

Lift Up Your Eyes

by Weston Leibee

Weston Leibee's sermon 'Lift Up Your Eyes' calls believers to engage in missions, highlighting the immense mercy of God and the balance of suffering and joy in serving Him.

Duration: 1:39:45

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 4:35, John 4:38

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker breaks down John 4:35 into five parts. The first part focuses on the disciples' view of the harvest, where they believe there are still four months until the harvest. The second part examines the word 'behold' and its significance. The third part explores Jesus' view of the harvest, stating that it is already white and ready for harvesting. The fourth and fifth parts highlight the action verbs 'lift up' and 'look on,' emphasizing the importance of changing one's perspective and seeing the harvest as Jesus sees it. The speaker encourages the audience to be consumed with the same passion and enthusiasm for the harvest as Jesus.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

This message is not copyrighted and is not to be bought or sold. You are welcome to make copies for your friends and neighbors. If you would like additional messages, please go to our website for a complete listing at www.charityministries.org. If you would like a catalog of other sermons, please call 1-800-227-7902 or write to Charity Ministries, 400 West Main Street, Suite 1, EFRA PA 17522.

These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Amen.

Good morning to all of you and greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I was very blessed by the singing this morning. Thank you all for exhorting each other and exhorting me in the singing.

I am struggling with a cough, so I hope that you will have grace with me. I couldn't enter into the singing like I would have liked to with my voice, but that didn't hold my heart back. And I was so blessed.

The word that stuck out to me in the singing this morning is the word, immense. If you remember the song, Amazing Love, how can it be? It talks about the mercy of God. It's immense.

How big is immense? The brother talked about a light bulb 13 feet tall. Is that immense? I don't even know if that's immense. But the love of God, the mercy of God is immense.

The entire world fits inside the parameters of the mercy of God. Can you imagine that? God has mercy enough for anyone. That's immense.

So I praise the Lord for that truth. Well, before we pray, I would like to just share with you a little report that I got. My brother Tanner actually called me this morning at about a quarter after seven, I think, from Ghana.

And I wasn't expecting that call. I was there studying for this morning. But he called me and I thought, well, that was good.

He gave me a couple of things that were going on there and I thought I could share with you some news hot off the press. And it fit well with what I wanted to share with this morning. So I'll just share a little bit of what he shared with me.

They had just finished a service there at the retreat. And for those of you who aren't aware, our missionaries in Ghana, we have about eight families there now, I believe. And twice a year, they all meet together in the central city of Kumasi for several days of encouraging each other.

For some of them, that may be the only sermon they hear twice a year. That's usually my case. I preach a lot of sermons.

I don't hear many. And there are times where I go out to a village and me and another brother will preach. But, you know, it's a very different experience to just go there at a retreat and sit in a pew on a Sunday morning.

It often brings tears to your eyes to realize what a privilege it is to be fed the Word of God. But they sat this morning, Brother Denny is there with his family and he shared with them and Tanner was just sharing with me as he had been so blessed and ministered to this morning, which has already happened in Ghana five hours ago. And so he shared with me about that and I was blessed.

But he did ask me to share with you a little bit what God's been doing in their family's life. So this is by way of testimony and praise. I don't know how many of you have been praying for Tanner or were aware that he is building a new home.

Are most of you aware of that? That he's building a new home. And it's been a very stressful month for him, a very busy month. What he does is he leaves his wife and children and he takes a bicycle or a motorcycle, I'm not sure which he's been using, and goes out to a certain finger of the great Volta Lake there, which is the largest man-made lake in the world.

And then he puts his bike or his motorcycle in a canoe and they ferry him across and he has another ride until he gets to the village where he and his family are called to live. And he's been building his home there for the last month. So he'll go there.

He'll spend about four days sleeping in the village. And the village has, by just a miracle of God, a totally Islamic village that's offered to build him a house free of charge if he'll come live with them. So he gets there and he sleeps with the people and they built the house.

And he said just two days ago, just before he left for the retreat, they were able to finish all of the mud building of the house. And he was just thrilled. He was sharing with me how amazing it was to wake up in the morning and these people gather to work all Muslims.

They want him to live there. They're helping him to build a local style home out of mud, which takes about 30 people to get together for about five solid days of work. So about 150 man days to build a home like this.

And they did this all free of charge, opening their lives up to Tanner and his family to come and live with them. So there now they have their home up to this level. No roof or anything, but the mud is built up and it's the dry season there.

And Lord willing, unless they get a freak rain, the mud should stand until they can get it plastered and put a roof over it. So Tanner was very thrilled. And he asked me to share that here as a praise report for those of you who've been praying for him.

His family is very tired from it. He said his poor little boys have lived without a dad for most of the last month. And they're suffering a little bit emotionally, but they're all enjoying a time of rest together at the retreat.

And then I have one prayer request that I think after I share, I'd like us all to stand and pray about. One of our, I was not aware of this until this morning, one of the missionary families is unable to be at the retreat and that's Sarah Barker who live in Accra. They're from Charity, just down the road here.

And Sarah has been hospitalized in Accra with a fairly acute kidney infection. And so she is under a doctor's surveillance in Accra being administered antibiotics through IV and also giving her fluid. And they are praying that she would be able to be released from that and join them at the retreat for the last couple of days.

So they're missing one of our missionary families there. It seems Satan likes to attack us during this retreat time and keep someone sick and away from enjoying that revitalizing experience. So why don't we all stand up together and just lift our hearts and voices up.

I know with Bless Seth and Sarah, they don't know I'm sharing this here, but some of you know them from over at Charity. Let's just all lift our hearts. I'm gonna pray, but I would just ask you all to pray in your hearts and with your amens or with your thoughts lifted toward God as we pray for this family.

Lord, we do come before You in Jesus' name. And we think of our brother and sister Seth and Sarah Barker, Lord, alone in Accra and maybe a bit discouraged, Lord, that they're not able to come together with believers in this rare instance for these workers in Ghana, Lord, to come together and be encouraged in the Word of Christ. And I pray, Lord, that You'd bless Sister Sarah, Father.

I pray that You would heal her, Lord. You are the great physician, Lord. You know our bodies.

You remember our frame that were but dust. And I pray that You'd heal this young lady, Lord, and touch her, Father. She has a young baby too, Lord.

I pray that You'd just touch their family, have mercy upon them, and work a miracle, Lord, that even the doctors would not recognize and that they would be able to be dismissed and go enjoy this time of spiritual renewal, Lord. It's our prayer that You would smile upon them this morning and encourage them and fill that little room in an African hospital with Your holy presence, Lord, that we just encourage them and lift them up in the Lord. Strengthen their hand in God.

That's our prayer for them this morning, Lord. And we do pray for this time together in Your Word. Thank You for Your people.

Thank You for songs and praises of God in our mouth. And Lord, I pray that You'd meet with us and open the Word of God to us. In mercy, Lord.

In Jesus' name. If you would turn to the Gospel of John, chapter 4, for this morning's text. I would like to preach on John, chapter 4, verse 35, but I believe that we will read the story for the sake of context.

I believe that context is very important and this verse was given in the middle of a story. And so, I don't think it would waste our time to read the story before we share. I'm going to read this and then I'll give a little bit of introduction.

So, let me read this story to you and with you if you'll just follow along. John, chapter 4. We'll read verses 1 through 38. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples, then He left Judea and departed again into Galilee.

And He must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there.

Jesus, therefore being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well, and it was about the sixth hour, or twelve noon. There cometh the woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

For His disciples were going away unto the city to buy meat or food. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If Thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to Thee, Give me to drink, Thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given Thee living water.

The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. From whence then hast Thou that living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself and his children and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.

But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband, for Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom Thou now hast is not Thy husband. In that saidst Thou truly.

The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

For the Father seeketh such to worship Him. Praise God. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ. When He has come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto Thee am He.

And upon this came His disciples, and marveled that He talked with the woman, yet no man asked or said, What seekest thou, or why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come and see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city and came unto Him. In the meanwhile, His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master, eat.

But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said His disciples one to another, nor hath any man brought him ought to eat. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.

Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then come at the harvest. Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal.

That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. I sent you to reap that world, and you bestowed no labor. Other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." Amen.

Thank the Lord for His Word and for a beautiful story. I wish that we could even look at the discourse between Christ and the woman. I would like to focus on the discourse between Christ and His disciples that they had while the woman went to call the village out to hear the Lord Jesus.

But, I will just give due honor to the discourse that Jesus had with the woman. It's a beautiful discourse and a beautiful model for how to answer the questions of sinners. A very, very precious passage.

I would like to preach this morning on missions. The title of the message is Lift Up Your Eyes. And I don't know what you think about when you hear that, when I share that I'm going to preach on missions.

I hope that this message today will be positive and enthusiastic. I hope it will be contagious. As contagious as the flu that's been going around that we're sharing with one another.

