

You Reap What You Sow

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[0:00] And talking about harvest time, you reap what you sow. Harvest time. Just as a farmer cannot sow thorns and then expect to reap wheat, we cannot sow sin and expect! You cannot mock God. So really there's a warning here to us, don't kid yourself, you cannot fool God. When we think about some, they think they can fool God, they think they can just read the Bible and pray and trust the Lord and speak the truth and stay faithful to our spouse and we might love our children, yet things can still go wrong. We may still have conflict and bitterness and trouble and tears and sorrow and we can ask them, well how come I was sowing all the right things, I thought that I sowed all the good things, that I would receive a good harvest, but we see Paul's words here, it goes on to say, Paul says don't get weary. He says there's a due time.

For that harvest. Sometimes we really want an immediate harvest, but it takes time, doesn't it? The harvest will come. The harvest will come, brother. The harvest will come, sister, at the proper time. The harvest doesn't always come when we expect it or when we want it. So yet the harvest can come. It could take months, years, even decades, but ultimately the harvest will come. Ultimately what you do with your life, there will be something for it. There will be something even in eternity for the wise choices that you make. For example, we might think of our children. You may say something that you forget, but it can stick with them for a lifetime. Even just some throwaway line that you make, you're sowing into their lives, aren't you? And I picked up this story about how parents of busy children, we can often feel too tired to spend time with our children.

Maybe we've had a long day or a long week at work. Often our children are the first to be put aside in our thinking when we're busy and tired. And there's a writer called Boswell, and he frequently mentioned a story of his childhood, a time in his childhood, a childhood memory that was really special to him. And it was a day that he'd spent fishing with his dad. And apparently Boswell's life was made the better for that one single day. It was etched on his mind, that one single day. And he constantly referred back to it as that special day that he'd had with his dad, that one occasion. And many years later, they found an entry in the father's journal, I suppose it was after he died. And they found the words that the man had wrote on that day that meant so much to the boy, gone fishing today with my son, a day wasted. A day wasted. The father thought that was a day wasted, the day that he'd spent with his son. And what we might think of as a wasted day, it could actually be really special to our children. We might think of that for ourselves, mightn't we? The time that we had with our mum, our dad or family, and it might have been just a day of fun, of joy, a nice occasion, something that was special to us when we were young.

And that was sown into our lives, wasn't it? And we could think of that too, really parents, of maybe we could think about the time that we spend with our own children. And we might look back and think, I wish I'd spent a bit more time. I wish I'd put more time into my children.

And that can be true. Like there was one businessman who said he spent so much effort trying to improve his family standard of living. And now he's saying my children are grown and gone. And now they're too busy for me. If only I'd spent more time with them. And it's interesting, really, we can think as parents too, we can get busy, but we should never be too busy to influence our children. Because if we don't, someone else will. Amen. Think about mums and dads here tonight.

Sometimes the harvest doesn't even come in this life at all. The Bible talks about a time where the Lord will say to you, well done, thou good and faithful servant. We might think, wow, I don't really see much reward in this life for all the efforts I'm putting in for ministry and things. But it's later, isn't it? That the reward can be later when we see his face. Sometimes we don't always reap what we expect too. But God in his wisdom, he defines what is good fruit. And we will receive good fruit as God sees fit. The question is really for all of us tonight is what kind of seeds are we planting? Are

we planting those seeds? Are we putting them in the ground? What kinds of seeds are we planting with our life? We've only got one life, which will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last, as someone said. So let's work hard to plant the right kind of seeds. And the word of God shows us this. It says in Proverbs 20 verse 4, it talks about harvest time. It says the one who doesn't sow gets nothing. Proverbs 20 verse 4 says the sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold.

[4:57] Therefore shall he beg in harvest and have nothing. So the son, they should be preparing, they should be putting the harvest, they're putting the crop in, but they're lazy and they don't do it. And then they're begging in harvest time because they've got nothing. And we could think, we could make choices in our life and think, well, I should have been planting then, but I didn't. I missed out. And so you reap what you sow. That's the principle, isn't it?

And we can think too of some, we can suffer the consequences of our own past actions from even before we were a Christian as well. But thank God we can know God's forgiveness and his promise of eternal life. Because in Christ, we know that Christ has paid for our sin. He's paid completely for it. And all our guilt can be taken away. As he's promised for us, if we just trust him, we may still experience the consequences of our actions in this world. You know, for example, we might think before we were saved, we might have committed some crime. We might have to go to jail for that because there's consequences for our actions, isn't there? But at least we know we've not got God's condemnation because he's forgiven us of our sin or we trusted Christ. We won't have to face God's wrath or judgment. But there's a warning here. It reads on in verse 8. Verse 8, For he that soweth to his flesh shall of his flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. It's a warning here about sowing to the flesh. In other words, it's just spending your life for yourself or for your selfish ways. It says there's going to be corruption. There's going to be destruction there. Our choices and our actions are like seeds and they're going to yield a harvest. They're going to produce a harvest. It says whoever sows to please the spirit, to please God, it says they from the spirit will reap eternal life. The question is, how can we please God? We might try to be religious. We might try to do religious things and good works.

