

Workers in the Harvest Field

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Preacher: Chris Thornton

[0 : 00] Father, I thank you that you are an amazingly good shepherd. I thank you that you're a father who cares for us. I thank you that you're a father who sees us and who knows us and who loves us and who gave everything for us in your son.

Father, I thank you so much for yesterday with the Chinese New Year outreach in Sun Yat-sen Park, Lord, where we're able to just experience your goodness and your grace and just to connect with people out in the community, so many people who are lost and hurting and broken and needing a savior, needing a shepherd.

Father, we just thank you that you have placed us here as a church, not for ourselves, but for your name, your glory, and for the people in this city. So, Father, I pray this morning that you would speak to us.

I pray that you would encourage us. I pray that you would challenge us. I pray, Lord, where we are wrapped up in many, many things, Lord, I pray that you quieten our hearts to hear what you want to say.

And I pray you give us soft hearts to be willing to respond to what you're calling us to. In Jesus' mighty name, amen. I want to invite Echo to come and read the scripture reading to us.

[1 : 16] This scripture reading comes from Matthew chapters 9 and 10. Please follow along in your bulletins or on the screen. And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.

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 laborers are few.

Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every disease and every affliction.

The names of the twelve apostles are these. First Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother. James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother.

Philip, and Bartholomew. Thomas, and Matthew, the tax collector. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus. Simon, the zealot.

[2 : 43] And Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out. This is the word of God. Thank you so much, Echo.

And can I just do a shout-out for all the people who helped yesterday at the Chinese New Year outreach. Thank you, all your ICF students. Let's give them a round of applause.

They were amazing. We were in the park with lots of kids. They did an amazing, amazing job.

Welcome. If you don't know me, my name is Chris. I'm one of the leaders here at Watermark.

Just very excited to welcome you this morning. I spoke to someone just recently who used to come to Watermark a long time ago, and I hadn't seen them for a long while, and I just bumped into them on the streets and said, hey, how are you doing?

And he said to me, hey, doing great. God's answered my prayers. I've got amazing work. Work's going really well. And we had this kind of conversation just saying how amazingly blessed they were with their work.

[3 : 46] And then I said, hey, are you involved in church? How's things going? And they said, no, I've not got any time for all of that. But me and God, we're doing great. And I thought about the conversation afterwards, and I thought, how often do we actually misunderstand what it means for us to be doing great with God?

What it means for us to be a follower of Jesus, living in a joy-filled, active relationship with Jesus, because we come with our ideas when what Jesus wants to do and what we're doing in the series of going through the book of Matthew is to help us to see what does it mean for us as a church? What does Jesus say about what it means to be a follower of Christ? And we want to go deeper into the gospel. We want to learn Jesus afresh because, and that's actually why we're doing, if you're in a community group, it's why we're doing the gospel-centered life, because we want you to get not just the idea of Christianity, we want you to meet Jesus and have the gospel go deep in your life because that's where you're going to flourish, in Christ.

But we don't just want to go deep in understanding the gospel ourselves because we also know that when Jesus calls people to follow him, when he called the first disciples in Matthew, he said, follow me, and then he says, there's a purpose to what I'm doing.

I will make you fishers of men. I'm going somewhere so that if you want to be a disciple of mine, you're always going to be going where I'm going and I'm always going out to reach people around who don't know me and who need to know the love of Christ.

[5 : 24] And so, last week, we began looking at the idea of salt and light. We're looking through the Sermon on the Mount and we saw how God has called us to be this light in this city and that actually that light is going to come not as us trying to be the light but actually as our love for Jesus and how that's going to flow out of us.

But we want to camp out really for the next three weeks or so in looking at the, unpacking this idea of what does it mean for us to be a light?

What does it mean for us to be on mission? What does evangelism mean in the life of the church? And we're going to look at some different scriptures to do this because this is what it means for us to follow Christ, to know Him more and to make Him known to others.

So, we're going to be looking today at this chapter in Matthew 9. And this, Matthew 9 and 10, this chapter is really a pivotal part in the book of Matthew. Jesus has basically been doing a whole lot of ministry, preaching and teaching and healing and all kinds of stuff and now He's going to shift the focus to not just Him doing the work but sending others out to do the work.

And so, what we're going to do, we're going to look at three different parts. We're going to look at the compassion of the shepherd. We're going to look at the invitation to the harvest and the commission to go.

[6 : 48] Okay? The compassion, the invitation, the commission. So, if you've got your bulletin with you, please follow along. We'll be tracking through some of that. So, first of all, the compassion of the shepherd.