I hope that this will be a contagious experience for you. And that it will be a blessing from the Lord. I know that sometimes because of the immensity of the task of missions and the challenge before us and the

suffering that it involves, perhaps it has become a bit negative in some of our minds.

I hope not. I hope that it will be a positive blessing this morning. I know, speaking for the testimony of our family, one of the biggest reasons my dad and I were speaking the other day about this, and I think dad and I agreed that one of the three great reasons that our family moved to Pennsylvania was to engage our family better in world missions.

The little church we were going to in Florida was a great blessing. We were going to a little Baptist church and they were very good to us and we learned a lot there. But there wasn't much chance for us to get involved in mission ourselves, personally.

It was more in the evangelical realm where the church is just a little bit of a couple missionary support and they weren't really involved. And we said, let's move up there and maybe we'll get involved more in missions. That was our testimony.

And God has been very good to us. And of us three children that have become married, I guess three of us have become involved in world missions. And I say that as a privilege and a joy and a testimony to the Lord's allowing us to be involved in something that's such a blessing.

I count it a great privilege to be involved that God has allowed us as a church and as a group of churches to get involved in what God is doing in the world. And I hope that you too see that as a privilege to be involved with a people who put such high emphasis on the kingdom of God being expanded in the whole world. It is a joy.

Not every church has that emphasis and I praise God for the emphasis that has historically and even more recently in the last few years that has been amongst our churches for this. You know, it's strange that I would be so excited about missions because I'll be very honest with you. My involvement with missions in the last few years has brought much suffering into my life.

It has not enriched me. Someone was surprised recently to learn that my bank account has not grown any in the last few years in my living on the field and I just chuckled at them. Missions is not good for your finances.

It's not very good for your health. It's not very good for your family. It's not very good for a lot of things like that.

It doesn't go with the prosperity gospel very well at all. Missions has brought only suffering to me and as I look into the future and consider a life lived out for the cause of missions, I can't imagine anything short of a lot of pain. But it has brought a wonderful joy with it.

I don't know how to share with you the mixture of those two things that is so strange that many people have remarked about missionaries that they're very strange. David Livingston, and I don't advocate everything he did in his life, but he suffered a lot and he came home and made a last minute speech right before he died to a group of students and he said, I've never made a sacrifice. You just wonder how he could make a statement like that.

Listen to this statement by Samuel Zwemer. I don't know how many of you are aware of him. He was the first missionary to Saudi Arabia years ago before Saudi Arabia was so close politically.

In 1897, Samuel Zwemer and his wife and his two daughters sailed to the Persian Gulf to work among the Muslims of Bahrain. Their evangelism was largely fruitless. In July 1904, seven years after arriving there, both of their daughters, ages four and seven, died within eight days of each other.

Nevertheless, 50 years later, Zwemer looked back on this period and wrote, The sheer joy of it all comes back. Gladly, would I do it all over again. That is the strange blending of suffering and joy that has been my experience in missions.

I have not lost my two daughters within eight days of each other. But as I read this man's testimony, he looked back and said, The sheer joy of it all comes back. Gladly, would I do it all over again.

Samuel Zwemer also said this, and I want you to just listen for a moment here. Our willingness to sacrifice for an enterprise is always in proportion to our faith in that enterprise. As much as you believe in something, you'll suffer for it.

The unoccupied fields of the world must have their Calvary before they can have their Pentecost. And that has been some of my limited experience. I do not say that to boast, but just to try to explain to you that while I'm thrilled with missions, and while I pledge until I die to do everything I can to get as many people involved in world missions as I can, it is not a bed of roses, and it is not all a fun experience, but it is a joyful thing to be involved in what God is doing.

Why is it so exciting? Just flip over for a minute to Romans 15. Paul looked at it as an honor, the work that the Lord had given him to go and spread the Gospel to the Gentiles, and Paul got approximately 40 people involved. That's what most people feel like, counting the names up in the New Testament, the people that worked with him.

Paul got about 40 people involved in taking the Gospel out to the Gentiles. And this is Paul's comment after having been beaten by the Jews, received 40 stripes to save one, like on three different occasions, and all that he went through. His comment still in Romans 15, verse 15, is he says that because of the grace that is given to me of God that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

You know, in other words, what he's saying is it's this honor, this privilege that God has given me to go out there and preach to the Gentiles. And you would think after all that he went through, he would think of it as a burden. But he says, no, this is the grace of God that's been given to me.

This is a joy that the Lord has given to me. You can flip back to John 4. Just to read a couple of other verses to you to show you how Paul was thrilled to be linked together in the work of God. In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul says that he has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

Now, when you give someone something, it's a gift. It's not a chore. It's not a burden.

It's not a grievous. It's a gift. Paul says he takes the ministry of reconciliation as a gift.

And in 2 Corinthians 6, Paul says we are workers together with Him. Maybe that is what's the most exciting thing about all of us getting involved in world missions. Is that God is in the business of redeeming people and building a kingdom for His Son.

And He is offering us, He's offering you a position as a partner in His business. Isn't that incredible? You know, when I think of my salvation, I think if God would have saved me and just made me a little slave in

the corner somewhere, that would have been great. I mean, gotten out of hell and out of my miserable self and just given me a tiny little corner in heaven as a servant.

Praise God, right? That's probably how you and I would have designed it if we would have been in charge of it. But no, God says, no, I'll do something beyond that. I'll adopt you and make you a son.

And you think, wow! But then God goes and says, you know what? I'll move beyond that. I'll make you a partner. I'll make you a joint heir.

I'll make you a fellow worker with Me. Isn't that amazing? I mean, God says, I'm not just going to make you a son like to sit at My table and eat My meal. I'm going to say, now son, now that you've eaten My table and eaten My meal with Me, I have something I'd like to go and do.

How would you like to join Me in that? What a great work that God has given us. Now you can see why Paul says, yeah, I have been nearly killed on several instances and I've suffered my whole life and I have this thorn in the flesh that won't go away. It's a gift.

It's an honorable gift to minister to the Gentiles. So I just want to lift that up to you, brothers and sisters. And I realize that many of you are partaking in this grace of God both through local missions here in the States and through involving yourself in world missions.

I just want to lift up at the beginning of this message that this is entirely positive. We have nothing to lose but our very lives. And we have everything to gain.

So, let's go to John 4. I want to especially make a fairly detailed study of verse 35 here. First, let's get the mood of the passage. Jesus is very excited here.

Can you see that? That's why I read the story. Okay, Jesus is very excited. Jesus is also very tired.

According to the passage, it's 12 o'clock noon and it's very hot and they've been walking most of the day. The Bible says they were walking from Jerusalem up to Galilee. So, they had spent the entire morning walking.

They surely got started at 5 or 6 in the morning to beat the heat of the day. He's been on the road for hours. He's very tired.

He sits on a well and the disciples offer, Jesus, should we go buy a meal in Samaria? And Jesus says, sure. Evidently, he was too tired to go with them. That's all I can assume other than the fact that he wanted to meet the woman there.

So, he sat on the well and they trooped into town to buy, like we do in Ghana, not to buy a nice meal at the Olive Garden, but just to buy some food off of the shacks by the side of the road and bring it back. And Jesus is sitting there and he has this discourse with this woman and is able to share the Lord with her and she runs into town to get people. And the disciples come back and evidently they spread out the meal and start eating.

And say, Lord, Lord, eat. And he says, I'm not hungry. Now, he was hungry before because he had allowed them to go into town to get me, but he says, I have food.

You guys have no clue. That food is not anything to me. You know, I'm paraphrasing it, but Jesus says, I had a different kind of food.

I'm not even hungry. And this is the enthusiasm that Jesus is in the middle of. And then Jesus says to them, and they're saying to each other, do you think somebody brought him something to eat? He doesn't even seem hungry.

And then Jesus opens his mouth and starts sharing. My meat, my food, my passion, my burning desire, that which makes me satisfied and full is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work. Now, that's the backdrop against which we get into verse 35, which I would like to spend the next half hour or so studying.

I would like to break verse 35 into five parts. If you want to take notes, I'll try to be distinct. Into five parts.

The first part is the disciples' view of the harvest, which is given to us in the first part of the verse there. They are yet four months and then come at the harvest. The second part is behold.

I'd like to look at the word behold. The third part is Jesus' view of the harvest, which is found in the end of the verse. They are white already unto harvest.

And then the fourth and fifth parts are the two action verbs that are found in the middle of the sentence. And those are the two verbs lift up and look on. So those are the five parts of this verse that I'd like to look at.

So let's start with the disciples' view of the harvest. So Jesus says to them, don't you say, in our King James here it's put as a question, don't you say that there are still four months until the harvest? Now, here in the King James we have it with a question mark. I'm not sure that they use question marks in the Hebrew or the Greek.

