

## Steadfast Living Obedience

We have a chance to see the harvest field through a microscope this morning.

Microscopes are designed to enhance our vision.

If you don't want to see things that you have missed don't use a microscope.

When we take a close look at the harvest field we notice some things.

Paul was willing to look through the microscope.

He did not want to miss anything Jesus was ready to reveal.

As he saw what Jesus had to show him he came to some realizations.

We need to make the same realizations.

If we don't we will limp through life.

The Steadfast Living God intended us to have is lost without His vision.

The effectiveness of our presence in the harvest field will be nullified.

We might go into the field.

But there is a difference between being in the field and harvesting.

I have never envisioned Paul snoozing through the day.

He did not just make an appearance in the harvest field.

Do you want to know God's perspective of life in the harvest field?

Life in the harvest field meant something to Paul.

It needs to mean the same for every one of us who are in Christ.

### **I Paul was INJECTED**

The first thing Paul saw in the harvest field was Christ Jesus.

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus . . ."

Paul was INJECTED with the presence of Jesus

Paul knew who he was.

At one time he had been Saul the Pharisee.

He had been the great persecutor of the Church.

He had been the primary sinner.

He was leading the parade straight to hell.

He wasn't just making that journey himself.

He was leading a whole entourage toward the gates of hell.

He was determined to stamp out the memory of Jesus.

But Jesus changed Paul.

Jesus is not just a memory to be forgotten.

Jesus is the living dynamic presence of God in this world.

Now Paul was an apostle of Christ Jesus.

He was now an apostle in the harvest field.

Being an apostle propelled him into the harvest field.

Being an apostle put him in the field with a purpose and a flurry of activity.

Instead of leading the world to hell, he was now leading people to heaven.

What is an apostle?

By N.T. definition an apostle is a person who has come near to Jesus.

It is anyone who has a life transforming encounter with the risen Lord.

And having encountered Jesus received His commission from Him personally.

"Apostle" always denotes a person who is sent with full authority.

Paul was called to prepare the way for others to come to Jesus.

And so are you and so am I.

To all who believe He gives the power to become children of God.

We become like Jesus in our relationship to the Father.

We take on the ministry of the cross and the gospel.

We are joint heirs with Jesus.

Hebrews 3:1 tells us **"Therefore, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession."**

We share the apostleship of Jesus Himself.

Begin this letter by inserting your name in place of Paul's.

Can you read that line with honesty and understanding?

Glenn, an apostle of Christ Jesus.

That would mean I have met the resurrected Jesus.

As an apostle I enter into covenant with Him hear His call

"Enter the harvest field with all My power and authority."

I am a delegate of Jesus Christ.

I speak to the world on His behalf.

I am commissioned by Jesus.

I am given His mission.

I am so united with Him that where He is I am also.

What He does, I do as well.

Can you see yourself in that way?

That is the only way you will live a steadfast life.

Others are counting on you without realizing it.

People are needlessly stumbling toward hell.

**People are within the grasp of Jesus because you are there.**

How many days, weeks, months, years, will you be empty handed?

**II Paul was also an INSPIRED apostle of Christ Jesus.**

What was it that inspired Paul?

**We are told in verse 1 that Paul was an apostle inspired by God's will.**

What is the big deal about that?

If it was just Paul's idea then he could walk away from it any time.

How can that be considered steadfast living.

**Without God's inspiration, if Paul grew weary or tired he could quit.**

If it was under his own authority he could pull the plug any time.

If he was the one calling the shots he could set his own agenda.

But he knew he wasn't.

God called him to be an apostle.

It was God's will that Paul be in the harvest field.

This was not an option as far as Paul was concerned.

William Barclay says, **"No Christian is ever chosen entirely for his own sake, but for what he can do for others."**

He goes on to say, **"A Christian is a [person] lost in wonder, love and praise at what God has done for him and aflame with eagerness to tell others what God can do for them."**

Paul lived to fulfill God's call and God's will.

**He was living to serve God not his own interests.**

**He was living in the harvest field to do God's work.**

And he did that work not through his own strength and will.

**Paul lived in the power and will and inspiration of God.**

No wonder the harvest was brought in.

**III** And there is one more thing that Paul recognized about the harvest field.

**In the harvest field Paul was IMPACTING.**

**In his letter to Timothy Paul was focused on impacting generations.**

In three different ways Paul saw this.

In verse 2 he saw himself as the link between Timothy and God.

**"To Timothy, my beloved child:"**

Paul knew that Timothy was depending on his faithfulness.

He says to Timothy, there is so much I want to see God do in you.

**"Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."**

Paul saw himself sandwiched between Timothy his child and God his Father.  
God flowed to Timothy through Paul.

Paul knew God had to move from generation to generation.

And it was God's will that Paul be a link.

In verse 3 Paul again speaks of this link between generations.

**"I thank God whom I serve with a clear conscience, as did my fathers, when I remember you."**

He is the link between the previous generations of fathers and the next generation of Timothy's.

In verse 5 he said, **"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you."**

**The eternity of generations is at stake.**

That is something we so easily miss and Paul hammered it home over and over.

We are so caught up with today, with the moment.

A prevalent spirit within the church today is, "What's in this for me?"

I need to feel good, my needs need to be met.

When I am happy and satisfied the church is doing what it is supposed to.

We think that is the end all and be all of who we are in Christ.

**We are not in the harvest field for our sake but for the next generation.**

It's time.

It's time to look at my life in the harvest field under the microscope.

Many, in the Church today, claim to be Christians.

But they treat the mission field like a camp ground.

The Mission Field becomes a place that we visit, but don't live real life.

They go in empty handed and they return empty handed.

**Paul said of the Gospel in Romans 1:16, "it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith."**

I see little evidence of the power of the gospel being employed.

**For Paul the Mission Field was not a place he visited.**

**Paul lived in the Mission Field and challenges us to make it our home.**

I see the Church just putting in time.

We look like we are doing the work but nothing changes.

Lives are not being transformed from sin to righteousness.

The burden that drives us to the spiritually lost is lacking.

We go into the harvest field then snooze the day away.

**God did not sacrifice His only Son so we could play church.**

He is not interested in watching us go through the motions.

Jesus dying on the cross was not just going through the motions.

God's will is that you be a source of God's grace, mercy, and peace.

Do I see who I am in Christ?

Being **INJECTED** with Jesus makes me Steadfast.

Being **INSPIRED** by God's will makes me Steadfast.

**IMPACTING** the generations I live in makes me Steadfast.

Are you anywhere near that place today?

Or are you living for yourself.

Is your focus consumed by self-interests?

**God desires to touch this generation through you.**

Paul did not tyrannize the harvest field with a flaming torch.

He did not terrify the lost with the fires of hell.

He moved among them with the astonishing love of God.

They were loved through the good news of salvation.

That is how we are to live in the harvest field.

Offer God's promise of real life which is found in Christ Jesus.

Closing Song I Will Follow