

God's Law of Sowing and Reaping

by

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Part 2

COMMENTS

(Brother M. W.) “Brother Hanby, before we get away from this thought... in Psalms, I had a thought that I felt would fit in very well there. The precious seed watered with tears will bring forth fruit; but watering without the seed is not sufficient... We can cry all the time with tears, but except we sow the seed, the tears will be unfruitful.”

(Brother Hanby) “There’s nothing that will bring forth a harvest but... Seed. There is nothing that will bear but Seed. There’s no substitute for Seed. If we want a harvest, we must sow the seed!”

(Brother D. C.) “The same ones who said nothing would be done in Logan, also said that there was no benefit for us to go to Junction City, but God blessed that work too, even though they had no faith.”

(Brother Hanby) “They meant well, but they did not understand God’s promise.”

(Brother N. P.) “Brother Hanby, I had a strange thing happened to me this morning as I was going toward Schenectady. There was a man taking a picture of a cornfield which had never been harvested. The frost had hit it and it was just a lifeless shuck. I was sort of ridiculing him – it seems like he could have found something more interesting to take a picture of – and then it came to me strongly – this is exactly a type of the harvest that is in the world – it is there, but if it never gets harvested it will be nothing but a dead stalk. And as I looked, I saw that the grain was still on the stalks. I was really impressed.

(Brother Hanby) “Yes, the harvest must be properly reaped after it grows or it will be wasted.”

FALLOW GROUND

Now let us turn to Hosea, chapter 10, and verse 12:

“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord till He come and rain righteousness upon you.”

There must be a proper condition into our lives if we want to see revival, if we want to see souls saved. Here is the plan for reaping – not only for the worker – but for the Church. The Seed must be sown in righteousness – then we shall reap in mercy. This is the law of SOWING and REAPING.

“BREAK UP YOUR FALLOW GROUND”

Fallow ground is unused ground – ground that is laying waste. Fallow ground generally does not produce much of a crop. It is generally the opposite – briars – thorns – weeds.

“IT IS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD”

And it certainly is, Brethren. The end of all things is near and so many are not saved. Let us seek Him - Let us cry to Him “Till He come and rain righteousness upon us.”

Now we will turn to Matthew 13:3, to the
PARABLE OF THE SOWER

“And He (Jesus) spoke many things to them in parables, saying Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside, And the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: And forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up and choked them. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.”

I think that this is one of the greatest parables we have in the whole Bible. Then Jesus goes on to explain this parable, verse 18: “Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When anyone heareth the WORD OF THE KINGDOM, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he that receiveth SEED by the wayside. But he that received the SEED in stony places, the same is he that heareth the WORD, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: For when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the WORD, by and by he is offended. He also that received SEED among the thorns is he that heareth the WORD, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the WORD, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that receiveth SEED into the good ground is he that heareth the WORD, and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

Now we cannot sort out the ground that will bear a hundredfold. If we could, we’re foolish for wasting time sowing on any other kind. But anybody knows that if you have much of a field to sow, that there’s always going to be some seed that falls where it was not really intended; it will fall on stony ground or it will fall in the path... or it will fall out of the way and not get in any depth of earth. These seeds, of course, will not bring forth a crop. We cannot tell the type of ground or heart in which we can sow the seed. If you can, you can do better than I can. I think that we’re going to have to sow the seed, like the Old Testament reference said,

“In the morning sow thy SEED, and in the evening – withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whither will prosper, either this, or that, or whether it they both shall be alike good.” Ecc. 11:6

“Blessed are they that sow beside all waters.” Is. 32:20

SOW BESIDE ALL WATERS

So when we sow seed, we sow seed wherever there are people. “The field is the world” - the people of the world - every creature. Let us sow the PRECIOUS SEED everywhere and pray that God will give us an abundant harvest. There are four areas in which the seed falls; only one area brings forth fruit to eternal life. I don't think that this means that one fourth of all the people would hear the word of God will receive it and bear fruit, but that there are four types of people upon which the seed falls. There are many who hear, but only a few take heed and obey.

