The Harvest Is In Our Hands

Psalm 126:5-6 (KJV)
They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

The Psalms are without equal in scripture in regard to their richness of illustration.

• Unfortunately many of the incredible truths contained within the poetic language of the Psalmist is lost in the transition to our language and culture.
  o Because of this the Psalms are best viewed when they can be seen through the lens of the author’s personal experience.
  o It is often difficult to catch such a glimpse of the Psalms, however, when it happens it opens the doors of understanding at a whole new level.

• Our text represents one such passage of scripture.
  o Sowing and weeping are not readily connected in the western mind.
  o Rarely have their been occasions in American History or in our frame of understanding where the sower went to the field to spread his precious seed with weeping and sorrow.
  o Therefore the real impact of the Psalmists words are somewhat reduced because of our limited realm of experience.

• I once read a piece by a missionary that served 14 years in West Africa.
  o His experience there gave him a unique opportunity to glimpse Psalm 126 within a context that must have been similar to the experience of the original author.

• He worked in a vast stretch of the Savanna more than four thousand miles wide just under the Sahara Desert.
  o In that area all of the moisture comes in a four-month period: May, June, July, and August.
  o After that, not a drop of rain falls for eight months.
  o The ground cracks from dryness, and so do your hands and feet.

• The winds of the Sahara pick up the dust and throw it thousands of feet into the air.
  o It then comes slowly drifting across West Africa as a fine grit.
  o It gets inside your mouth.
    ▪ It gets in your nose.
    ▪ It gets in your lungs.
    ▪ It will even get inside your watch and ruin it.

• The year’s supply of food must all be grown in those four months.
  o The people there grow sorghum or milo in small fields.

• When he related his experience he said that October and November are beautiful months.
  o Those are the months that know the bounty of harvest.
  o During those months the granaries are full.
The joyous harvest has arrived.
- People sing and dance.
- They eat two meals a day.
- The sorghum is ground between two stones to make flour and then a mush with the consistency of Cream of Wheat is prepared.
- The sticky mush is eaten hot; they roll it into little balls between their fingers, drop it into a bit of sauce and then pop it into their mouths.
- The meal lies heavy on their stomachs and they sleep the sleep of the contented.

Then December comes, and the granaries start to recede.
- Many families omit the morning meal.

Certainly by January not one family in fifty is still eating two meals a day.
- By February, the evening meal diminishes.
- The meal shrinks even more during March and children succumb to sickness.
  - You just don't stay well on half a meal a day.

April is the month when disaster begins to strike.
- The images of April, according to the missionary, are haunting.
  - In April you hear the babies crying in the twilight.
  - Most of the days are passed with only an evening cup of gruel.

Then, inevitably, it happens.
- A six- or seven-year-old boy comes running to his father one day with sudden excitement.
  - "Daddy! Daddy! We've got grain!" he shouts.
- "Son, you know we haven't had grain for weeks."
- "Yes, we have!" the boy insists.
  - "Out in the hut where we keep the goats -- there's a leather sack hanging up on the wall -- I reached up and put my hand down in there -- Daddy, there's grain in there!
  - Give it to Mommy so she can make flour, and tonight our tummies can sleep!"
- The father stands motionless. "Son, we can't do that," he softly explains.
  - "That's next year's seed grain. It's the only thing between us and starvation.
  - We're waiting for the rains, and then we must use it."

The rains finally arrive in May, and when they do the young boy watches as his father takes the sack of precious seeds from the wall and he does the most unreasonable thing imaginable.
- Instead of feeding his desperately weakened family,
  - the father goes to the field and with tears streaming down his face, he takes the precious seed and throws it away.
  - He scatters it in the dirt!

Why? Because he believes in the harvest and he understands the simple principle that there's no reaping without sowing.
The seed is his; he owns it.
  o He can do anything with it he wants.
• The act of sowing it hurts so much that he cries.
  o But regardless of the agony he throws the seed into the dirt.
  o As his boy stands by and watches with tears in his eyes, he sows the seed.
  o **Because he understands that you don't reap where you haven't sown.**
  o His family may be desperately hungry today but the only hope for their future lies not in consuming the meager supply of grain but instead in sowing it.

The principle of sowing and reaping is one of those biblical themes that spans the whole of scripture across both testaments.
• From the first chapter of the bible God introduces the concept of seed and harvest.
  o “Let the earth bring forth grass, The herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.” (Genesis 1:11-12.)
    ▪ From that day till now, each species of grass, herbs and trees still produces after its kind: it is an absolute law which is true in every part of the world.
• God established the same law among the creatures which have the oceans and the seas for their natural habitat.
  o “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that bath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.” (Genesis 1:20-21.)
    ▪ Everything that God created produces seed and reproduces after its kind.
    ▪ Its a simple principle of life.
• As is often the case, what God set in order in the physical world mirrors a spiritual reality.
  o As followers of Christ it is our calling, indeed it is our purpose to spread the gospel — making disciples of other men.
    ▪ As born again believers we have a mandate to reach our world.
  o A church exists in Lake City not for fellowship,
    ▪ not for community service,
    ▪ not to provide an avenue for charity,
    ▪ although we may do all these things,
the church exists to spread the wonderful truth of the gospel.
  • We are called to reap the harvest that is around us.
  • We are called to produce believers.
• However, I believe there is a lesson to be learned from the weeping sower of Psalms 126.
  • I doesn’t matter how bad you want a harvest.
  ▪ It doesn’t matter how earnestly you long for revival.
  • If there is no sowing of this precious seed,
  ▪ my friend there will be no reaping and rejoicing.

