

Shepherds often give their sheep a mark of some sort (e.g. an ear clip or coloured dye on their wool) to distinguish them from those belonging to another shepherd. On Sunday we considered a few things that could be seen as being the mark of the 'spiritual' sheep.

### Mark 1. GRATITUDE

#### READ PSALM 107 1-3

1. This Psalm goes on to recount some different stories of how people were delivered from barrenness, darkness, afflictions and storms. Each time they are called to "*give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.*" (v8, 15, 21 & 31). Verse 2 says "*Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story*". What is your story? What are you thankful and grateful to God for today?

### Mark 2 – GOOD DEEDS

#### READ GALATIANS 6:1-10

2. Using the image of 'sowing and reaping' Paul says that we will either reap "*destruction*" or "*eternal life*" depending on what we sow into our own lives (v8).

i. Based on what Paul has taught at the start of this chapter what kinds of things does Paul have in mind when he says, "*sows to please their flesh*" and "*sows to please the Spirit*? What other types of behaviour can you think of that would fit under these two headings?

ii. Over the years, our lives have been influenced, both positively and negatively, by what others have 'sown' into our lives. Who would you say from your past has made a significant **positive** impression on your life?

3. Verse 9 says that there is a positive harvest that we will reap in response to us "*doing good*".

i. What do you think this "harvest" is that Paul is referring to?

ii. What reason is Paul implying as to why people might "*give up*" or "*become weary*" in doing good? What can we do to maintain our zeal in this area?

4. In verse 10 Paul encourages the Church to sow goodness into other people's lives, "*especially the family of believers*"

i. Why might Paul have thought that the "family of believers" should take priority?

ii. Do you think the same as Paul or do you think that meeting the needs of non-believers is a higher priority?

### Mark 3 – GATHERERS OF THE HARVEST

#### READ MATTHEW 9:35-10:8

5. Jesus, moved with compassion for the harassed and helpless crowd, saw them as being like "*sheep without a shepherd*" (v36) but He also saw them as being a "*harvest*" (v37) and called His disciples to pray that God would send workers to reap it.(v38).

i. Do you think the Church should still see the spiritually and materially 'needy' people around us as being a "harvest" that Jesus wants us to reap for Him? If so in what way? If not, why not?

ii. Why do you think there is a lack of workers to do the Lord's work?

#### TO PRAYERFULLY PONDER THIS WEEK

Having asked His disciples to pray for workers, Jesus then sent them out to do His work, motivated by the guiding principle "*Freely you have received; freely give*" (Matthew 10:8). What might Jesus be calling You to do for Him this week in response to what He has done for you?