You know, Jesus, Jesus has been going around, it says, all kinds of cities and villages in Galilee with His little gang of disciples with Him. And there's about 200 villages and cities at that time in that area and it would have taken a very, very long time for Jesus to go around all of them effectively. And what we know about these villages from chapters 5 to 9 is that Jesus has been teaching how different the kingdom of God is from the way the culture of all these villages and cities were living. Because in these places were filled with messy, broken people. There were families torn apart by divorce. There were greedy, obsessive bosses.

There were locals who were angry at their taxes. There were people wanting independence from the political rule of Rome. There were people worrying about getting enough food just to feed and supply their families.

[7 : 54] There was bitterness. There was unforgiveness. There was anger. There was hurt. There was brokenness in relationships. Everywhere, it was messiness and brokenness. And it says, Jesus came to these places and a crowd, a random bunch of these people started coming out to see Him.

And they had 100,000 different motives for why they were coming. Some just came out of curiosity. Some came because they wanted to hear what the latest speaker was like.

Some came because they were desperate to get healing. Some came because they just wanted to use Jesus for themselves and then get on with their lives afterwards. And it says, when Jesus came to His crowd and He saw the crowds, He judged them instantly for their lack of purity of heart.

When Jesus came to the crowds, He thought, why should I waste my time on all these messed up people? Is that what He thought? It says, chapter 9, verse 36, when He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them.

He had compassion for them. Do you know what that word compassion means? It literally means to be moved in your guts. That's not because you've got food poisoning.

[9 : 23] That's because it literally, it's the strongest word for pity in Greek. Someone said, compassion is an emotional response where you so identify with the situation of others that you're prepared to act for their benefit.

Have you ever felt that? it's the same word that's used, you know, in the prodigal son story, if you know that story, where the youngest son takes his father's money, leaves the family, squanders it all, and he's in poverty, and then decides to return to his father.

And it says, while he was a long way off, the father saw him and had compassion on him, and he ran out to him. It's the same when a blind person comes to Jesus and he asks for healing and he says, it felt compassion and he reached out and touched him.

You see, when Jesus sees this messy bunch of people, his reaction isn't to run away from them saying, wow, this is overwhelming. His reaction is to long to run to them with gut-wrenching compassion.

You see, I heard a story of a guy who went out to visit on a mission trip to an African country which had desperate poverty at the time.

[10 : 42] Kids were malnourished. It was a terrible situation. He was just going to see the relief work that was going on there. And just as he was about to leave his little visit and get on the plane, a lady comes up to him carrying a baby.

And she says to him, she tries to hand him the baby and says, please take him. Please take him because if he stays here, he's going to die.

And the guy said he knows he can't take him back. And he says, as he turned around and he had to shut the door behind him with this woman crying desperately for help, he said he had this gut-wrenching compassion of a desire to help and to reach out.

That is what Jesus is feeling right here. I don't know what response this morning you think Jesus, you'll get from Jesus if you come to him this morning.

Do you think he's a little annoyed at you? Do you think he's kind of like, oh, I know what you've done this week, but hey, I guess I'll accept you. Do you realize that no matter how far away from Christ you think you've gone, no matter whether you feel worthy or unworthy, no matter how pure your motives are or impure your motives are, whether you're here this morning out of joy or here this morning purely out of habit, Jesus has gut-wrenching compassion for you.

[12 : 22] He longs to reach out to you right where you are. Why does he have that? Do you know what the next part says?

He had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Do you know, literally, that means they were torn and thrown away.

Do you know like those wildlife documentaries when you see the antelope that's gone away from the rest of the herd and then the lions are coming and they pounce on its hind legs and bring him down and are tearing at him?

That's the idea here because that's what Jesus sees them as. Why are they like that? Because they are sheep without a shepherd. Do you know the Bible's very deliberate when it calls us sheep?

Do you know that you're a sheep? Say after me, I'm a sheep. Let's do it one more time just to bring it in. I'm a sheep. Okay, now that's not a compliment.

[13 : 30] You may think you're a wolf but you're a sheep. Here's a couple of things about sheep that you need to know. Ezekiel 34 when God's talking about Israel it says this, so they were scattered because there was no shepherd and they became food for all the wild beasts.

You see, what you know about sheep is sheep are vulnerable. You know, sheep don't have claws. They don't have razor sharp teeth. They can't fly.

They can't run away fast. They're a ball of wool on four legs. Which means this, if you don't have a shepherd you will always feel insecure because you're a sheep.

