IMPACTERS COMMUNITIES

A Work of The Catholic Guy Ministry

REACHING THE NEXT GENERATION

SUMMARY

Drawing from Matthew 9:35-38, this sermon calls the Catholic Guy Ministry and IMPACTERS community to recognize and respond to the urgent missionary need of reaching youth and young adults. Bruce Downes grounds the message in Christ's compassion for the crowds, describing how Jesus was moved deeply by the spiritual condition of those he encountered, seeing them as sheep without a shepherd. From that compassion flows a missionary imperative, one that Bruce applies directly to the church's responsibility toward the next generation. The Message announces a significant ministry development: the establishment of a dedicated youth outreach initiative, supported by a sacrificial gift from a married couple who have offered to fund one youth worker's salary, with a corresponding challenge to the wider community to match that funding. Bruce also announces that his daughter-in-law Brigette, who holds qualifications in media and communications, is being invited to join the ministry staff as part of this initiative. The Message closes with an extended teaching on the spirituality of giving, framing the offering not as fundraising but as an act of worship directed toward God, with the fruit of that giving directed toward reaching young people nationally and internationally.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Compassion is the starting point of mission.** Jesus did not begin with a program or an organization. He saw people, was moved deeply by their condition, and responded. Our missionary activity must flow from the same compassion rather than from institutional obligation.
2. **The harvest belongs to God.** We do not own the people we seek to reach. We are invited to participate in what God is already doing. This frees us from measuring success purely by numbers and keeps us oriented toward faithfulness.
3. **Going is as important as welcoming.** There is a significant difference between ministries that measure success by who comes to them and those that are equally committed to going where people are. Jesus moved among the towns and villages. The church is called to do the same.
4. **Faith must become personal.** Families, schools, and parishes can create extraordinary opportunities for young people to receive faith, but each person must ultimately come to own that faith for themselves. Helping young people reach that point is one of the central challenges facing the church today.
5. **Prayer leads to participation.** When Jesus told his disciples to pray for laborers, the very next chapter shows those same disciples being sent out. Praying for a missionary need should make us more attentive to whether God is calling us to be part of the answer.
6. **Giving is an act of worship.** Offering is not fundraising. When we give, we give to God. Scripture is clear that giving must be free and cheerful. It is an expression of our relationship with God and a measure of how fully we allow him to be Lord of every area of our lives.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

- Matthew 9:35-38, in which Jesus travels through cities and villages teaching, proclaiming the kingdom, and healing, is moved with compassion for the crowds who are harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd, and instructs his disciples to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers because the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few

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SMALL GROUP GUIDE

This guide is designed to help your small group dive deeper into the message.

OPENING PRAYER

Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and open hearts to God's transforming work. Pray the **IMPACTERS** Community Prayer .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Up

1. When you first encountered faith in a meaningful way, who or what was the bridge that helped you get there? Was it a person, a community, a piece of media, or something else?
2. Think about the young people in your life, whether children, grandchildren, neighbors, or people in your parish or church. How connected do you sense they are to a living faith? What does that stir in you?

Going Deeper into the Passage

3. In Matthew 9:35-38, Jesus is described as being moved with compassion when he sees the crowds. Bruce explains that this word describes being moved deeply within oneself by the condition of another person. How is that different from simply feeling sympathy or pity? What does genuine compassion actually look like in practice?
4. Bruce Downes points out that Jesus does not stay in one place and invite people to come to him. He moves through towns and villages and goes to where people are. What does that posture look like for us today, individually and as a community?
5. Jesus calls the harvest his harvest. What does it mean for our sense of responsibility and our sense of humility that the harvest belongs to God and not to us?
6. Jesus tells his disciples to pray for laborers and then almost immediately sends those same disciples out. What does that sequence tell us about the relationship between prayer and action?

. Reflecting on the Message

7. Bruce Downes describes a moment early in his ministry when he discovered that tens of thousands of young people in one city had almost no connection to faith community. He says he was deeply affected by those figures. What figures or realities about young people and faith today affect you in a similar way?
8. Bruce draws a distinction between helping young people attend religious activities and helping them become disciples of Jesus. What is the difference, and why does it matter?
9. Bruce Downes says that Christian faith cannot simply be passed from one generation to another as though it were an inherited possession. Do you agree?

What are the implications of that for how families, parishes, and communities approach the formation of young people?

10. Bruce addresses the topic of giving directly and frames it as an act of worship rather than a financial transaction. How does thinking about giving as worship change the way you approach it? Is that a familiar way of thinking for you, or does it challenge you?

PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

11. Bruce Downes says that when we bring a missionary need before God in prayer, we must also be willing to consider whether he is asking us to participate. Is there a need related to young people or to mission more broadly that you have been praying about but have not yet considered whether God might be asking you to step into personally?
12. Bruce challenges the group to give sacrificially, meaning over and above regular giving, toward reaching the next generation. Setting aside the specific financial request for a moment, what would sacrificial giving look like in your own life right now? What would it cost you?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following to carry into your week:

- **Pray specifically.** Set aside time this week to pray by name for young people in your life who do not yet have a living relationship with Jesus. Ask God to show you what role, if any, he might want you to play in their journey.
- **Start a conversation.** Identify one young person you have access to and make a genuine effort to connect with them this week. Do not go in with an agenda. Simply listen and show interest in their life.
- **Examine your giving.** Reflect honestly on whether your giving reflects a posture of worship or whether it has become routine. Read what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 about giving freely and cheerfully and allow it to shape how you think about your next offering.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together by praying Matthew 9:38 directly, asking the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. Then invite each person who is willing to offer a short prayer for a specific young person they know who does not yet have a living faith. End by asking God to make your group itself a community of people who go, who give, and who carry the presence of Christ into the world around them.