



3rd Sunday after Pentecost

14th June 2026



Will I respond to Jesus' call for workers in His missionfield?

I want to start this morning by asking you to do something simple. Picture the street you live on. Picture your neighbours — the ones whose names you know, and the ones you wave to when you collect the mail. Picture the people at your club, your exercise class, your family gatherings.

Now — honestly — what do you think when you picture those people in relation to faith? In relation to God? I suspect for many of us, the quiet, unspoken assumption is something like: "They're not really interested." Or: "My faith is private — it's not really my place to say anything." Or maybe: "Someone else will figure that out."

I want to suggest to you this morning that those assumptions — however reasonable they feel — are directly contradicted by Jesus. Because Jesus looks at the same people we look at. And he sees something completely different. Jesus sees the people in his neighbourhood as a harvest field — ripe and ready. Let me set the scene. Jesus has been going through "all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness." (v.35) He has been moving, present, and close enough to people to hear their struggles. And then comes this pivotal moment in verse 36: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

Notice what Jesus doesn't see. He doesn't see indifference. He doesn't see people who have made their choice and want to be left alone. He sees people who are harassed and helpless — spiritually exhausted, spiritually lost, without direction, without a shepherd. And he responds not with frustration, but with compassion.

And then he says something that should stop us in our tracks: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." (v.37) Not — "The harvest could grow in time." Not — "In some places the harvest is plentiful." The harvest is plentiful. Right now. Among the people right in front of you. The problem is not the harvest. The problem is the workers.

Point 1 | Wrong Assumption #1: "The harvest isn't plentiful here."

We have a tendency, as a church, to quietly decide in advance that the people around us aren't spiritually hungry. We look at our suburb — busy families, long working weeks, weekend sport — and conclude: "People here in Morisset, Bonnell's Bay and Wangi Wangi just aren't interested."

But Jesus didn't reach his conclusion about the harvest from a distance. He went *through* the towns. He was present with people before he declared their readiness. And I wonder — how much of our thinking is the product of distance rather than reality? Have we decided the people around us aren't hungry, without actually getting close enough to find out?

I was reminded of this at the Alpha Conference recently. Testimony after testimony came from people who had been introduced to Jesus simply because someone had invited them along to a church-related event — nothing elaborate, just an invitation. The more I heard, the more convicted I felt — because I realised how much I had allowed myself to believe that people in our community weren't interested in God or church. But that assumption isn't just unhelpful. It is, as those testimonies made plain, directly contradicted by what Jesus said.

Here's what I've found in six years of ministry at Southlakes. When you actually sit with people, when you get close enough to listen to them — people are not as indifferent as they appear. They are asking big questions. They are searching for meaning. They are worried about their kids, their marriages, their sense of purpose. They are, as Jesus described, 'harassed and helpless' — often without even knowing what they're looking for.

The harvest here is plentiful. We just have to be close enough to see it.

Point 2 | Wrong Assumption #2: "I'm not one of the workers."

Even if we accept that the harvest is plentiful, there's a second assumption that holds us back: "It's not my job. I'm not trained. I wouldn't know what to say. That's what the minister is for." Look at who Jesus actually chose as his workers. The twelve are not an impressive lineup. Fishermen. A despised tax collector. A political radical. Men who argued about who was greatest — and one who would betray him. These are not the ones you'd point to and say, "Obviously, there are the harvest workers."

And yet: "He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority." (10:1) The authority was given. It was not already there. Jesus didn't find twelve qualified people and release them. He called twelve ordinary people and then equipped them. The calling came first. The equipping followed.

Here's what I need you to hear: *You are the answer to your own prayers.* Jesus says, "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers" — and then, almost immediately, he appoints the twelve and sends them out. The prayer and the sending happen in the same breath. God doesn't wait for someone more suitable. He sends people who are available, with what they have, right now. That includes you. It has always included you.

Point 3 | Wrong Assumption #3: "Someone else will do it."

Even if the harvest is plentiful, and even if you're one of the workers, there is still this soothing voice that says: "The new minister will sort it. When things settle down, we'll get around to it." I understand that voice. Transition creates uncertainty. But listen to the urgency in Jesus' language.