And as I looked at this, some Bible versions put this as a sentence. Do not say there are yet four months and then come at the harvest. You see how it could be that way.

Say not ye. And some put it as a question. So either Jesus was asking them the question, don't you have a saying or don't you guys think that there are still four months to the harvest? Or Jesus is saying to them, don't think that there are four months to the harvest.

But either way, it has the same meaning. And then Jesus later on is going to explain what He says. So this reminds me a little bit of the Sermon on the Mount.

As Jesus gets into this verse, if you remember in the Sermon on the Mount, He did this several times where He would say, you say this, but I say this. It was said this, but I say unto you this. He's going to correct their thinking.

So their view is there are yet four months and then cometh harvest. Now there's two ways of looking at this that they said. It's possible that they were speaking of the actual harvest in Palestine at the time.

It's possible that Jesus was saying, you have a proverb that there are four months to harvest. Or it's even possible that this very day that they spoke this, there was four months until the Jewish harvest, Like they were exactly four months before their harvest. That's one possibility.

The second possibility is He's speaking spiritually. That you feel that the spiritual harvest is still sometime in the future. So I'd like to look at both of those.

Let's look at the physical one first. Let's say that the disciples were four months away from harvest. That, you know, as they looked on the fields in those times, you know, there was just a little teeny plant out in the field and there was yet four months.

I believe that the winter wheat crop is a long crop. You might have four months in there. And they really were four months away from harvest.

So Jesus says, I know that you guys are thinking that we're four months away from harvest. That is your opinion. Well, let's think about that a little bit, brothers and sisters, and what that means to us.

So that means that they were operating in a different sphere than the Lord Jesus. They, as they looked around them, they were looking at the tiny little wheat crop just bursting through the ground. And Jesus was looking at a different harvest.

They were looking at the natural things of this world. And that is not wrong. However, we do have to remember that Jesus said, after these things do the Gentiles seek.

What do the Gentiles seek after? They seek after what to eat, wherewithal to be clothed. Is there something else? Maybe where to house themselves. These are the things that the Gentiles seek.

These are carnal things. Now the word carnal, as the way I'm using it, does not necessarily mean what we think of. You know, when we think of the word carnal, we think of like going to the mall and playing video games, and you know, really like evil, worldly, bad influence stuff.

But Jesus isn't talking about carnal as in you love the world and you're bent against the Father. This speaking of carnal here is just simply natural. The word carnal, from where we get our word carnivorous, or meat eating, simply talks about the meat or the flesh.

And Jesus doesn't use the word carnal here. Paul uses it later in his books of the Corinthians. But we could say that this is a carnal reasoning.

They're thinking in the world. There's yet four months to the wheat harvest. They have their eyes very solidly focused upon the wheat harvest, which would have been their manner of living.

We could compare that to having our eyes focused on our job or on the new house that we're trying to buy, on our payments, or whatever it is. So Jesus says, I know that you guys, you disciples, your mind, your heart, your thinking is on the harvest, which is still four months away. And you know, I just want us to think, brothers and sisters, that it is very natural for us to think on those things, and I perfectly understand that.

It's very natural for us to think about our jobs as men and the house that we'd like to get, or the food for us ladies, and the next grocery store trip that we need. Those things are natural, and it was natural that the disciples sitting there eating were probably looking at the fields and thinking about that. But I will warn us that we have to be very careful with our minds, don't we? Because Paul said to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life.

Now, he's not just meaning to be evilly minded, to be thinking about evil things, but to continually have your mind focused on carnal things kills spiritual meditation. Is that right? I'm not talking about evil things. I mean carnal things.

To continually be thinking about my job, and house payments, and the auction that I should go to. This will deaden spiritual life down. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life.

These patterns of thinking do work against patterns of spiritual thinking. The disciples were unable to see the spiritual harvest that Jesus brings out later, because they were focused on the wheat harvest. Again, nothing wrong with the wheat harvest.

It needs to be engaged in, but it can't consume our minds. Well, let's look at the second way that the disciples may have been thinking. I believe that Jesus might have been speaking a bit tongue-in-cheek, or a bit, maybe a better word, Jesus often had a double meaning when He spoke.

And I believe, as I understand the Jewish thought at that time about the harvest of the Gentiles and the Samaritans and all these people, that the Jews pushed that harvest out into the future. I think that most of the Jews, you know, in reading the Old Testament, would have felt like there was probably a time coming in the end when Jerusalem would be lifted up and all nations would flow unto it, and there's some passages that would intimate those things. And so spiritually, they would have also been feeling like there's yet four months.

In other words, there's yet a season. We are not in the harvest season. We're not in the dispensation when the nations of the world are gathered in.

There's still some time coming before that. I believe that's how the Jews would have perceived it. So, this was a different view of missions.

A view that said there is still time. It's not our responsibility. They didn't sense the urgency that Jesus sensed because there was still four months.

And that's a very reasonable excuse. If there are still four months, then it's no need to sharpen your hoe today or your sieve. It's no need to lay aside other responsibilities in terms of the harvest because after all, there's still four months.

Or there's still a space of time. So, Jesus says to them, isn't that what you're thinking? That there is still time before the harvest. And I would encourage us, brothers and sisters, that I think sometimes that we tend to go that way in our hearts and minds too.

Now, I know that all of us in this room, I'm quite sure we believe that we live in the day of grace. And this is the dispensation of grace. This is the time for the peoples of the world to come to the Lord Jesus.

He's been lifted up so all men can be drawn unto Him. We would know all of those things. And yet, in our hearts, sometimes we live or act like there is still a space of time before things get urgent.

I mean, once the weed is ripe and white in the field, there's no more time for delay. You can't even go visit anybody. You know, it's time.

But once when the weed is still this tall, there's plenty of time. And I think there might be in our hearts sometimes that thought that, well, there is still time. Surely, it's not that urgent.

If we believe there are still four months until the harvest, the harvest or the fields of the world will not play a daily part in our life. Four months before the harvest, you don't think every day about the harvest. But you know, I want to tell you something that's a little scary.

I just read this quote this week. It could apply to many things other than missions. But listen to this for a minute.

Nothing that does not occur daily will ever dominate your life. That's true, isn't it? Nothing that does not occur daily will ever dominate your life. Now, we eat every day.

So, it dominates our life. We sleep every day. It dominates our life.

We eat with our wife and family every day. There are certain things that dominate our life. But nothing that does not occur daily will ever dominate your life.

And if the harvest is perceived to be four months out into the future as the disciples felt, then it wouldn't have dominated their life. It wouldn't have dominated their thinking. But the Lord Jesus was obviously very opposite.

And I don't want to get ahead of myself. I'm going to get into that when we look at His view of the harvest. The Lord Jesus was obviously dominated by the harvest to such a point that food, which normally dominates a person, was not appealing to Him.

The disciples were spread around the well, I assume, on the ground, eating food, and Jesus seemed not to even be interested. He put them off to the point that they felt surely He had had a meal. He was that dominated by the harvest the same way that they were dominated by food.

It was a daily reality that stood in front of Him, this reality of the harvest. But to the disciples, it was not a daily reality. And I just want to ask us, as we sit here and think about it, how is it for us? How is it for me? I was sick last week for about three or four days, and it was a very good time.

I don't know how you find it, but in the last couple of years of my life, every time I'm sick, I get malaria sometimes, every time I'm sick, I know God's going to do something in my life. Because I've just had some really special times with the Lord when I'm sick enough to stop and meditate for a couple of days. And I was sick this last week, and I told my wife, well, hey, maybe God will do something.

And God started opening up this passage to me, and oh, I was just thrilled all day long. I just couldn't get off some of these phrases here about lifting up your eyes. It was like God used that sickness to just lift up my eyes.

And oh, I was so blessed. But I just want to probe into your heart as God probed into mine. What is the harvest like to us? Could we honestly say with the disciples, we have a little bit of that same thought.

Yep, there's four months. Of course, the harvest is important, but there is four months. And there is a little bit of a space, leeway between now and then in which a lot of other things could be done.

Alright, let's move on to the second part of the verse. And that's the little word, behold. And I actually allocated a whole point for this, because this stood out to me as I was reading the verse.

I looked through the book of John, the rest of the book of John, and I could find, somebody could correct me if I'm wrong, but I only found two or maybe three instances, including this verse, where Jesus uses the word behold right in the middle of a passage like this. Jesus isn't speaking to people that are across the valley that He's trying to get their attention. Like John, when he saw Jesus, he said, behold, the Lamb of God.

Well, that was to get people's attention. But here, Jesus has the disciples' attention. He's already speaking to them.

He's already discoursing. But He pauses His discourse as if He really wants to get their attention and says to them, behold. That would be a strange thing for me to say if I were in the middle of talking to you and saying, yes, and brother, I would really like to come over today.