There must be sowing before reaping.
• It’s a basic concept.
  • It has been established from the foundation of the world and it hasn’t changed.
  ▪ In order to have a harvest you must first plant the seed.
    • There must be sowing and reaping.
  • We live in an instant generation,
    ▪ we like to see immediate results but sowing and reaping are separated by time.
  • Sowing is the beginning of the process,
    ▪ while reaping is the culmination of it.
• When the farmer sows his field, he must do so in faith, trusting that all of his efforts will eventually be worthwhile.
  • Nearly everything which the farmer does,
    ▪ he does in the light of what he hopes to be the outcome.
  • The farmer puts the seed in the ground in faith that it will produce results.
    ▪ This is the mindset in which we are commanded to sow the good seed of the word –
      • in faith believing that it will produce a harvest in due season.

Jesus shared the parable of the sower.
• In it the sower sows indiscriminately.
  • He sows everywhere he can.
    ▪ He sows in the knowledge that 3/4 of the seed he sows will never produce seed.
  ▪ But he sows.
• Jesus himself applied the truths of this spiritual principle based upon a physical reality.
  • He told the disciples that the seed was the word of God.
    ▪ The seed is this glorious gospel truth that we have.
• My friend, this message works.
  • If we will share it, with the passing of time it will produce results.
    • We need a simple revival of the faith of the sower.
We must sow the seed – everywhere, anywhere, somewhere.
- We must sow the seed – in every situation, with every opportunity, as often as we can.

Romans 5:9 tells us that by the one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, and that by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous.
- This verse finds its application in the life and death of Jesus Christ.
  - However, the principle of sowing and reaping is active here as well.
- Jesus was the ultimate seed that was sown with weeping.
  - He was a man of sorrows, much acquainted with grief.
  - He was bruised for our transgressions and wounded for our iniquities.
    - And, as the ultimate seed of eternal life he was sown in the ground with weeping and emerged with rejoicing.
- The same principle finds its application in the life and subsequent death of every believer.
  - Jesus told his disciples in John 12:24 unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- My friend we are called to produce fruit.
  - We are called to produce believers.
    - It’s not just our desire to have revival – its our mandate.
  - If we aren’t having revival, if we aren’t reaching our city,
  - then we aren’t fulfilling our purpose for being brought into the kingdom.

In light of that simple truth I want to remind you tonight that there can be no harvest, there will be no revival, unless we are busy about the business of sowing the seed.
- There will be no visitors if we don’t invite them.
  - There will be no conversions if we don’t teach them.
  - There will be no baptisms if we don’t share what we’ve been given.
- And, my friend, we’ve been given the seed.
  - The harvest is in our hands.
- We will reap what we sow and we will only reap as much as we sow.
  - He that sows sparingly will reap sparingly.
  - But where there is much sowing there will be much reaping.
- I believe that our biggest obstacle as a church is not the culture that we face or the sins and spirits that must be overcome.
  - I believe that our biggest obstacle is our own aversion to the simple work of sowing the seed.
    - In the spirit of political correctness we’ve allowed ourselves to be conditioned not to sow the seed.
- In the interest of tolerance, in order to get along and blend in we’ve been sold a bill of goods that says its not appropriate to be a constant evangelist of this incredible life changing truth.
  - We’ve been sold a bill of goods!
We can sit back and wonder all day long where the days of revival have gone.

- We can lament the passing of the great awakenings and long for the church services of yester year but my friend the fact is that we’ll never see the kind of expansion and growth that God desires to give us until we become unapologetic evangelists of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
  - Revival will follow on the heels of sowing.
- If we are faithful to spread the word, to share this truth at every possible moment with as many people as God will bring into our lives – we will reap in due season if we faint not!
  - This is the promise of God.
  - This is the culmination of the principle.
    - You reap what you sow.
- This is the simple fact that sends the West African father into the field bearing his leather bag of precious seed.
  - This is the simple truth that drives him to mingle his tears with the seed in the mud of the earth with absolute faith that revival will follow.
- The bottom line is that we won’t have unprecedented apostolic revival until we adopt again the apostolic principles of authentic evangelism.
  - The early church discovered the most wonderful revelation ever given in the power and glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Everywhere they went they shared it.
  - They shared it in the markets, they shared it in the synagogues, they shared it on the streets and they shared it in their homes.
- Anybody that would listen heard the wonderful truth of the saving name of Jesus.
  - Even their jailers and tormentors weren’t spared.
- They spread this message everywhere and it spread like a wildfire thru all of Rome – until they were referred to as the men who turned the world upside down.
  - We simply must go back to the book of Acts.
  - We simply must take up the mantle of evangelism again.
- Acts 18:3 tells us that, while he was in Corinth, Paul worked as a tentmaker but two verses later in Acts 18:5 it tells us that he was occupied with the word!
  - Even when he worked a secular job Paul kept himself employed in his first job – that of an evangelist.
- It is high time for the church to revive that attitude and spirit of authentic evangelism.
  - This is the only way we will ever see apostolic revival in our city.