Because sheep by nature always need a shepherd to give them protection, to give them security, to provide for them. Which is why each one of us here is always looking for security and protection from something because we're sheep.

But it's not just that we're vulnerable. Sheep also always wander off. Isaiah 53 you might know this.

[14 : 49] We all like sheep have gone astray. I don't know. I grew up in England. I went to Wales. There's tons of sheep.

There's more sheep than humans in Wales. And I don't know if you've ever seen shepherds. It's not kind of in Hong Kong there's not sheep wandering around. But in Wales there are. And if you've ever seen a shepherd trying to get sheep to go anywhere you know there's a reason that modern day shepherds have sheep dogs.

Because what you find is even though the shepherd is trying to lead them to some beautiful new pasture one little sheep goes and sees something interesting on the side and starts wandering off and then everybody else is like oh that's a great idea and they all wander and follow him.

Doesn't matter if it's a cliff over there they're all going to go. We're like a bowling ball you know which has that natural curve that it always no matter which way you throw it always is going towards the gutter.

That's you and me because we're sheep. But the thing is what he's saying here is every other shepherd every other place you look to for security is a shepherd in wolf's clothing.

[16:08] Sorry no it's a wolf in shepherd's clothing. You find your approval and your sense of worth in anybody else's opinion just one comment just one look from a colleague from a spouse and it will devastate you.

Find your security in your finances or your career or your grades and just see how many people in Hong Kong are suffering from stress and insomnia because we're enslaved torn apart harassed and helpless because we fear not getting enough because we fear what our bosses are going to think about us because we live in fear and all around us there are people promoting find your security in this find your security in that but we're sheep and every other shepherd is a wolf in shepherd's clothing.

It will tear you and eat you alive. We are like the crowds before Jesus but Christ is a shepherd who is different from every other shepherd because when you hear that word shepherd in the Bible you're not supposed to be thinking of those terrible pictures that I see in Christian hospitals I think we may have one of Jesus kind of blonde haired blue eyed Jesus with a little lamby.

Do you have one Christina picture of that? That is not what you're supposed to be thinking oh lovely. You see a shepherd in the Bible is an image of a king it's an image of a ruler it's an image of a strong leader but he's not the kind of strong leader who's just there to use you for his own agenda. He's a shepherd who has gut wrenching compassion on you because he knows that you're vulnerable and prone to wander. You know Jesus when he looked out over Jerusalem a couple of years later he says oh Jerusalem Jerusalem the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.

[18:10] In other words these guys just don't respond well. How often would I gather you? How often have I longed to gather you your children together as a hen gathers her brood gathers her chicks under her wings but you were not willing.

Do you see what he's saying? He knows what we're like. Do you know that you're a sheep like that? And sometimes people think Jesus is nice but God's kind of angry with me but so kind of hide behind Jesus and not get angry God but actually when Jesus says if you've seen me you've seen the Father God so loved the world God so loved you that he sent Jesus to you to show his compassion to you because he wants to draw you to himself that's why he died on a cross for you because he desperately wants you for himself.

No matter how messed up you are no matter how good you think you are do you know you're a sheep but he's a compassionate shepherd calling you today? That's the first point.

second thing the invitation to the harvest Jesus is in kind of farming territory so he just switches the metaphor from sheep to crop farming so he then says this the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest harvest any farmers here?

Yep I didn't expect so most of us the farming analogies kind of get a little lost on us but actually harvest time was the time of the greatest joy and opportunity in a farming village because it's what the whole year's work is all about it's the time where you're going to get everything that you've been looking for for the year now in our context just imagine if a memo is sent round to employees in a company where basically the whole of your bonus is based on the yearly profits and it says this it says the rich clients are plentiful but the sales team is few therefore ask your boss urgently to hire more sales team to send them out to bring in the revenue does that sound like an opportunity or a burden because what he's saying is often as Christians when we come to the idea of sharing our faith and evangelism we kind of know it's a little bit uncomfortable it's a little bit difficult and so

therefore we feel it's like something Christians have to do and we feel a little bit guilty probably because we haven't been doing it as much as we should and so every time you hear a sermon on evangelism you just go away feeling a little deflated and then you forget about it for the next few months until the next sermon but evangelism as Jeremy shared actually this week with us in the staff team he says evangelism it's not something you have to do it's something you get to do it's an opportunity it's a privilege that we have because it's about a harvest of joy and opportunity but let me unpack this for a minute because if you think about it if a boss is serious about making his company profitable unless he is incompetent why doesn't he just hire sales staff anyway why does the boss need to ask the employees to ask him to then hire more staff that's weird right