Brother, you know, then you would, oh, you would sit up. Why are you addressing me in the middle of our discourse in a very personal way? What does the word behold mean? In modern day English, maybe it means, look here, listen, pay attention. We don't use that word behold anymore.

But it's like Jesus is speaking to the disciples. They're having their lunch around Him. He says, don't you guys, aren't you thinking that there are still four months until the harvest? Listen, and they all kind of look.

I'm about to say something very important. Listen, pay attention. In the middle of His sentence here, Jesus pauses and gives this strong word of behold.

Look and see. So I just wanted to underline that for us. Let's go on to the third point here.

I'm going to skip over the two action verbs for a minute and go to Jesus' view of the harvest so we can contrast the two. Jesus' comment on the harvest is, let's put it together here. Jesus says, you say there are yet four months and then the harvest is coming.

I say that the fields are white already to harvest. If you take the verbs out of there, He gives them in between there, He gives them two things to do. But contrasting the two thoughts, their thought was that there were four months.

Jesus' thought is they are white already. Let's tear apart this phrase just a little bit here. Do a couple of word studies if you would put your thinking cap on here.

This is something I can do in the States when I'm preaching. I can't do word studies. I just preach in pictures and stories.

But here, I know that we like words. So I started looking at a couple of these words. The first thing that I notice is that Jesus uses the plural form.

Do you notice that? Jesus says, look on the fields for they are white to harvest. Both of those are plural forms. Fields and they.

Then I looked at the word that Jesus used for this word fields. And that I could find in the Bible, it's only used two times. It's a very different word.

Other times the word field is used like in the parable of the sower, it talks about field. Remember it says the field is the world. And other times it says the field.

So, any other time in the Bible the word field, the word that's used is agro, which that's pretty obvious for us to figure out what that means because we have a lot of words that start with these three letters, agriculture and words like that. And that's obviously speaking about farming. Agro.

But this isn't the word that's used in this case. In this case, we have a new word introduced to us. Quora.

And it's only used twice in the New Testament. Here and one time in the book of James. And this word, quora, let me just read you the definition.

The idea of empty expanse, as in a space of territory, more or less extensive, often including its inhabitants. Now that's interesting that that's the word Jesus chose, isn't it? So Jesus switches the metaphor here from the farming metaphor that the disciples were talking about into a people metaphor. In other words, this word quora, here's a couple of translations that the Strongs gives.

to describe the fields, coast, county, fields, ground, land, or region. I really like the word region because Jesus is saying, look on the fields, look on the open territories, the quora, the expanses that are inhabited. Look on the regions, the counties.

And this is the word that Jesus chose to use. Isn't that interesting? It's different than an agricultural word. Let's look at the next word that Jesus uses.

Jesus says, they are white already. The words white and already go together. He would have only needed one of those words, but he chose to use two.

They are white already. The word white obviously would speak of the color that grain turns as it opens up out of the head. In Ghana, we grow a lot of sorghum or millet, and as that head begins to open, and then the stalk sags, we say that the food has become white.

In Ghana, the term that's used in the language that I speak to mean that the harvest is ripe is they say the sorghum bends, or the sorghum bows. You know, when the sorghum begins to fall over from the heaviness of the grain, it's time to harvest it. This is what Jesus is saying.

It's ripe, it's bending, it's white. And then he uses the word already. Now, these two together make a present perfect tense, I believe, if I'm right.

My mother would know better than I do. She did a wonderful job of teaching me grammar, but I didn't always pay attention. But I understand it's a present perfect tense.

They're white already. That means it happened in the past, and now today it is completed. They're white already.

Jesus says, you understand there to be yet four months. I understand, and of course, Jesus is right, that the process of ripening and completion is behind us. So we're in a state of perfect present tense.

It's complete. All ready. You just take that word already and think about it for a minute.

It's all ready. Sir, your room is all ready. The car is all ready.

Here's the keys. The harvest is all ready. Waiting around is not going to make it more ripe, is it? Once grain is ripe, waiting around will not make it more ripe.

What will waiting around do? Those of you who are farmers? You'll lose it. There's only a small space of time in there where you will actually lose it. Grain cannot become more ripe than ripe.

The next word after ripe is the word rotten, or spoiled, or rancid. And even grain can get to that point. I've learned a lot more about farming since I live in Ghana, and I farm several acres there by hand.

And I have learned a lot more about the sobriety of the harvest. That's something that we can hardly understand in America. I don't even know how to put our mind into that.

Even those of us who are farmers here, I don't know if we have farmers here, maybe a couple. But if our crop fails, there's always Agway, you can buy feed for the cows, or if your garden doesn't produce this year, hey, even if you need to go on a family trip that we go, well, the neighbors can have it. When you come back, there's always Glenwood, and Lawrence Martin, he has cheap produce.

And we do not have an urgent sense of harvest. We lost that several generations ago in this country. But if you would come and live with me, with the Konkombas, they speak of the Lidichiel, that's their word for the harvest.

It literally means the cutting of the sorghum. And the Lidichiel, everything in their calendar year rotates around the Lidichiel. The Lagurigmalinawe Lidichiel.

It still remains four months until the cutting of the sorghum. I mean, that phrase, how many months it remains, or how many months have come to pass after the sorghum, is crucial to them. Because if the sorghum is not cut and harvested, people will die.

As happened in the 1990s in our area. They tell me the stories of when a famine came through and they didn't harvest, and people just died. They don't go to Glenwood.

They don't have these kind of things. They die. So they realize that our very lives are watching this harvest, and they go out every day, and they check the field, and they check, and right when they think that grain is ready, everything else stops, and the harvest commences.

So Jesus says, it's white already. I've gone and tested it. I've looked at it, and now, it has ripened.

It will ripen no more. It is white already. So this is Jesus' contrasted view with the disciples' view.

They're very different views, actually. There's four months remaining, or it is white already. Then the last little phrase in Jesus' view is to harvest.

And it's very simple English, but as we break it down and look at it, it really opens up to us. They're white already to harvest. Jesus' view is there's only one reason that those fields are out there.

They're not to look at. You know, here in the States, grain is not a precious commodity to us. So some of us love to drive out through the Midwest during the season of grain, and we find it a very beautiful thing.

But Jesus says there's one purpose and one purpose only for these white already fields. To me, Jesus says, those fields bring one word to mind. To harvest.

They are white unto the harvest. They have come to this point for one reason, and that is the word harvest. This word harvest is different.

Jesus speaks of two harvests in His discourses. In a couple of His parables, Jesus speaks of an end of the world harvest. You know, Jesus said, let the wheat and the tarrys grow together until the angels come and the great harvest.

That's talking about when all peoples of the world are taken up to the judgment seat. That's not the harvest Jesus is speaking of now. Because 2,000 years ago, He proclaimed this harvest ripe.

And the ripeness of the final harvest when the angels come still hasn't come. But this harvest, this harvest where you and I are the harvesters, it's ripe. And Jesus said, the fields to me are a call for harvest such that I'm really not even hungry when I meditate on it.

That's how involved Jesus was. Alright, let's look at the two verbs in the middle. Then at the end, I'll try to make some more practical applications for us.

Let's look at the two verbs. The first one is lift up. Lift up your eyes.

So this is the fourth point as we're looking at this verse. Number four, lift up your eyes. That's a very simple phrase, isn't it? But this stuck out to me when I was studying it.

Lift up your eyes. This means that this whole thing could be overlooked. Is that right? You don't say lift up your eyes to something that's obvious.

You say lift up your eyes when something is on the fringes of your vision that you haven't noticed. I was trying to think of an illustration for you that we could use to talk about this. Of an illustration of how you have to lift up your eyes to notice something.

I don't know if any of you have ever been very busy working outside, and meanwhile a beautiful sunset is being painted across. And you're out there as a guy, you know, you're out there mowing the lawn or whatever you are. Suddenly your wife goes out and goes, honey, did you see the beautiful sunrise? And you just kind of, oh, that's beautiful.

No, I hadn't seen it. Well, you were out there the entire time, but because you were so engrossed in what was right before you, that was not obvious to you. It was obvious, it was sitting there.

It was not hidden, but you had not lifted up your eyes yet. Another illustration I want to use for you is when I was learning to drive, I remember very well an older man and then later my father telling me the same thing. They said, Weston, when you drive, you are focused on a point too close to in front of your car.

Do you fathers, is this how you tell your boys to when you're learning to drive? Is that you need to set your field of vision further out. About 10 car lengths out ahead or something like that. And when you drive, you look out there and you know what happens? When you set your field of vision out there, you'll still see the things that happen close.

That's how your eyes are. But did you know our eyes are in such a way that you can't see beyond where your point of focus is set. Do you understand what I mean? If you watch right in front of your car and the light turns red up there, you won't see it till you're right on it.

But if you watch right out there, you'll see the light turn red. And if a dog runs across, you pick it up. Your lower field of vision picks up.