But we see the only way is by faith. We read Hebrews 11 verse 6. Hebrews 11 verse 6, it reads, But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. How can we please God? The only way is by faith.

The only way is by trusting Christ. We might have all kinds of religious background and experience and knowledge and religiosity and superstition and different beliefs and philosophies. But the only way to please God is by faith.

Without faith it's impossible to please God. So we've got that choice what we're going to sow. And really the most important thing that we can do to plant into our life is to have that faith.

[7:50] To have that faith in Christ. To honour God with our life. To trust in Christ as our saviour. And that's what it means really, I would put to you, about sowing to the spirit.

In other words, to give your life to God. To yield your life to God. To have faith in Christ as your saviour. And that brings eternal life and sure blessing. Because it's where the spirit is where eternal life comes from, isn't it?

It's God's spirit that gives eternal life. So think of it for yourself here tonight as we're looking at this principle of sowing and reaping. Our choices and our actions are like seeds that we're planting. And they're going to produce a harvest one day. And for some, they just sow to gratify their sinful desires. That's going to yield destruction and decay and loss.

But we can sow to please the spirit. We can rather trust Christ with our life and have that seed of faith planted, as it were. To see that eternal life that he gives by faith.

[8:52] It will yield a harvest of eternal life. In John 6.47, the Lord says, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. It's trusting in Christ that brings eternal life.

What kinds of seeds are we sowing? What will we sow? Will they be seeds of destruction? Will it be the seed of eternal life? The seeds of destruction will just bring a bitter harvest.

But the sowing to the spirit, in other words, trusting Christ as your saviour. As part of this family of God here, you can get behind the past. We all have weary times.

We get tired. We're human. We all have days we feel to slacken. But no, the Bible says keep going. Keep going. Think of what you give yourself. And his wife devotes 75 hours a week to work in that business.

And, you know, we can live our life such that we're eating up our life with work, work, work. And sometimes maybe it's called for at times or seasons of our life.

[9:54] But we could think, how am I living my life? What am I putting my time into? What am I devoting my time to? And it can be sometimes we can get preoccupied, can't we? We're preoccupied with the things of this world of flesh?

Or could it be the things of God we get occupied with? You're planting. You're sowing. Day by day, aren't you? The time that you spend, what you do with your life.

There's an eventual harvest. There'll be something to show for what you're putting your life into, for what you're investing into. And it could be either favourable or unfavourable. And Paul tells the Galatians, let us not be weary in well-doing, in doing right.

Think about doing right, doing good. That can be challenging, especially when you're putting your time into things. Sometimes you're putting your time into people, into attending meetings, into fellowship.

You're pouring your life into people. And sometimes that can be hard going. You know, it's not always easy working with people, especially when people aren't always faithful.

[10:57] It's easy to lose heart. But if I could urge your pastor, but really all of you, to get behind your pastor here tonight. We mark these 12 years as a church. How much time does your pastor give?

Sometimes you don't really. It's not like you clock in or clock out, is it, Brother Athol? You don't always clock in or clock out. And sometimes people don't respect the boundaries. They're ringing you all hours of the night. But you get that time where the pastor's time is often occupied in the pastor's life.

Even more so sometimes. What do they see for it? They're planting. They're planting, aren't they? They're sowing. They're sowing into your lives. They're sowing into this church. They're sowing because they love the Lord.

And they want you to have that heart too. To sow into the Spirit. I'm sure that can be true of the pastor, that sometimes the pastor gets criticism. It's not always easy.

There's challenges as you give yourself to God's work. And that can be true for you too. Even as you work alongside, as you do something for God, maybe in your witnessing, in your personal life, and your family life, you can get picked on because you love God and you want to follow Him.

[12:06] But there's a ministry there. And there's a joy. Because there's a reward coming. There's a harvest day coming. Amen? And so this verse encourages you and me. It encourages all of us to a steadfastness.

It encourages us to a perseverance. And we can know, as it tells us, that giving up is not an option. Give out. Don't give up. We will reap a harvest. You will reap a harvest.

At the proper time. When He sees fit. So believer, I urge you, sometimes we can flag and feel that faint-hearted, you will see a harvest. Keep on planting.

Keep on investing yourself. Don't give up. Do not grow weary. Really, perseverance is an essential, isn't it? The harvest may not come immediately, but it will come.

It says it will come. At the due time. At the proper time. In God's good time. For the meantime, stay firm. Stay steadfast. Keep strong. Keep going. Because there's consequences for what we do.

