

ATTITUDES THAT HINDER THE HARVEST

Sermon by Dr. Tim Hill

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Scripture Text: John 4:27-38: ²⁷ And upon this came his disciples, and marveled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? ²⁸ The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, ²⁹ Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? ³⁰ Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. ³¹ In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. ³² But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. ³³ Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? ³⁴ Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. ³⁵ Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. ³⁶ And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

Introduction: Attitudes are defined as inward feelings expressed in outward behavior. Attitudes can't be hidden very long by anyone. Sooner or later, an attitude surfaces and is displayed for all to see.

There are some hindering attitudes where the harvest of souls is concerned. In the story of the woman at the well, there are a number of attitudes that are displayed by the disciples.

Let's look at some of these same attitudes that can be found in the church today.

I. There Is No Harvest

A. The disciples seem surprised that Jesus saw potential in the woman of Samaria.

B. Jesus was tuned in to the fact that there were souls at stake while the disciples seemed more concerned about buying food to nourish the physical body. Jesus informed them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."

C. There is a blatant denial among many church-going people that there is a harvest.

1. We have become isolated within our four walls and are often unaware that in the shadow of the steeple souls are dying.

2. We live in our own world surrounded by the godly and are seldom anywhere near sinners.
3. Proverbs 10:5: "He who gathers in summer is a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame."

II. There is a Limited Harvest

- A. While some acknowledge that there is a harvest, they often limit it by saying, "There is a harvest, but not them, not there, or not here."
- B. Jesus was emphatic when he said in Matthew 28:19, 20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- C. The woman of Samaria was an outcast.
- D. It's known as selective evangelism. It's amazing how many people will give to world missions to save someone in a faraway country, but it would be offended if that same man came in to sit beside them on Sunday morning in their own church.
- E. In Acts 10, God showed Peter that He is no "respector of persons."

III. With All The Workers In The Harvest, Surely God Doesn't Need Me.

- A. Jesus said, in Matthew 9:37, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but laborers are few."
- B. In Matthew 9:38, Jesus instructed His disciples, "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers are few."
- C. There is a shortage in the harvest labor force.

IV. There Is Plenty Of Time

- A. Jesus said, in John 9:4, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work."
- B. Jesus told His disciples that day at Jacob's Well, "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up

your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (John 4:35).

- C. While we live as if there is no hurry, souls by the second slip into eternity.
1. Contrary to what many may think, we have little time to reach the harvest.
 2. James 4:13, 14: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

Conclusion: A weeping mother was running toward her burning home to save her four-year-old son Johnny. She was restrained by two firemen who warned her of certain death if she went back in the burning house. She continued to cry, "Somebody please save Johnny from the fire."

Finally, the two firemen risked their own lives and bravely ran into the burning house and pulled little Johnny Wesley out of the fire. They had no idea the child they were saving would become the greatest evangelist of his generation.

Souls are crying out to be rescued. Can you hear them? What is your attitude about the harvest today?