Oh, there's something in front of me. So if you look right in front of you, you end up rear-ending somebody. And I remember my dad telling me, Wes, look further out.

And you kind of, ooh, that seems scary. I mean, you're just, as a new driver, you want to look right there in front and see what's happening. Dad said, look further out.

So you're looking further out. You'll see the stuff that happens here. I want to use that as an illustration of what Jesus is saying here.

Jesus is saying, lift up your eyes. It's like He's just going to each of His disciples and just kind of lifting their chins up. Oh, look out further than where you are seeing.

Shake yourself. Tear yourself away for a minute from what is right in front of you. And it might be a good thing, but Jesus is saying, just tear yourself away from that thing for just a minute.

And blink and refocus and see what's out there further. And you may be shocked. All right, let's look at the next verb and then I'll put the two verbs together and we'll talk about some applications.

The next verb is look on. So now you've lifted up. Now Jesus brings another verb.

Look on the fields. Look on. It's one verb in the Greek.

And again, it's a little bit different. I think it only occurs a couple of times. Thea omae.

Look on. And I'll just read you the definition here. This is a prolonged form of a verb.

So it's prolonged. To look closely at. By implication, to perceive.

To visit. To look upon. Now isn't that interesting? It's a prolonged form.

To look closely at something. To perceive it. Or even to visit it.

When I read this definition again, I had to jump back to where I live in Ghana in the Konkombas. And a verb that they often use, that when I first came to Ghana, I couldn't understand. In their language, it's the verb gwan.

And the verb means to check out or to visit. But they would use that word in interesting ways that I couldn't understand sometimes. Like a common expression in Konkomba is nkantom gwan bukpvale.

And it means I'm going to visit the farm. Sometimes I'd see them walking. Obviously they weren't going to work.

It was late in the evening. And I would think, why are you visiting the farm? That doesn't make any sense to me. You know, to use the word visit in that sense.

And they just put a hoe over their shoulder and they'd go in the evening. It's almost dark. But see, the farm to them is everything.

And this harvest is crucial. And what they say when they mean to visit is the way that we would say, I'm going to inspect. I'm going to check on.

And they would go out and this farm is their life. And they just walk around, looking at the grain, admiring the good heads, feeling sorry for the weak heads. They look and see if there's any critters that are destroying it.

Not necessarily doing work, but they're just looking. I've got to go visit. My heart is on the farm.

You know, and I have to go visit it. And they just walk. Just see now, the Konkombas just walking around.

Maybe they pull a weed or two, but they don't do much. They're visiting. They're visiting the farm as you would a close friend because it's very important to them.

This is the same type of word that Jesus uses. Lift up your eyes. Now look on.

Visit as it were in your mind. Take a long, prolonged look, the Greeks. What is a prolonged look? What word would we use for that in English? To gaze? Anybody else have an idea? What word would you use if you want to take a prolonged look at something? Study.

Stare. Admire. Focus.

Y'all are getting some good words I didn't think of. Scrutinize. That's good.

I like some of those words. To study. To look on.

To take a long gaze. To admire. To think about.

To scrutinize. This is the word that Jesus is using. Lift up your eyes.

Now do you see that out there? Now look on. I mean, really look. Or maybe even visit in your mind.

Visit. There's a difference between looking and seeing. Seeing is passive.

Let me give you an illustration. I could ask you this morning, did you see, who here saw some trees on the way to church today? Yeah, most of you did. I mean, it just, that's passive.

Who saw an elm tree on your way to church today? Now I guarantee you that most of you passed by an elm tree. I'm not a good tree person. But I'm sure you did, but you weren't looking for it, right? Now the trees, they just stood out to you.

That's a passive thing. There's so many trees that it's a passive verb. I mean, you weren't focusing on any trees, but the fact that there were trees, they occurred to you.

But to find an elm tree would require an active looking. I looked for and found an elm tree on the way to church. I'm sure we all passed them.

I'm just, I'm sure we did. But none of us saw them. None of us looked for them.

And so we didn't see them. None of us looked for trees either, but there's so many of them that we happened to see them. This is what Jesus is talking about.

The heart, though it's huge, though it's white, it's something that doesn't just occur to you. It's something that doesn't just strike you. It's something that doesn't just lay upon the field of your mind.

It's something that takes an active look. So evidently, in our Christian life, it would be possible to go through our experience without really comprehending the amazing, the amazingly huge or immense white harvest. That's why Jesus puts these verbs in.

Jesus didn't waste time and He wouldn't have put these verbs if it was something so obvious. Jesus wanted us to look. Now, let's talk about this a little bit in a practical way.

You can turn to Mark chapter eight, because I would like to look at a story there in just a minute here. What am I saying, brothers and sisters? I'm sure you've been making applications a little bit as I've been going along, but I wanted to spread out that whole study of the verse before we actually start thinking about it. What am I saying? What is Jesus saying? I don't claim to understand everything that Jesus is saying, but I hope that we can catch the enthusiasm with which Jesus is saying this.

As Jesus is leaning forward, get into the story. Jesus leans forward on the well, refuses lunch, and says, God, there's something way more than lunch. I want you to lift up your eyes and look on the fields and harvest just like I see it so that you would be consumed like I'm consumed.

So that your meat and your desire and your fulfillment would come like mine does in doing my Father's will in this harvest. I am asking us to constantly stretch. It takes a stretch.

Both of those two words are stretch. Lift up your eyes. Stretch.

And then look, gaze, scrutinize. Both of these are stretching words. And I'm asking all of us, let's stretch ourselves.

I'm not just up here advocating that you should think about Ghana more. I hope that you can see beyond my love for the country of Ghana and specifically for the Concomitant people. That's just where God has called me now.

And I have found Ghana to be only a stepping stone out further and there are many harvests that I gaze at from Ghana. I have not found my heaven there. I have not found something which consumes all my passion.

It does consume all my passion. But on the other hand, I still feel an obligation to lift up my heart and stretch. I still sometimes driving through Ghana, I see about other tribes there.

I think about them. And Charity and I have taken a couple of evangelistic trips inside of Ghana to other tribes like in the Upper West region. Oh, our hearts were stirred to go to an area that's very unreached.

And just different places. My heart is still constantly stirring and I'm asking you, brothers and sisters, that this is a discipline in which we must engage ourselves. Are you lifting up your eyes and gazing on a harvest? And again, I'm not just saying to you, go work in Ghana.

That may be one target of your lifting up eyes. One target of your gaze. But I'm asking you to be creative.

Jesus is giving the disciples a lot of room to be creative. Jesus was probably using the Samaritans as an illustration. It's very likely the Samaritans were coming up out of the village to see Him and that Jesus pointed their way and said, look at the field.

They're right in the harvest. But the Samaritans were only one illustration. Jesus was saying to the disciples, I want to teach you to do something that I do that fulfills me like food fulfills you.

I want to teach you to look and to gaze and to yearn and to long for the harvest beyond where your normal field of vision would exercise itself. That's what I'm asking us to do here, brothers and sisters. I'm so glad coming back here, I have found that the church here at Ephrata has lifted up their eyes and stretched themselves out to a group of people called the Old Colony Mennonites in the Southwest.

And that's very exciting. They are a people group. And you all have set your gaze upon them and you are beginning to long after that harvest.

That's biblical. That's right. And I praise God for that.

But I would ask us to keep doing it more. Keep doing it more. I do believe that God gives certain people a certain harvest to work in.

And that's beautiful. But I think it's a good exercise for all of us to keep continually lifting up our eyes and looking and stretching ourselves. It will keep us from getting stale.

It will keep us involved in the Kingdom of God. And I'm firmly convinced we're still not doing all that we could do. Thank you for those amens.

I appreciate that. I want us to believe that there's still more that we could do. We haven't yet striven unto blood.

We haven't yet gone the whole way. And I know, though, I bless each and every one of you for your part in the harvest, whether it's here in Ephrata or whether it's in the Southwest or wherever your heart stretches out to. I'm asking you, let it stretch more.

Let it stretch more. We want to see people the way that God sees them. Look here in Mark 8, verse 22.

And we have an interesting story here. The story of a blind man. I don't know of any other story like this in the Gospels.

There's just so many interesting miracles. But this blind man comes to Jesus and wants to be healed. And Jesus does something very different.

In verse 23, Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of town. And when he had spit upon his eyes and put his hands upon him, He asked him if he saw anything or saw aught. And he looked up and said, I see men as trees walking.

Well, that was an improvement, wasn't it? I mean, total blindness. If at least you could see forms, it would deliver you from much danger. It would deliver you from walking into fires.

Or, you know, it would... That was a great significant salvation from his blindness to see if he would just squint. You know, that's how he was seeing now. Forms and some color.

And Jesus didn't say, Well, praise God, brother. You've been delivered from something. Jesus put his hands on him a second time and made him look up.