[13:05] We can just give up or give in. We can stop sowing to the Spirit. But rather, no. Keep on doing good. Keep doing the well-doing. Keep on going with it. Let's be mindful all the time for our lives that we live.

For that next span of time that we've got before glory. It's really only days and months, isn't it?

Potentially. Let's choose to honour God in all that we can. With what we can.

In what we do. Trust God. There's a harvest. A fruitful harvest in due time. So think of it. Identify areas in your life where you can sow. Where you can put your life into.

Where you can invest your time and energy. Can you live for Christ? For his glory? Find ways to serve. Ask the pastor. Look, I want to do more for God.

I'm sure that he'd love to have people volunteering to serve in this church. Sowing in the flesh will reap temporal life. Flesh is temporary. It's organic.

[14:03] That will decay. But sowing to the spirit is eternal, isn't it? There's an eternal dimension. We can put so much of our life into material things. And before we know it, life's gone.

It's just gone. It's like a vapour, like it says. All of that time and effort and attention. We can invest so much time into trying to acquire wealth or amass wealth. But really, it's not going to satisfy you, will it?

Rather, let's think about... Have that more eternal perspective. What can I do that's really going to make a difference? It's an eternal difference. And be content with what we have, rather than being greedy.

Some people are just all focused on money, on wealth, as if that's their God. All they think and talk about is money, making money. But what about us? We should be different. Where should we place our energy?

Of course, we still need money. Of course, we still need to pay the bills and be sensible. But it's the sense where that shouldn't preoccupy us. That should be just really secondary to what matters.

[15:00] Our mission. Our mission. The time is coming when we'll no longer be able to sow the seed. That's the reality. We've only got so much time. Especially as younger ones, you've got a bit more health and stamina than some of us older ones talking about me.

But the time is coming when you'll no longer be able to sow the seed. We see that in John 9 verse 4. Our Lord says, I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work.

There's going to come a time when it's night time. Your capacity to labour and serve is going to be gone. Use that time when you can sow to sow. To sow right.

And we know that really it's what we sow is going to yield something. You can't sow seeds of bitterness and reap peace. You can't sow seeds of discord and reap unity. You can't sow seeds of doubt and reap faith.

So sow the right seed. Sometimes we actually reap much that we did not sow. Much that we reap we never planted. Someone else did. And we reap the consequences. If you think of that, for example, in the church context, the church is like that.

[16:05] It was planted by the pastor and his wife and with some few workers. And we all get the benefit now because the church is operating. It's been planted. And so we want to recognise that and mark that today.

The sowing, the giving, the labour, the sacrifice that's planted this church. So it's true that we can be blessed by the work of others. What others have planted. Others have laboured and we enter into the blessings of that.

And when you think about it too, it's like that with salvation, isn't it? What have we got to claim any credit for or any merit for about salvation? Paul said, I'm the chief of sinners.

He says, I don't deserve anything. And he was, wasn't he? He was standing by the men that were stoning Stephen to death. He was really a wicked man, Paul. And yet God turned him around on that Damascus road on the inside.

And he was saved. And salvation, when you think about it, is everything has been done for you. Christ has planted everything that had to be planted so that you can reap the benefit.

[17:07] As he cried out on the cross, it is finished. Everything was done at Calvary's Hill for you to trust him. Everything was done for your salvation as a gift. In life also, we can reap negatively from what others have done.

It could be that your parents might have sown into you things that you think, oh, I'm just like my mum or dad. And I don't really like what I see in the mirror. You know, it could be a critical spirit. Perhaps they were always finding fault with everything.

And now we've learned to copy them and to be just like our mum or dad. They might have been critical kind of people. Maybe they were fearful and afraid. And they've sown that into our lives such

that we're fearful and afraid.

Because we reap what our parents sow into us sometimes, don't we? I'll say again, message to parents again. That should wake us up as parents, shouldn't it? Think about what are we sowing into our children's lives.

There will be a harvest. We want to sow good things into the lives of others. And that's true for ministry. As we sow, there will be a harvest. That's why as ministry, anyone who's in ministry, is sowing into other people's lives.

[18:11] And that's an awesome privilege, isn't it? An awesome responsibility. So don't get weary in that, brother, sister. Think of the people in your life that you can sow into. Because really, as an older Christian, as younger Christians than you, you can sow into their lives.

You can disciple them. Beware you reap what you sow. We think of David and Bathsheba. David and Bathsheba. He ended up breaking every commandment of the second table of the law.

He committed murder, adultery. He stole. He bore false witness. He coveted his neighbour's wife. And just as bad as all that was with David, that was just the beginning.

Because then there was a kind of ripple effect that it was in his family too. He had a harvest in that his sin had a ripple effect in his family. We can think of that too for ourselves. Am I being a godly example to others?

