Prayer Provides Laborers

By Andrew Murray

"Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:37-38).

The Lord frequently taught His disciples that they must pray, and how, but seldom what to pray. This He left to their sense of need, and the leading of the Spirit. But here we have one thing He expressly enjoins them to remember: in view of the plenteous harvest, and the need of reapers, they must cry to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers. Just as in the parable of the friend at midnight, He would have them understand that prayer is not to be selfish, so here is the power through which blessing can come to others. The Father is Lord of the harvest; when we pray for the Holy Spirit, we must pray for Him to prepare and send forth laborers for the work.

Prayer is indeed a power on which the ingathering of the harvest and the coming of the kingdom do in very truth depend. Prayer is no form or show. The Lord Jesus was Himself the truth. Everything He spake was the deepest truth. It was when *"He saw the multitude, and was moved with compassion on them, because they were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd"* (v. 36), that He called on the disciples to pray for laborers to be sent among them. He did so because He really believed that their prayer was needed, and would help.

How little Christians really feel and mourn the need of laborers in the fields of the world so white to the harvest. And how little they believe that our labor supply depends on prayer, that prayer will really provide "as many as he needeth." How little the burden of the sheep wandering without a Shepherd is really borne in the faith that the Lord of the harvest will in answer to prayer, send forth laborers, and in the solemn conviction that without this prayer, fields ready for reaping will be left to perish. And yet it is so. So wonderful is the surrender of His work into the hands of His church, so dependent has the Lord made Himself on them as His body, through whom alone His work can be done, so real is the power which the Lord gives His people to exercise in heaven and earth, that the number of laborers and the measure of the harvest does actually depend upon their prayer.

Solemn, blessed thought! This power has been given to us in prayer to provide in the need of the world, to secure the servants for God's work. The Lord of the harvest will hear. Christ, who called us so specially to pray thus, will support our prayers offered in His name and interest. Let us set apart time and give ourselves to this part of our intercessory work. It will lead us into the fellowship of that compassionate heart of His that led Him to call for our prayers. It will elevate us to the insight of our regal position, as those whose will counts for something with the great God in the advancement of His kingdom. It will make us feel that we really are God's fellow-workers on earth, to whom a share in His work has earnestly been entrusted to us. It will make us partakers in the soul travail, but also in the soul satisfaction of Jesus, as we know how, in

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answer to our prayer, blessing has been given that otherwise would not have come.

Lord, teach us to pray.

– Excerpted from *Learning To Pray (With Christ In The School Of Prayer)* by Andrew Murray.

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