QUESTION

(Question by N. P.) “What does it mean, ‘hath no root?’ Does this mean that they have no character or no backbone?”

(Brother Hanby) “NO ROOT means that they don't give any place in their heart for the word of God to take root. It's not the seed's fault, but their fault; they get the word of God no place in themselves.”

The earth itself is very productive – marvelously productive. From the earth man was made – from the earth every living creature was made – from the earth every tree and herb was made – from the earth comes our food. Even the ground that seems to have nothing in it; the desert sand that appears to have no productivity; if it is watered and irrigated will oftentimes produce mammoth crops. There is a desert area of California that has become almost like a garden of Eden because it has been irrigated. There are the deserts of Israel, the dry and parched areas which have lain waste for so long, they are now being irrigated and the Lord is sending the rain. The ground that for ages was barren is now blooming like a rose. Isn't that what God said would happen? “THE DESERT SHALL BLOSSOM LIKE A ROSE” HALLELUJAH!

It is nothing less than amazing what the earth will produce. From the same ground will grow many things according to the kind of seed that is sown. In one row you will grow red beets, from the next row, the yellow carrots, then tomatoes – then cabbage – then onions – then green beans – then corn – etc. All from the same ground!

IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU SOW

The devil knows this law of Sowing and Reaping, and he has sown the ground with weed seeds – seeds of sin. And so the thorns – the briars – the thistles. So he hate, envy, lusts, drunkenness, bitterness, murder, war, and such like have filled the earth. But if we sow the seed of the Word of God, it will grow and subdue the seeds of wickedness. Jesus said, “For the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” John 6:63

So you see that the Word of God has life in itself. Think of that a minute –

THE WORD OF GOD HAS LIFE IN ITSELF

just like a seed has life in itself. When Bibles or Gospel literature are distributed, even without personal witnessing or preaching, it will grow and bring light and life, if it is

received by honest and sincere hearts. It will bear fruit because there is life in the seed. When we talk about a seed we talk about germination – we talk about growth – about life. Several days before my father would plant his fields with corn, he would shell a few grains off of several years and then lay them between wet clothes. He would keep them dampened and warm until they had time to sprout. He wanted to be sure that the corn that he was planting would grow. It is possible that the seed might have been stored in too damp a place, or that it had frozen too hard, or perhaps was too old, that it would not germinate. See, you could plant 10 bushels of corn, but if it had no life in it, you would never have a crop to harvest.

BUT THERE IS LIFE IN THE WORD OF GOD

You don't have to worry about that! It is never too wet, it is never too cold, it is never too old – IT WILL GROW! The only thing that can stop it is the heart that will not give it room. But there are things that you can do to the ground which will make it unable to produce, such as – scorching it with excessive heat, or using a lot of salt, or too much fertilizer. Brethren, these things are applicable to the sowing of the seed of God's word.

THE DIRECTIONS ARE IN THE SEED

(This wonderful truth was suggested to me by my son in law J.W.)

Not only is the germ of life in every seed, but the instructions for growth are in the seed: such as the kind of growth – how tall – how bushy – the kind of fruit - the color of the fruit – the time of maturity – etc. The onion seeds will all produce the same kind of stalks. The tomato seeds will all produce similar vines and fruit. The melon seeds will produce the same kind of vines and leaves. The fruit trees will grow about the same height, same leaves, the same fruit. The tomatoes will be red. The carrots will be yellow. The corn will be yellow or white, according to the kind of seed. The wheat will be golden. When you plant the seed, you don't have to instruct it how to grow. God put all these instructions in the seed. WHAT A MIRACLE! And so is the spiritual! The WORD OF GOD, which is the SEED OF THE KINGDOM, will produce God-like people. The word of God contains all the directions for spiritual growth – for daily living – for righteousness – for bearing fruit – FOR SOUL-WINNING! We are to be like Him! What a miracle of grace! HALLELUJAH!