[21 : 54] Christians don't need to evangelize because God needs you to he's quite capable of doing the job himself you know there's lots of dreams of people having dreams in Middle East coming to faith through he could do that but he calls us to share the faith of a compassionate God because he's inviting you to both share in his work and share his heart his heart of compassion so his compassion becomes your compassion so his joy becomes your joy because I don't know if you know in Genesis 1 it says to be human is to be an image bearer somebody who reflects what God is like that's where we flourish when we're living like that but the only way you'll ever be fully human the only way you'll ever fully flourish if that is true is if you're involved in his mission because it's only when you're on God's mission to save and reach out to people that you'll ever get his heart for people his heart for lost sheep around you do you notice

Jesus doesn't pray doesn't tell the disciples to actually just pray for lost sheep to come to him did you see that he doesn't just pray for people who don't know Christ he actually says pray for more workers you see that why do you have to pray for more workers anyone huge response okay I'll assume that you're knowledgeable but too ashamed to share why do you have to pray for more workers because this is not a one person job even Jesus he's like there's too many people for me humanly to reach out to people here this is a whole community thing it's a whole community thing I'm looking out at 25 Nepalese kids on a Thursday night saying are there more people who can reach out

I can't reach out to these by myself you go on the MTR and you see thousands of harassed and helpless sheep wandering around in your office in your family and no pastor can reach them all why are there so few workers you know I was really challenged by this but St.

Augustine he lived he was a guy he's a dead guy lived a lot of time ago he said this he said this has really impacted me cramped is the dwelling of my soul expand it that you may enter in cramped is the dwelling of my soul expand it that you may enter in what is he saying everyone in Hong Kong feels cramped that's why we're all looking to buy bigger flats and moving to bigger spaces right do you know the most cramped place in Hong Kong is in our hearts because we only get concerned with our own issues our own things we get bitter about life and about others we want to hang around just with people who are like us just with people that we like and who are going to give us something you know that's networking right but God has a heart that is spacious a heart that is expansive his heart is not cramped it's overflowing to compassion to the very people that I wish he wouldn't be compassionate towards to the people that you and I have issues with which cramps our hearts his heart where we are cramped his heart expands you know in John

Jesus has just been talking to a Samaritan woman and he's been calling her to herself and he's showing her that she doesn't need to look to men to fulfill her but he is the living water that she needs and then after this amazing conversation the disciples come back and see Jesus talking to this woman and they go hey Jesus let's grab lunch and internally they're going what why are you talking to her and you know what Jesus replies he says lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest that's challenging when you look out at Hong Kong do you go I wish there were fewer people here because it made my life so much easier or do you go the fields are white for harvest oh that convicts me you see there are so many people here

[26 : 55] Jesus says we should be praying God send out more workers there are so many people that you have brought to this city you know I got in the lift yesterday a rather old grumpy man got into the lift in my building and just to be friendly I said to him and then I noticed he had a Manchester United cap on and said oh do you support Man U and he replied I don't want to talk to you this is literally this was yesterday okay I get that all the time it's okay I don't have a complex and then he said and I was just about to get out of the lift actually then he said you're one of those missionaries aren't you and I didn't know how to respond to that because I didn't even really know

him so I was like how do you know this stuff and as I got out the lift normally what

I would be thinking would be he's got issues he's a grumpy old man or I'd feel offended or I'd feel like I've got to try and be nicer next time I don't know what I've got to do but actually because I've been thinking about this passage I walked away going there's a sheep who's suspicious and hurting and broken and I don't know whatever shepherds he's running to but you can tell from his face that they're not bringing him joy and my heart broke for him and I started praying father would you send people into his life who are going to show him that you are a good God a good compassionate shepherd just think if every one of us in watermark started praying God would you open my eyes to see people not the way I normally see people but to really see the people you've placed around me to see even my boss even the people who intimidate me or annoy me or anger me with your eyes of compassion and love just think how different our responses would be isn't that what

Jesus is saying to be about a light in the city as you're walking along the streets and you're seeing the broken and the hurting around you how more freely would we be loving people how much more urgently would we be praying God there's so many people I can't reach all these please send more workers because when you start praying like that you can be living in a hundred square foot flat but you'll be living the most spacious life because your heart would have been expanded to be more and more like Christ's heart but it's not just his compassion this compassion he wants us to have it's also his joy he wants you to experience I don't know if you know that God is a joy filled happy God not a miserable grumpy God did you know that it says in Timothy he's the blessed