The Greek word for "send out" in verse 38 is the same word used for casting out demons — forceful, urgent, propulsive. The Lord of the harvest does not gently suggest sending workers. He commands them to go out. The people on your street — harassed and helpless and searching — are not waiting for the right church program. They are living their lives right now. And they need people who carry the kingdom of God into the ordinary spaces of everyday life. That is not the minister's job alone. That is every believer's calling.

Point 4 | The heart of Christ's Message: Freely received. Freely given.

"Freely you have received; freely give." (10:8) Everything flows from that sentence. The disciples weren't being asked to be someone they weren't, or to produce a message they knew nothing about. They were being asked to pass on what had already been poured into them. And that's true for us too. You have received grace — freely.

Forgiveness, acceptance, belonging, hope, a future — freely. You did not earn it. You did not deserve it. It was given. And Jesus says: don't keep it contained within these four walls. Let it go — into your neighbourhood, your clubs, your family gatherings. Invite someone who is lonely and without hope to Dinner Church or a Sunday service — and come with them. Research shows that 96% of unchurched adults say they would be likely to attend church if personally invited. The door is more open than we think. We just have to knock.

Application | How? A simple, practical way to start.

Before I close, I suspect some of you are thinking: "I want to be one of Christ's workers. But I don't know how." That's honest. So let me share something simple — a two-part rhythm that anyone can follow, whatever your age or stage of life.

First — pray for five people by name, every day. Not a general prayer for "the lost." Five specific people whose faces you can picture. Pray that God opens their hearts. Pray for opportunities. Pray for courage.

Second — B.L.E.S.S. them.

B — Begin with prayer. Pray for them by name. Be present in their world.

L — Listen to them. Ask good questions. People who feel heard are more open than you'd expect.

E — Eat with them. Share a meal, a coffee, a barbecue. The most significant moments in Jesus' ministry often happened around a table.

S — Serve them. Find a practical need and meet it. It doesn't need to be dramatic — just real.

S — Share your faith. When the moment comes — and if you've been present, listening, eating and serving, it will come — tell them what Jesus means to you. Not a rehearsed speech. Just your story.

Pray for five. Bless them. I'll be sharing more in the notes from today — please take one home, or download it from the Church's website. There are even some cards you can use on the table in the foyer of the church.

I cannot preach this passage today without acknowledging what today is.

This is my last Sunday with you. And I want to ask you, gently but directly, not to go into standby mode. Because the Lord of the harvest does not pause when leadership changes. The fields around Southlakes do not stop being ripe. The people in our community do not stop being harassed and helpless. The harvest does not wait.

You do not need a minister to be workers in the harvest. You are already equipped. You are already sent. You have already freely received what you need to freely give. What I pray you'll hold onto after today is the eyes and the heart of Jesus — the ability to look at the people around you and see not indifference, but hunger. Not closed doors, but a ripe harvest field. Not someone else's responsibility, but your calling.

For me, this passage carries a personal note too. I am moving to a new harvest field — new streets, new people, who are also harassed and helpless and searching. And the same assumptions will tempt me there. The same voice will whisper: "Stay where it's warm and comfortable. They're not interested. Someone else will do it."

And I will have to keep coming back to the words of Jesus: the harvest is plentiful. The workers are few. I will ask the Lord of the harvest for more — and I will count myself as one of them. And go.

Will you? The harvest around you is plentiful. Jesus said so.

You are one of the workers — not because you're impressive or have it all together, but because Jesus calls ordinary people, gives them authority, and sends them out. The time is now. Not when things settle. Not when someone else steps up. Now. Today. On the street you drive home to after this service.

Pray for five. Bless them. Trust the Lord of the harvest to do what only he can do.

Freely you have received. Freely give.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
forgive us for the smallness of our vision — for looking at the people around us and seeing closed doors, when you see a harvest field. Open our eyes to what you see. Give us the courage to believe that we are workers, sent by you, equipped by you, for this time and this place. May the grace we have so freely received flow freely from us into the lives of those around us. Lord of the harvest — send us out.

Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. Jesus saw the crowds as a harvest field — ripe and ready — while we might see the same people and assume indifference or disinterest. What assumptions have you been making about the spiritual hunger of the people around you — your neighbours or friends — and what might it look like to get close enough to actually find out?

