he means, "Now *you* go do it!" The employees leave the conference room thinking, "Another rock in my pack." or "How long before this one blows over?" or "Where I can get another job." or "What was that all about!" The boss would have been better off to say, "So I am going to ask you to pray"—but the sad thing is that someone would probably sue if the boss said, "Let's pray!" We live in difficult times—so perhaps we should pray that the people who make the rules will make better rules.,,,

I am reminded of my wife when she says, "I am going to tell you about a problem, and I don't want you to jump up and try to fix it. I just want you to LISTEN." Oh, that's hard—but it's important! Sometimes listening is the key to solving the problem! And listening strengthens relationships—and good relationships solve problems! So does prayer!,,,

Jesus says, "The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few." And then he says, "Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest." ,,,

Jesus tells us to pray! Note that it says "*his* harvest." The harvest is God's! We have a role to play in the harvest, but we need to keep it in perspective. It is only by the grace and power of God that there will *be* a harvest. We need to pray that God will take charge of the harvest—and provide laborers for the harvest. God has the whole church at God's disposal. We do not have to do it all ourselves. We need to pray that God will send in the troops—bugles blowing—flags waving—hearts full of faith.,,,

Our prayer will prepare us for our task. Our asking will help fit us for our role. The time we spend with God will reshape us so that we will become a proper tool in God's hand. Once we have prayed, *then* we can go—and proclaim the good news—and cure the sick—and raise the dead—and cleanse the lepers—and cast out the demons. Once we have prayed, we will find ourselves working by God's power. ,,,

Nothing is impossible with God! When God is on our side—better yet, when we are on God's side—we cannot fail.,,,

Norman Vincent Peale once told about addressing a Methodist conference in Atlanta, Georgia. In his sermon, Peale told the congregation that God can change a life, no matter how hopeless the person might seem. Never lose hope.,,,

After the service, Peale met with three other ministers in the pastor's office. While they were talking, someone interrupted to say that a man wanted to see the minister. The pastor told the secretary to send him in.,,,

The man came in—disheveled, unshaven and smelling of alcohol. He had been in the congregation, and had heard Peale's message. He looked at Peale and asked, "Do you really believe that Jesus can help me?" Peale responded, "Without a doubt!" The man asked for prayer, and the four ministers gathered around to pray for him. After the man left, the bishop said, "If that man changes, we'll all be surprised, won't we?" Note that the bishop did not close the door on the possibility that the man might change. He just noted the unhappy reality that change is difficult, and many people do not change.,,,

Six months later, Peale was sitting in a hotel lobby in Clearwater, Florida, when a man approached him. The man was well dressed and had two little girls in tow. At first, Peale did not recognize him. Then, as the man came closer, Peale realized that he was the drunk for whom they had prayed in Atlanta. God had answered those prayers. The man was a new man—living a new life. He had come to thank Peale for imparting faith on that day six months ago. Peale said that it was one of the most emotional and unforgettable experiences of his life.,,,

Jesus calls us to GO—and to proclaim the good news—and to cure the sick—and to raise the dead—and to cleanse the lepers—and to cast out demons. But first he calls us to PRAY—because we cannot by our own power proclaim the news—or cure the sick—or raise the dead—or cleanse the lepers—or cast out demons. But God can! And God will, if we first devote our lives to prayer.,,,

As I conclude today, I would like to end with this hymn story.,,,

Frances Ridley Havergal wrote the hymn, "Lord, Speak to Me." She also wrote other hymns, the best known being "Take My Life and Let It Be.",,,

The daughter of an Anglican clergyman who devoted himself to the improvement of church music, Frances was a gifted poet, pianist, and singer who followed in his footsteps. Her passion was bringing people to Christ. Her charming personality helped her to do that, and her musical gifts continue to nurture our faith even today.,,,

Her original title for this hymn was "A Worker's Prayer." When you read the words of the hymn, it becomes clear that she was speaking of a Christian worker — a worker for the Kingdom of God. ,,

The hymn is a prayer that God will speak to us so that we might, in turn, speak for God. It is a prayer that God will teach us so that we might be able to teach others. It is a prayer that God will fill us until our hearts overflow with kind thoughts, glowing words, love, and praise. It is a prayer that God will use us however he chooses until that day when we see him face to face. Let us make this hymn our prayer.,,,

Here is the hymn, "Lord, Speak To Me".,,,

-- That's our Lord's message for this Lord's Day and I hope you got a blessing out of it!.,,,

-- Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed! -- For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed!.,,,

-- Thank you all for watching and listening and we will see you all next week!

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