God blessed means happy and what brings him delight is to bring lost people like you and me broken people to himself Jesus said there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 who don't need to repent heaven gets on party mode when someone comes to faith if that guy in that lift came to know Jesus heaven would explode with joy it would be better than LKF so how is our response when someone comes to Christ like someone did last week through somebody in watermark do we go that's nice another member of the club or do we go with unconceivable joy that is just so gracious of you father thank you cramped is often the dwelling of my soul but we have a compassionate shepherd who shows us his love so that he can expand our hearts so that we can have compassion on others to involve us in his mission so that we might experience his joy and we need to be praying that's the first place we start to pray that

God would do this in our lives and God would send out more workers I'm going to ask Joanne to come up and share a little bit of her story Joanne welcome it's okay we're not too scary up here Joanne would you love to just tell us who you are and yeah just say something about yourself hello I'm Joanne can you hear me yes okay and I've been to watermark for like five years now I'm from Hong Kong and I'm a part-time artist graphic designer and I'm doing a master course in HKU in expressive arts therapy great so if you feel like you need some therapy afterwards just come and talk to Joanne I'd love you to tell us a little bit about what you were like before you met

[32 : 37] Christ in your life I was a professionalistic so everything I wanted to be perfect and I was very easy to get nervous and really want to take control of things and plan things well so that's why it really makes me yeah very easy to get nervous and like oh my gosh what it would be like and really afraid of making mistakes great and so tell us a little bit about your story of how you actually came to Christ it was like seven years ago I guess like I failed myself using my own effort it's like a really bad period of time it's when I studied and I didn't really get what I want and I feel like I failed myself because like no matter how much that I paid for pay effort for like I couldn't get whatever things that I wanted but then like God but then like God showed me to be like I made to be like I gave up to you and started to show up and I had to show myself to me and I can see that God is gracious but then like that then my heart wasn't truly surrendered to him yet and through and other circumstances so were you uh were you in a Christian family or what what was your family no no my family it's all non-believers I'm the yeah and um so three and other circumstances uh which is uh my like my first time that when I end um my first relationship and then like at that time I was really sad and heartbroken and it's kind of like really lost as well and that time um so there was one day when I was um waiting my friend in MTR station which is in Cosway Bay and um it's really rare because my friend was late for half an hour but like she was usually very very on time and suddenly there was a lady tapped on my shoulder and then like she said she asked me um are you a Christian and I'm like no and then like she said oh actually today when I prayed um

I had a calling from God to find a lost ship and you are one of the lost ship and I'm like all my goose boom is like going up because I didn't expect that you know there are there were a lot of people

doing all these kind of outreach um and on the street as well usually but that lady it's really it's a little bit different because like she's like a very old lady it's like 70 years old and usually these kind of lady they wouldn't like do these kind of do these kind of do these kind of things like in my perspective and she showed a lot of sincerity and the first thing that she said it's not taking up um her bible and then showing me this verse blah blah blah blah but the thing she told me is I prayed and I had a calling from God and you are the lost sheep and God wants you to come back and I'm like oh wow and my heart was softened and I accepted Christ um in the MTR station which MTR?

Causeway Bay so just head to Causeway Bay guys at after lunch and then she disappeared um I and I never saw her again never saw her again and so yeah what happened like what happened next?

and then I and then like I started go to Watermark you see God works in amazing ways right? that's amazing and so that was seven years ago?

no that's five years ago five years ago five years ago what's God been doing in your life since that point? um like I think well of course there are times that I still struggle struggle because there are a lot of worldly pressure and and you know like there are a lot of things to to perform as well but especially when there are a lot of unknowns um and when I think of my future but I think this time it's pretty different it's because I know God and and he's faithful that when in all these uncertainties happen that I know where I can anchor that anchoring God and knowing that he's faithful and he knows way better than what I know and um yeah because he created us and he did everything for us and he even knows that I would accept a Christ in an empty aisle using a pot pot and I think yeah he knows everything way better than I do that's great can I pray for you?