And he was restored. And he saw every man clearly. Praise God.

And I think of this, if you could just allow me to make a little analogy. Maybe I'm slipping back into my African mode of looking at things, but I see an analogy in this that is how we Christians are sometimes. Yes, my eyes have been opened, praise God, but I still confess, I still see men as trees walking.

When you guys get all excited about the harvest out there somewhere, I don't see that. Maybe we need another touch from Jesus that now I see clearly. I'm amazed how people see things very, very different.

You know, you look at people that aren't Christians. I mean, they look at things entirely different. They look at people totally different.

Go to 2 Corinthians 5, verse 16. There's another Scripture that talks about the way that we see people. And my heart is being stirred by this, brothers and sisters.

I haven't arrived. I want to see people how Jesus sees them. Look in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 16.

This is talking about the new work that Christ does in us. And He says, Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh. Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new.

Then He talks about the ministry of reconciliation. I believe in verse 16 what He's saying is, Henceforth, know we no man after the flesh. I see people and notice people and know people in an entirely different way than I knew before.

I'll just give you one illustration. Let's look at the Muslim people group. I mean, they're huge.

It's not even fair to lump them all together. They're so big. But let's, for the sake of time, do that.

And I remember some years ago, working for my father, we had a dealer up in New Jersey. And it was just after September 11th, 2001. 2001, you know, the big terrorist attack in New York.

And I think this dealer is probably only 40 miles from ground zero. And I drove a load of furniture up there. And I was talking to this guy.

And my heart is burdened for the Muslims. You know, I love them as a people. And I mentioned to this man, as he's not a Christian at all, and as we were discussing, and he was discussing this and who these Muslim people are.

I said, do you know, I love the Muslim people. I would be honored to give my life for them. And I remember he jumped back like it was a spider and said, don't say that.

And I said, what? He said, don't say that around here if you value your life. And you know, this man was very... He was... His heart was in this thing. He's only 40 miles away from a terrorist attack.

And he... Boy, we saw those people from such a different light. I mean, he despised the Muslim people, you know, because he blamed them for the attacks there on September 11th. And he couldn't believe it when I said that I could love a group of people like that.

You know, he just... There you see the difference of the way that... That was Christ in me looking out and seeing this field. And he was saying, you are out for lunch. How could you see that? But the Bible says, henceforth know we know man after the flesh.

I don't know people like that anymore. I don't have enemies. I love my enemies.

You know, when we see things like Jesus does, it just totally changes our perspective. And I want you to think with me how many men of God have been changed and had their lives changed simply because they exercised themselves in this one thing. Probably the man that comes to my mind the fastest, and maybe it's already come to some of your mind, is William Carey.

I understand that William Carey spent the early years of his Christian life working as a cobbler, as a shoemaker. And he was there in England. And as he was nailing shoes together, he put a map of the world up right beside his cobbler's bench.

And history would tell us that he actually drew it himself. He tried to find the best data that he could. And he like drew this hand-drawn picture of a map.

And then later on, he would write numbers in there of how many people lived here and there. And they tell us, people that walk in and visit him, that as he was there putting shoes together, he gazed on this map and he wept. That was his career.

You know, he put shoes together and looked at the map. And God birthed in the man's heart a vision for the world just through a piece of paper that other people that walked into the room would have said, that's a map. That's a drawing.

You drew it yourself. You know, what is that doing for you? But henceforth, we know no man after the flesh. He didn't see men as trees walking.

He didn't just see outlines of countries. He saw souls. And he saw groups of people.

And he saw needs here. And he was moved and motivated. That was for him, that was his telescope through which he viewed the world and stretched out his heart unto the world.

And God birthed in that man a missionary heart. And probably through him, brought about the modern missionary movement through the eyes, through the heart of one man who was willing in his little converse shop to stretch out his heart. And he'd never been any further.

He didn't have the internet where he could see video clips of these people. He didn't have slideshows to go to. I mean, this was a little hand-drawn black and white map.

And through that, he was able to stretch our hearts. Oh, may God do it among us too. I am very blessed.

Again, I want to underline the things that I see God doing in our church here and in our churches. I am very blessed as I think in the last few years how God has stirred us. Let's take the Muslim people as an illustration there.

I believe that several years ago, we would have only had maybe one family in all of our churches committed to the Muslim people. And that would have been Mike and Tammy and then later on Ernie and Anna there to the Doumbas. But my brother Tanner was sent to the Gonja tribe making two.

We have another family from North Carolina who has moved to Turkey just several weeks ago. And as I think about these things, and I think about how God has been turning the hearts of our churches toward this, I see it as the hand of the Lord. The world population of Islam is between 1.2 and 1.5 billion.

And I know that we think, well, why do we even talk about numbers like that? It's so above our heads. But you just can't even wrap your mind around that. That's one-fifth or one-sixth of the world's population.

I would say that they're worthy of several of our families. Just to give you an idea of that population, there's about 300 million people in America, so that's four times the population of this country. If you can imagine all the people in America times four.

If there were four Americas, would you consider that a worthy field of reaching? I mean, we live in one county in America and we can't imagine all the needs here. Four times America with only a handful of missionaries among them. Are you aware that there are between one and seven million Muslims in America? It's a very disputed term.

Most people believe there's three or four million. I would just like to give you a personal glimpse inside of that that my brother Caleb and I had the opportunity of having. When we went with Moe's to Alberta several months ago, on the way back, God gave us a five-hour layover in Detroit.

And at first, we had bought our ticket cheap. And so that was what they gave us. And at first, I thought, maybe I should complain to the airline, see if I can get another.

And then the Lord said to me, no, Weston, I want you to go into Dearborn. For years now, I've wanted to go to Dearborn, Michigan because I understand there's a large Arab Muslim community there. So I said, yeah, amen, Lord.

And so Caleb and I, we got out of the airport and hired a taxi and just 15 minutes ride from the airport, you come right there into Henry Ford, has his big plant there. And I don't know if you realize, if you drive a 150, it was put together by Arab Muslims who work there at the Ford facility. I told the Muslim taxi driver, he was from Iraq, and I told him to just drop us off right in the middle of the Arab community.

So he said, OK, and we were able to share with him a little bit. And he dropped us off and we got out there. And I tell you, if you would like to lift up your eyes and look on a field, that is what we did there for about three hours.

We walked different directions on the streets and we didn't see white people. All you see is Arab Muslim people. I mean, fully veiled women, you know, people speaking Arab.

It is a little Middle East right here, just 10 hours drive from here, 12 hours drive from here. I was shocked. My heart was so burdened.

I felt like Paul when he walked through Athens. But I couldn't believe it. I'm not in the Middle East.

I'm not in Beirut, Lebanon. I'm not in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. This is just right here.

These are the people that build our pickup trucks. And right here, I couldn't believe it as we walked around it. Restaurants, everything signs in Arabic.

You know, this is, this is the little Middle East right here. There are four, between four and 500,000 of them just in Detroit. Four and 500,000, that's more people than live in this county.

That's how many Arab Muslims are in Detroit alone. Can you imagine? But what an exercise that was. I have not been able to shake that off my heart.

It has been on my heart, I think I could say daily since we got back several months ago, even with my heart in Ghana and my heart here in different places. I just, God, I can't believe that. I will not lay that down until I see, I would like to see a family dedicated to that field.

I just, wow, Lord, look at that harvest. I can't believe that. And I came back and tried to look and put my feelers out and feel around.

I don't sense a lot of Christians that are trying to minister there. But what an opportunity right here in our country. I'm just trying to give you an example.

That was just a little taxi ride out of a flight layover that we had. But an example of a way that you can lift up your eyes and look on a harvest field and it will motivate your life. Because of our shared lifestyle values, I actually believe that conservative Anabaptists may be the best Muslim missionaries and several Muslims have said that too.

You know, we have a lot of shared values with Muslims. We believe in, you know, family, large family. And we believe that our women shouldn't be out in the workforce.

And I know there's differences there, but you think how many shared values we have and modest apparel and, you know, we're against Hollywood. And there's a lot of shared values, so much to the point that recently an Anabaptist lady was in another country and the Muslims said, it wouldn't take much for you to become a Muslim. You guys are almost like Muslims.

You know, she was sharing about the Anabaptist faith. And what they were saying is your lifestyle and your values line up very closely to ours. And I think that we are awakening to the fact that God has given us a bridge to cross over there.

And I'm just sharing my heart there of one area that the Lord has stretched my... I don't work among a Muslim people. You may not all know that. I work among an animistic people, but my heart is stretching out toward them.

Just another practical point here. Jesus didn't say the harvest is easy. He did say the grain is white, but He didn't say it'll fall off into your basket.

And I think sometimes we kind of get the impression that if a harvest is very easy, then it's of the Lord. And if it's not, it's not. You know, if we go to an area and people just start getting saved all over the place, then that's of the Lord.