(Comments by M. W.) “I think that the ones who do not get rooted are those who rely solely on the feeling they get from salvation, but fail to base their daily living on the scriptures... They just want to live on this HIGH feeling. They don't get any depth of scripture in their heart, and then they have nothing to fall back on. If I understand it correctly, three types of ground receive the Word and make a start for God, but only one kind will bring forth fruit. This would tend to explain why some people come and say, ‘Oh, what a wonderful thing, Thank God,’ and then in a few weeks or months they're gone. And we say, ‘What happened?’ Well, maybe they were just stony ground and the heat of trials withered up all they had. We gave them the same Word; it wasn't our fault.

It was because they were the wrong type of ground.”

(Brother Hanby) “That’s true, very true. It is because they had no deepness of earth. Then when the sun came up (persecution arose) they withered away.”

(Brother N. P.) “I just wondered, is that root sincerity?”

(Brother Hanby) “I think you are confusing the seed with the ground. The sincerity must be in the ground, not in the seed. The seed will take root wherever it has a chance. These had no root in themselves, no roots of character, no roots of stability, no depth. Therefore, they will bear nothing for God.”

(Brother D.B.) “Perhaps we worry, many times, about people who would not stay in the church anyway, and we wear ourselves out. Then, there is such a fine line of knowing just when you have done all for an individual. It is very difficult.”

(Brother Hanby) “It is true, Brethren. I believe we spent our wheels a lot of times, and sometimes we waste our energy on people who will never obey truth. Not only the saints, but oftentimes we ministers are not sure how much time we should spend on some individuals. So many times the saints will beg you to go to great length to reach a particular person, maybe it’s one of their special friends or relatives. But you may not feel any leading of the Spirit; there is no direction from God. Sometimes the decision is difficult. Of course, we have to be careful and be sure that we aren’t careless and indifferent. It’s good to try to save everybody, but sometimes we try and work and work to save one particular individual, while the rest of the world waits and waits. Brethren, we can waste our time on a few who will never serve the Lord, while other hungry souls are waiting – waiting for us to get the precious seed to their longing and waiting hearts. Therefore, I am persuaded that

WE CAN’T WASTE ALL OUR TIME ON 1 OR 2

We need to sow the seed everywhere and go on. If one does not hear us, GO ON, GO ON! LEAVE THE RESULTS WITH GOD!

Don’t be discouraged because one didn’t respond in a day, or a week – or in a month, and conclude that they will never respond. I have often been amazed, During my life and ministry, at the results of the Gospel. I have seen places where the seed was sown where some of the members of a home obeyed the Gospel 40 years ago, while other individuals of that home looked like they would never obey it... but have, after 30 or 40 years, obeyed the word and have received the Holy Ghost. I had given up on them; really, I had given up! You know, we sometimes think that if they are honest at all, they’re going to hear and get saved NOW! Somebody else said, ‘They are sure to have the light, because I preached the word to them.’ But you don’t always know when an individual has light. We do not always know! Just because somebody tells them, or perhaps somebody throws the seed at them, it does not always mean that they get the light. Someone else says, ‘Well, I know I gave them the light.’ But how or where did you shine the light? The Bible says,

THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET and a LIGHT UNTO MY PATH.

If you are going out into the night to help someone who calls, ‘Will you please bring

me a light? I can't see anything, and I'm stumbling in the darkness.' And you answer, 'Yes, I'll give you a light.' And then you shine it in their eyes. You didn't do them bit of good, NOT A BIT OF GOOD! They are in worse shape than they were to begin with. Now they can't even see the ground. The place to shine the light is on the path, ON THE PATH! In the olden days, before they had modern lights, they tied torches to their feet, and of course, every step they took in the light gave them light for the next step. When I was a boy on the farm, we use to carry an oil lantern, And you couldn't see far with a lantern; but you could see far enough for a few steps. But every step you took gave light for another step, for another step, and then ANOTHER STEP! For spiritual things, many people do not have faith that the path will light up as they go, and with hesitation they say, 'How in the world will I ever make it? I cannot see beyond fifteen feet.' Well, Walk the fifteen feet, You can then see still more. We are instructed to 'Walk in the light as He is in the light.' Remember, 'The word of God is a lamp unto our feet, and a light onto our path.' For this we give God the glory."