



**CHAPTER ONE**

# **OPENING THE FIST OF RESISTANCE**

## **Matthew 9v35-38**

Most Christians deeply value God’s word and it holds a sacred place in our hearts. We enjoy talking about the Bible with fellow Christians but when it comes to sharing with the un-churched we so often keep the word of God to ourselves.

It’s as if we hold God’s word in a clenched fist close to our heart. The following passage will help us open that fist so that we become people who spontaneously find ourselves freely sharing God’s word with the lost.

### **Read Matthew 9v35-38**

A. To open the fist of resistance we need to see the crowds. (9v36)

1. What did Jesus see when he looked upon the crowds?

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2. If Jesus was to look at the crowds of Britain's what do you think He would observe? Would He merely notice the exterior of people getting ahead in life, busy with their career, their happy family life, living in an attractive home owning lots of modern conveniences, not having any need for God? What do you think?

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B. To open the fist of resistance we need to feel compassion for people. **(9v36)**

The Greek word here translated "compassion" in most English versions is "splanchna". It means literally my insides are knotted up.

3. How would you explain Jesus' feelings for people as He looked beyond the surface?

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4. Have there been times when you have felt deeply for a lost friend or stranger? Describe that experience.

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C. To open the fist of resistance we need to *know the harvest is plentiful*. **(9v37)**

5. How open do you think the average Britain is to Christ?

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6. If Christians think that the average non-believer is closed to the gospel then how motivated do you think they will be to share the good news?

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D. To open the fist of resistance we need to care that the workers are few. (9v37)

Approximately half of the United Kingdom's population on the census identify themselves as Christians. However, the majority of these people are not practicing Christians nor do they regularly attend church. A more helpful statistic is the evangelical population of Britain. The evangelicals make up 8.8% of the Population, that is approximately 5.5 million Christians. (Operation world, Jason Mandryke, page 852)

By definition, evangelicals believe the Word of God to be the foundation for all Christian belief and practice and that a genuine Christian has a personal relationship with Jesus. If the evangelical statistic represents the true populace of Christians in Britain, then for every 1 believer there are approximately 11 non-Christians. If every British evangelical reached one person with the gospel per year in only 11 to 12 years all the United Kingdom would know Jesus.

7. Do you think there is a shortage of Christians in this nation or a shortage of workers?

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8. Do you ever feel concerned that so many who have become Christians have not become workers in God's harvest field? Elaborate on your answer.

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9. Does the Lord want the average Christian to become a communicator of the gospel? To help answer this question look up the following references and comment briefly on each:

**Philemon 1v6**

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**Romans 10v17**

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4v2

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## 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3v15

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## 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9v16

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## Jude 1v23

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To open the fist of resistance we need to pray to the Lord of the harvest. **(9v38)**

10. In the next activity, list in the provided circles the non-Christian connections that you have. As a group talk about one or two in your list that you most want to pray for. As a community of believers ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers to share the gospel with your un-churched friends, family and associates.