If it's not, it's not. I think that God does give a lot of very open doors. The tribe I live with is very open and it helped to motivate our church years ago into world missions.

But not all harvests are easy. You know, you look at a potato harvest. It's a potato harvest when it's ripe.

It's just as ripe as a corn harvest, right? But it's all under the ground. And if you'd never harvest it, you'd think this is a pain. I mean, this crop is ripe and you want me to take a shovel and dig every one of those things out of the ground? You know, that's a very time-consuming harvest compared to corn where you just go up and, you know, just tear it right off the stalk.

But it's the same level of ripeness, isn't it? You know, beans and peas must be picked off and then shelled and gotten out of their shells or you have to have a big machine to shell it. And we can say, well, that, you know, it's much harder than wheat where you just cut it and thrash it. But it's still ripe.

So let's don't get confused that a harvest must be easy to authenticate God's interest in it. When Jesus looked out and saw all those fields, they weren't all easy fields. And that's why I like the fact that Jesus used the plural form.

Jesus saw fields, regions, coras. And He looked out there and saw maybe some of them were potatoes, some of them were corn, but He saw that God was in it. And He was excited about it.

Jesus was constantly stretching beyond. You know, there was one occasion I didn't write down the verse here, but I think you remember the one occasion where Jesus was out somewhere and He healed people all day. And then He went and He prayed either early in the morning or at nighttime.

And the disciples came and said, Jesus, the people are looking for you. They want you to come. And Jesus said, no, we must go today because, how did Jesus say it? I must preach in other villages also for therefore am I sent.

I'm sorry, I'm not quoting it word for word, but you remember that occasion? I must preach in other places also for therefore am I sent. I'm sure the disciples think, but Jesus, they're very happy to have you here. There's plenty to do here.

But Jesus knew He could stay in that one village His entire time. And Jesus said, no, I'm still looking beyond. As I've been here praying, God is showing me other places beyond.

And they said, okay. And so they moved on. And I'm not at all advocating that we abandon the works that God has given us.

But there I see Jesus' heart. Yes, He loved the people. He had compassion.

He ministered. But He was always free in His heart to continue stretching Himself. And that's my vision for the church here.

Lastly, let's look at a few rewards. Again, on a positive note for the work in the harvest. Back to John 4. And we'll close on the verse right after 35.

There's a couple of verses there. Verses 36 through 38. So Jesus has just given them this twofold command to lift up their eyes and to look on the fields.

And now He gives them this blessing. And He wouldn't have had to give them this. That was enough.

But He seems... He knows that this will be something that's challenging for them. And so He gives them this blessing right on the heels of it. Verse 36.

Jesus says, And he that reapeth in this harvest receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that same truth. One soweth and another reapeth.

I sent you to reap that world and you bestowed no labor. Other men labored and ye are entered into their labors. So it's like He's telling the disciples, look at the fields.

I'm sending you out. In another place, Jesus says, look at the harvest. Pray that God would thrust out laborers.

And then Jesus says, and by the way, if you would go, you would get blessings. You would get rewarded. You would receive wages.

You would rejoice with the one who has sown. And He's tempting them. He's giving them blessings upon their way.

Let's consider some of the rewards of getting involved in God's harvest, in God's mission. The special blessing of God follows them. Look in the verses in Matthew 28.

We won't go there. Where Jesus, when He sent them out, go into all the world and preach the Gospel. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

That promise was given on the basis that they would go. That promise cannot necessarily be claimed as I'm washing my dishes, although there is a sense that God is always with me. That verse doesn't mean that when I go into Walmart, the Lord is with me there.

That's not what that verse is talking about. That verse is God is saying, I'm sending you out to the uttermost parts of the world, and I'm promising you that if you do it, I will accompany you there. This is a partner with God promise.

I don't know what these wages and fruit unto life eternal is, but I know that I want it, do you? If Jesus has wages and fruit unto life eternal, we sure want it. And I know that we're all going to receive wages, but Jesus is giving us a special promise. If you, I'm not just saying if you become a missionary and leave this country, but if you will lift up your eyes and lift up your heart, and if you look on the fields and engage your heart, you are going to be a part of the fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth and he that sendeth may rejoice together.

But to me, the greatest reward, and this is my last point that I have for you this morning, the greatest reward of missions is a multicultural heaven. I don't know about you, but I want to spend my eternity there. I want to better the place of my eternity.

I'm going to spend eternity there and I want it to be marvelous. And I know it is going to be marvelous. The reason heaven is going to be marvelous to me is primarily because Jesus Christ is there.

The Bible says that we may go and you so shall you ever be with the Lord. And that's my every hope is based on that. But after that, there's only one other thing about heaven that really captures my imagination.

It's not the streets of gold. It's not a mansion and it's not a meal. It's the multicultural aspect of heaven.

John, that was one of the first things he saw. So I know it's obvious. John, when he was called up into heaven, he says, and I saw a multitude out of every tribe and kindred and tongue and nation.

Paul, John saw that. I mean, he walked into heaven. He couldn't see everything, but that was clear to him.

How? Were they costumed after their countries? Was it written upon them? Did they speak with accents? I don't know. But John immediately, he walked in and he looked at the people and he said, those are people from all over the world. There's a multicultural aspect of heaven that struck John immediately.

And I am looking forward to it. What a festival! Can you imagine to be with people from every tribe of the world and all of a sudden, you're given a common language and you can go up and ask the Chinese how they withstood the persecution of the last 50 years. And you can go up and ask the ancient Egyptian Christians how they made out.

And you can go and talk to all of these people that you've always wanted to talk to and ask them how it was. That multicultural aspect of heaven is beautiful. I have a lot of personal dreams about how it's going to work out, how we're going to sing in different languages and all harmonize, but I won't give you all my speculation.

But that to me is a great reward of missions. Oh, how precious! And how precious to think that the harvest that you engaged yourself in, that you lifted up your eyes and looked upon, to see those people there, if you don't think that will bless your heaven. Oh my! What a joy to realize, oh, these people that, you know, maybe you weren't able to go there.

You weren't able to send a missionary there. But this is a place that you sat in front of your map and left that you... You mean you people are here? Yes, we're here. Oh, and you just rejoice in that.

What a glorious rejoicing that will be. Streets of gold will definitely be something to walk on compared with all of that. And pearls and stuff.

I don't think that is going to be front and center. So to me, one of the great rewards is a multicultural heaven. I can't wait to be a part of that.

So I hope this has been an encouragement to you, brothers and sisters, to engage yourselves in the Kingdom of God, to engage yourselves in world missions. I bless you for your involvement, but I encourage you, you want more of it. We need more of it as a church.

We have not yet done all. Let's keep stretching. Let's keep lifting up our eyes and looking.

We don't want to miss what God has for us. May the Lord bless us to that end. Thank you, Weston, for that encouragement and challenge and opening up that verse 35 there.

It seems like every time that the Word of God is preached and you look at a particular verse, a particular passage, it's always amazing, isn't it? The things that God has there for us that we can see by the Spirit of God. And I believe this is a message that we need to hear. A message that is on God's heart.

That we would lift up our eyes and that we would look and gaze and consider the world and pray for lost people and pray for missions and world missions and understanding God's heart that God sent His Son as a missionary to the whole world out of heaven. Left His comfort zone. Left everything that He had there in heaven to come and be that Son of Man, that suffering servant for us.

And in missions, as West began, that there is suffering, there is sacrifice in missions, but as he also ended the message today, there is great, great reward. And I don't believe it's all just in heaven either. And I know you know that too.

The joy of seeing souls converted. The joy of seeing people begin to understand the Word of God and whether it's missions in this country, like in southwest Texas as he's talking about there. I was talking to Jeremy Martin on the phone last night and I was asking him how it's been going.

They've been there about two and a half weeks. And he was sharing some of the trials and some of the struggles, but some of the joys of some of the things that they've just been learning just in two and a half weeks there and seeing things come into their life about baptism and the doctrine of baptism and how it's misunderstood there and how they need to see it and how some of them are beginning to see it and the joy of seeing the light go on in their eyes as they understand the need to be baptized and all of those things that are part of mission work and whether it's here or abroad or wherever it is. But praise God.

Well, why don't we take a little time and open it up. Let maybe some of you share something, add something to the message or if you have a word about any of that or maybe there's something on your heart a testimony of some way God has stirred you to lift up your eyes and look or a particular area you're looking at that would be a blessing to share here with us this morning. And why don't we take some time to hear some of those thoughts there.

Abe in the back. Yeah, I was really blessed with that. I read them verses many times and never seen any of that in there really.

Kind of the way the Word of God is, I guess. I see myself as kind of a person that has always seen missions, especially world missions as kind of out of my reach, I guess. But in doing that, maybe I have fallen short even in the local area here and in my own country.