[37 : 37] yes thank you um father thank you so much uh for my dear sister Joanne uh lord you are an amazing God thank you so much that you care for lost sheep uh thank you that you cared for Joanne and to bring her to yourself and I pray that you'd continue to help her uh see more and more of who you are that you're a good shepherd that you're a father you're the one who wants to wrap your arms around her and give her that sense of security and uh comfort and knowledge that her life is in your hands so lord I just praise you for what you're doing thank you so much for her and lord just bless her mightily in Jesus name amen great thank you please give a round of applause isn't God good?

you see God works see God's a compassionate God who wants to reach out and he'll even use a pawpaw who's available to reach out we've talked about the compassion of the shepherd we've called it that the invitation to the harvest I've got one more point so don't worry we're not going to go forever the last point is the commission to go because you know when Jesus calls the disciples to start praying for workers to be sent out into the harvest field who does he send out?

he sends out the disciples you see when you start praying send people into the elderly homes into the MTR stations into into the schools into the hospitals into HSBC into wherever when you start praying that you've got to be prepared to be the answer to your prayer just like that pawpaw was and Jesus says as you start praying who is willing to go?

and there's this passage in Isaiah where Isaiah meets with God he has this incredible encounter with him and at the end of it he's on his face he's on the in the kind of little corner and God says to him who's going to go for me to preach my message and Isaiah kind of raises his little hand from the corner and says oh you can send me are you willing to be that person?

are you willing to be that person? send me because you see a few verses later in the passage it's not in our reading here it's just in verse 23 it says Jesus says I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves he's sending us out as sheep not as marine commandos not as those who've got all our act together not as those whose heart is anywhere near as expansive as his he's sending us out as vulnerable insecure prone to wander sheep in a hostile challenging difficult world what a ridiculous strategy and we go yeah but I can't share anything because I've lost my temper at work I'm not a good witness I'm not a good answering all those questions people have and Jesus says I know but do you realize who the guys that Jesus is sending out are?

[41 : 03] just look at them Peter Peter's got serious pride issues in fact he's so insecure he's desperately trying to prove himself all the time James and John they're called sons of thunder not because of their stomach issues but because they had serious anger issues Thomas doubting always sees the glass half empty mind filled with questions Matthew a Jew who'd compromise his integrity to get ahead in his career and just get more money for himself considered a traitor by

everyone else Simon who's called a zealot meaning he was a political activist like a terrorist willing to use violence to get out the Romans are you any of those?

do you have pride issues? anger issues? do you have doubts? have you messed up in integrity and faithfulness? are you a terrorist?

oh you you may be okay with that one are you insecure? do you stray? well I know the answer to it yes you do because you're a sheep like me you sound like the kind of harassed helpless person that Jesus today with deep compassion is calling to himself to run to him so that you might experience his goodness and his love and his joy and for him to be your shepherd where you find security and provision in him not in anything else you're chasing after and as you come and deeply understand his great love for you it's you he then wants to send out to be used by him on his mission for his glory into your neighborhood into Lockhart Road into your office into the elderly homes in Hong Kong so you can know his joy are you willing to be the answer to your prayer? and you see it's scary because we feel inadequate because we are inadequate but God gets the glory in taking weak things in this world like you and me and showing his grace and his power through them our confidence is not in how eloquent we are it's not in how strong we feel it's not in having all the answers to every question your confidence isn't in how great even your witness has been as a Christian because you may have been Mr. Grumpy for the last three weeks I don't know but that is not our confidence our confidence is in who our shepherd is who our king is who the one who rules over everything sovereignly and yet has compassion on the very people around us I cannot change anyone I cannot heal the sick I don't have words to change people's hearts but Jesus is a sovereign ruler he has authority and he gives his disciples authority he is compassionate but powerful evil spirits tremble at his name he can take people like Joanne people like me people like you and he can work in our lives to change us and he can work if he can work in your life then he can work in the people around you their lives to change him do we see that he is the power to change grumpy old men grumpy young men grumpy old women grumpy young women people who are stressed people who are nervous people who are from every background to bring them security in him and so we pray

God send me it's not your power my power it's your power you are my shepherd the Lord is my shepherd I will lack nothing give me patience give me wisdom this is the call that God has for us as a church that our hearts might be expanded to be more and more like him maybe just like to bow your heads for a minute what is Jesus saying to you right now do you know that he really has deep compassion for you and is calling you to come to himself if you are not a believer if you don't know this this Jesus of such compassion he's calling you today will you respond like Joanne did will you respond to him because he wants to bring you more security than you've ever had in your life if you're a believer and you're just you know you've been chasing after other shepherds other things in your life you just come to him right now and do business with God allow him to speak to your heart maybe some of us we've been

[46 : 21] Christians a long time and we we know this kind of message but we know that our eyes don't see like Jesus sees just cry out to him cry out to him to open your eyes to expand our hearts to send out more workers to send you and to send me this week to the lost the broken and the hurting z■ and I