2. Jesus called twelve deeply ordinary people — fishermen, a tax collector, a political radical — and gave them authority before they had any obvious qualifications. What is it that makes you feel unqualified or unsuitable to be a worker in God's harvest field, and how does Jesus' choice of the twelve speak to that?
3. The message identified three common assumptions that hold us back: the harvest isn't plentiful, I'm not one of the workers, and someone else will do it. Which of these resonates most honestly with you — and why?
4. Jesus says, "freely you have received; freely give" (v.8). Take a moment to reflect on what you have freely received — grace, forgiveness, belonging, hope. What would it look like, practically and concretely, to let that flow outward into the life of one specific person in your world this week?
5. As Southlakes moves into a season of transition, there is a temptation to turn inward and wait until things feel settled before engaging with the community around us. What is one step — however small — that you could take in the coming weeks to remain outward-facing and present to the harvest field around you, regardless of what is happening within the church?



MISSION & WITNESS

How are we going to fulfill Christ's great commission to make disciples in our community at Southlakes?

A strategy that is doable, achievable, and realistic for every member of our church!

PRAY *for* 5

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B.L.E.S.S. *each* 1

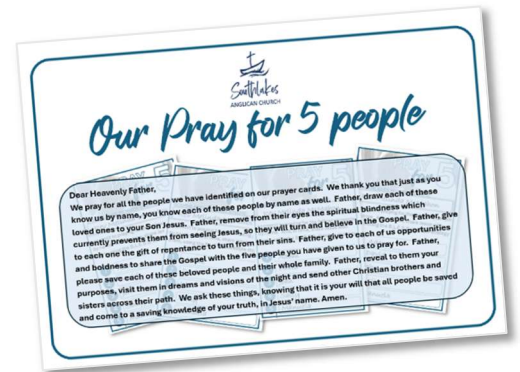
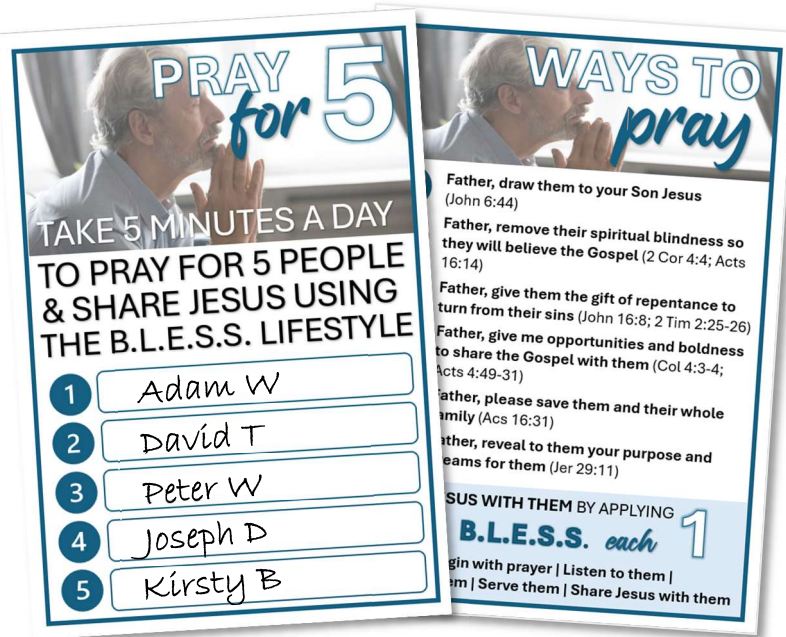
How every member of Southlakes Anglican can share Jesus ...

There is power in praying for people by name. Every member is invited to identify 5 people who they see on a regular basis (for example, a neighbour, a friend from club, a carer who visits). Pray for each person by name. Then adopt the B.L.E.S.S. lifestyle strategy with them. If we all do this, we will be in a strong position to fulfil Christ's commission in our community.

Step 1: Pray for 5 and B.L.E.S.S.

Step 2:

Write your name and the names of your 5 people. You could pray collectively for all these people in our weekly intercessions.



What is the B.L.E.S.S. Lifestyle Strategy?

- B**egin by praying for them by name.
- L**isten to them during conversations as they share their struggles.
- E**at with them, either over coffee, a meal or just a quick snack.
- S**erve them by doing something that shows you care.
- S**hare Jesus: at the right time, in a gentle way as the Spirit leads.