I've been busy the last... I lived here for seven years now and I've been so busy with raising my boys and raising goats and rabbits and ponies and all that stuff. But that's pretty empty. And I guess I've been stirred up to look up and look upon the field.

And you mentioned Dearborn, Michigan there. I guess we're going to be moving to Indiana. That's less than three hours from where I'll be living.

And I've spent a lot of time in Detroit doing a lot of work there. And I guess I was stirred up to turn my eyes to the harvest there. And also what really stuck out to me was the harvest is ready now.

I always see, well, I'm going to do this and this. And maybe someday I'll go get busy. But what come to my mind was how my grandpa at harvest time, when we were ready to thrash weed or make hay, he would get really excited and really, really upset if we didn't get busy and really get excited about it too, you know, because it was good.

It could rain. It could, a lot of things could happen and ruin that harvest. So I want to see the, I want to use that as a reminder to see the importance of that.

Yes. Okay, we're here. Brother Weston said that we need to look at the harvest and let that motivate us and stir us.

And one thing I have been doing in the past year is reading a very thick book that goes through every country in the world and gives facts and statistics on that country. And also prayer requests for the country. I gave facts and statistics on physical things in that country and where that country is at spiritually.

And it has, you know, every time I read it, I often pray, you know, God, just show me what you want me to learn through reading this. And one thing it has stirred in my heart is to realize how much I have. And it just seems like country after country is so plagued with famine and war and persecution.

And also I see the high number of Muslim influence and population in those countries. And it just makes me realize how much I have and how much the world out there needs Jesus. And it takes my heart and my mind off myself, my daily problems.

And it just puts me in another world that I get pulled into when I have time to really think about how it must be to live in those countries. So that's how, I think that's one good way of what we can start now is to at least read on other countries. Is that here in the middle? Amen.

Thank you so much, Brother Weston, for the message. I was very blessed and challenged again this morning just being back from Ghana, you know, fresh three weeks ago. And God's heart just... He's speaking to my life on missions.

It's been very heavy in my mind and I believe this is a very timely message. And just a thought, you know, some of us may be sitting here or some people, you know, you may be wondering, you know, where is my place in missions? Where is God calling me? Where can I find my place? And you know, Brother Weston mentioned William Carey. And I've just been very blessed by William Carey's life.

You know, he was the father of modern missions. And if you look at his life, he was in a failure in very many things. I believe his marriage was a failure.

I believe even his business, his preaching, he preached all sermons. And yet he was the father of modern missions, which is very interesting to me. And you know, God... But one thing he had, he was a plotter and he was consistent and he sought God's heart.

And he looked on the harvest. And that's what I want to do in my life is to just look on the harvest and see God's heart. And God can take people like that and He can use them in very special ways.

And you know, take heart for those of you who may be discouraged or think, well, I'm not the kind of person that is called out for missions. There's a whole world waiting. There's still three billion people who have yet to hear the Gospel.

And God is just simply looking for people who will go and follow Him. Because I was blessed with the message this morning. And I was thinking about what Brother Weston was saying about it's a lot of work.

And I was thinking about the man that knocked on my door to share the Gospel with me. It was the 20th door he knocked on that day. And what if he stopped at number 19? And that's just one thing that really challenges me is that there's one out there.

And it might be just one. And may we be about our Father's business to reap the harvest. That's right.

The 20th door. A lot of testimonies like that, I'm sure. Middle there.

It is very good to be back with our local church again. I really appreciated this message this morning. Having grown up on a produce farm and attending farmer's markets most of my growing up years, I can relate to a lot of examples Weston spoke of watching the crops grow and mature.

And just keeping a close eye on that. And also relating with people of different ethnic groups. But I've never seen this verse expounded in this way.

So I really want to give God the blessing. One thing that really stood out is the example of the fields. It's not the common word used there.

I never looked that up myself. But rather that it means the regions or the expanses out there. It's a little different word than I commonly think of as fields.

So the way Weston brought it out, what I see there, it's actually a command our Lord gives us to do these things. And I've never looked at it in that way before. So I just appreciate what I think of as the nuts and bolts of how this gets started.

So thank God. I was really blessed. And it stirred in my heart when I hear a message like this, it's my very heart to see souls saved, to see our eyes locally and then abroad.

And I was just amazed that he shared it so positively and so nice to us. I just almost think he was too easy on us. I think he sees himself as a young man and he is very careful.

But this is a very hard message and the consequences of us not obeying it, Brother Rick, are serious. I was reading a passage here the Lord gave to me here. It says.

In verse 45 of chapter 24, Matthew, it says who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his Lord hath made him ruler over his household to give them meat in due season. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find him so doing. So here he's telling us that he's giving us a job to do and we'll be blessed when he returns and we're doing it.

Then in verse 51 or 50, it says he gives us the warning of what's going to happen if he doesn't. He says the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him and in an hour that he is not aware of it and shall cut him asunder. I believe that means in half.

And appoint in his portion with the hypocrites there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And I just want to remind us today that if we do not obey the Lord to go into all the world and preach the gospel, he says he'll cut us asunder. He'll cut us in half.

We won't stand. So there's not really an option. God's got us in a corner.

We best do what he said. In Jesus' name. God bless you.

Amen. Yes, I was really blessed this morning hearing again of God's heart. One of the illustrations of Weston talked about or shared there about he was talking about the sunset there and that individual may be being focused on something else, but he had to make a choice to lift up his head and look at the sunset.

And I've read that passage that he was talking about this morning again and been challenged to, you know, it's a choice we have to make and it's a choice that I have to make to look up and to gaze and to be

involved You know, I thought of it before too that sometimes we almost tend to believe that some of us are cut out to be missionaries or just born to be missionaries. But I think for a lot of us, it's actually a choice. And so I was just challenged with that.

Last week, actually last Sunday, I went down to hear a former Muslim share his testimony of how he was born again and the work that he has in New York, reaching out to the Muslims there. But he shared that, you know, in the Bible where it says to go, he said, you know what that word means? He said the meaning is God orders. And I don't know, that really blessed me.

And it's true. God did say go. And so I want to do that where I'm at today and maybe in the future, too.

Thank you. Yeah, I appreciated the message this morning, real challenging to me. And I was thinking about how are these four months and how we can get our focus in on put it off a ways and things like that as far as going.

And it's easy to do that. And there's really no convenient time to be a missionary, whether it's here locally or on the foreign field. There's no convenient time because a young man, when he's young and he has work to learn and he has a marriage to think about or even a girl in that sense, and then maybe they get married and then there's children coming.

And, well, it's not a good time either because, you know, we have children. We need to raise them and that. And then you get a little bit older.

And, well, the schooling for our children, what are we going to do? I mean, there's always a time where we can put it off and then it gets a little later. And, well, I'm not feeling so well. My body's not as good as it used to be.

And so there's never really a convenient time for missions, like I say, whether it's locally or in the foreign fields. And I just really appreciated that thought there of four months and then comes harvest. And that was the way the disciples looked at it.

But Jesus had a different perspective. And that's the one that we need to have. Appreciate that message.

Thank you. Yeah, thank you for the message. And I just kind of want to echo what Brother Steve said, a verse in Ecclesiastes that stood out to me recently.

It says, He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth clouds shall not reap. And just that was a it says, What is the way? As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child. Even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

And but he, the Lord Jesus has told us that the fields are white, even though sometimes it might not look like it or. But he has said that he'd give us his power. And I just recently been very blessed to have the experience of meeting two Muslim men just down the road here, five star auto on 272.

They brought in a car for us to work on at the shop. And we did that. And afterwards, we had a good discussion with them.

They were open to discuss spiritual things. And they invited us, you know, just come over and visit us. And, you know, we'll talk more about these things.

And so we did a few days later. And we gave them some Arabic Bibles and they were thankful. They took them and then we've been back a third time since then.

And they they really like to discuss things. And sometimes it's more like an argument. But we've been able just to present the truth to them.

And they don't seem to be very offended or they're just very friendly and open to discuss. And last time we we asked them if we could sing for them. And we sang the love of Jesus to me is greater than anything I've ever known.

And good choice. They didn't really know what to do with that. But that's right.

It's been a blessing. And they've invited us to go to the mosque with them. And, you know, just they have an open door there.

So, you know, just right down here on 272. Yeah, there's a shocking number of them around. You know, if you just look a little bit lifted, if you just lift up your eyes and look.

You don't have to even go to Dearborn, Michigan. As shocking as it is to hear there's 400,000. I wonder how many just in this area here.

How many hundreds or thousands there are in Lancaster or Berks County just right here. I know we have a business up in Berks County. And we see quite a few, you know, come around.

I think maybe there's more up in Reading than there is here. I'm not sure. But I have seen quite a few up there.

So you don't have to go to Dearborn even to lift up your eyes and look and see the needs.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16730.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/weston-leibee/lift-up-your-eyes/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net