Matthew 9:35 – 38 describes how Jesus sees people in the crowds around him – not as a faceless mass to be judged, but as individuals to be treated with compassion and empathy.

As Christians, we are called to do the same – to see the need in the broken world around us, and to respond with compassion. Jesus looks at the crowds and sees sheep with no shepherd - lost and chaotic, without purpose. He sees that people need help and guidance, and support and loved them like a shepherd loves his sheep. He cared about them and about their well-being where the religious leaders only cared about themselves - in contract, Jesus wanted the people to feel safe. He wanted them to be cared for and to thrive.

When we look at crowds of harassed and helpless people, it’s hard to imagine things changing for them. It’s easy to feel despair at the chaos and confusion, and overwhelmed by the scale of need. We see this when we look at pictures of people suffering across the world – it’s easy to feel powerless in the face of so much difficulty. But when Jesus looks at the crowds, he sees a plentiful harvest – and all that is required to make a success of this harvest are workers - people who will step up to help, and feel compassion for the crowds of people.
Jesus tells the disciples that there is a plentiful harvest right in front of them - not just any harvest field, but a rich, bountiful harvest. For us as Christians, there is a huge harvest waiting - a fairer and more just world. God wants us to bring compassion and kindness to his world. Jesus, when he looks at humanity, sees a tremendous harvest all around, and the potential that humanity has to do and be better.

While this passage is often used to referred in the context of evangelism, we can also think about a plentiful harvest in terms of justice and fairness in the world.

Harvest time is a time for action – for building God’s kingdom on earth, and working together to show compassion to others. At this harvest, more than ever before, it’s vital that we show compassion and take notice of the need in the world around us. Though the workers are few, together, we can create a just and compassionate world.

Traidcraft Exchange’s work is helping to build a fairer future – a world where everyone, no matter where they are born, can earn a decent income from the hard work they do everyday. From campaigning for recognition for the hidden homeworkers of garment supply chains in India, to working alongside fruit sellers in Senegal, so they can earn a decent income, supporting Traidcraft Exchange’s campaigns and projects is a simple and practical way to ensure a plentiful harvest for the poorest and most marginalized in our world.

Here are some practical things you can encourage your church to do:

- Hold a Big Brew - Harvest and raise money to support the work of Traidcraft Exchange
- Buy fair trade where you can – why not commit to ordering church tea and coffee from Traidcraft? (go to www.traidcraftshop.co.uk)
- Encourage members of your congregation to make a regular small donation through our ‘Small Steps’ community or to support our campaigns to make trade fairer. Find out more at www.traidcraftexchange.org.uk.
- Take on a challenge together – give something up as a community, or work together and fundraise a target amount to help change the future for the world’s poorest people. You can email fundraising@traidcraft.org for ideas and support.
Prayers

For daily food
We give you thanks
For farmers’ skill
We give you thanks
For fields of wheat
We give you thanks
For fresh, ripe fruit
We give you thanks
For rain and sun
We give you thanks
For healthy crops
We give you thanks
For all your gifts
We give you thanks
Amen

For daily food
We give you thanks
For farmers’ skill
We give you thanks
For fields of wheat
We give you thanks
For fresh, ripe fruit
We give you thanks
For rain and sun
We give you thanks
For healthy crops
We give you thanks
For all your gifts
We give you thanks
Amen

Our Father in heaven, at harvest time we praise you as Creator and Lord of all creation.

We pray that your Kingdom would come and that the rules of our world would be turned upside-down.

We thank you for your amazing generosity to us. You provide for us and support us every day.

Forgive us for our indifference towards the hungry and poor—those who struggle every day to survive.

Help us to be good stewards of your creation. Stir us into action that we would challenge injustice and share what we have with those in need.

For everything we have and are is yours.

Amen

To those in need
May we bring your provision
To those in distress
May we bring your comfort
To those in sickness
May we bring your healing
To those who have nothing
May we bring your abundance
To those who are lonely
May we bring your fellowship
To those who are far from you
May we bring your truth
Amen

Father God, thank you for the opportunity to celebrate your goodness at harvest time.

Thank you that you are a faithful, loving God who delights in blessing us. Help us never to take your provision for granted and help us to be generous in sharing it.

Thank you for the ultimate provision of eternal life through your Son Jesus. Help us to make that life known to others.

Amen

Our Father in heaven, thank you for the opportunity to celebrate your goodness at harvest time.

Thank you that you are a faithful, loving God who delights in blessing us. Help us never to take your provision for granted and help us to be generous in sharing it.

Thank you for the ultimate provision of eternal life through your Son Jesus. Help us to make that life known to others.

Amen