Or am I sowing things that are going to be an influence that's not good on the people I love? Will we sow to the Spirit? Be careful what seed that you're going to plant. We do not sow discord and reap unity.

[19:13] We do not sow sin and reap sanctification. We do not sow hypocrisy and reap holiness. We want to sow the good things, not the bad things. So David sowed to the flesh and those consequences, those actions for that.

You know, sin is like a seed. And when you do something wrong, there's a harvest for it, a bitter harvest. We don't want to do that. We'd rather sow to the Spirit. Friends, harvest time is coming. So be patient. Christian worker. Don't get weary. Don't lose heart. You know, sometimes you think it's heavy going. It's a slog sometimes.

Ministry of any kind. Of whatever ministry that you're serving in this church. The different things that you're giving to this church. Of your time. Your life. Sometimes you may not see much fruit in the now.

But you will. Amen. You will see the harvest in God's good time. So will you sow to the flesh? If you do, there will be a bitter harvest. We see that in Proverbs 22 verse 8.

[20:13] It reads, Here that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity. In other words, if you sow sin, it's saying there's going to be a calamity, a sorrow. There's going to be a yielding of grief, of suffering, of anxiety, of vanity.

Sometimes the harvest we reap will be devastating. It says Hosea 8 verse 7. They have sown the wind and they shall reap the whirlwind. Sometimes we might do something in a minor way, but there's actually even more dreadful calamity.

We might sow something that seems minor and then it just becomes major. It's like this one who sows the wind and then they reap the whirlwind. In this sense, the word here whirlwind means a violent whirlwind like a destructive tornado.

So rather sow that which is righteous and good. Sow to the Spirit. And if it's going to snowball and get bigger, then it'll be a good thing. It won't be a bad thing.

Another truth is if you do not sow, you do not reap. You could just sit back like the one we talked about before. Harvest was coming and they just were slumbering.

[21:22] They weren't planting. If you do not sow, you do not reap. Another truth is if you sow sparingly, you reap sparingly. If you want to reap a bountiful harvest, you must sow in a bountiful way.

So 2 Corinthians 9 verse 6 it says, For this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. So for example, if you're a farmer and you've got one acre that you plant, you'll reap one acre.

But if you had 100 acres under cultivation, your harvest is going to be 100 times greater. Think of that for yourself. How can I do more for God? How can I be planting more? How can I be sowing more for God? How can I be more zealous of good works? As it reads in Titus 2.14. How can I be ready to every good work? What you plant is what you're going to see the result from.

So plant yourself in this church. Plant yourself in giving of yourself, in serving God, as God helps you to. I think one example that speaks of this is the young lad who gave five loaves and two fish. [22:27] He could have been selfish and thought, Oh, that's what my mum gave me for my lunch. These five loaves and these two fish. And yet he put them in the hand of the Lord.

And the Lord took that little that he had and multiplied it and fed 5,000 men beside women and children. That boy could have chosen not to give. He could have said, No, it's my lunch. I'm not sharing it. So if I could leave you with somewhat of a challenge to determine so to live in the now that you can produce a good harvest. A full harvest.

A harvest that you won't regret this harvest because it will be a good thing. It won't be destruction. It won't be condemnation to you. But it will be eternal life. And that happens as you sow to the Spirit. So really the bottom line truly is salvation. To trust Christ. To know the Saviour. In where you're at today.

[23:25] Could today be the beginning of an eternal life as you're born again by God's Spirit? But really he is the one that we need to save us.

And you that are saved can even make the mistake of sowing seed that you're going to be ashamed of too. You reap what you sow. You know, we can be a careless Christian too. You might say, I'm a Christian but I know that I'm just sowing to my seed. I urge you tonight to make peace with God. The Bible says that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. I pray that you might receive that gift of his eternal life. That you'd say, Jesus, Lord, thank you for dying on the cross for my sin.

For paying the full price of all my sin and shame and guilt. That you bore my death penalty and paid for my sin on the cross.

[24:32] And I trust you as my Lord and Saviour. By faith I receive you into my life. To be my Master and Saviour. I trust you now.

And receive your salvation gift. Pray for everyone here tonight that that might be your heart. That you who know the Saviour might know what it means to sow not to the flesh but to sow to the spirit. To make that decision that you're going to plant that which is righteous and true. That which you're not going to be ashamed of. And there'll be a harvest. A wonderful, fruitful, blessed harvest to the glory of God.

Pray for each one, each soul. Pray for this church. The church pastor here. His wife, Lord, for your continued blessing.

For our continued fellowship. We pray if there's any here tonight that they've felt to utter that prayer. They've felt to call on your name. They might say to their friends here tonight, I've trusted Jesus tonight.

[25:44] I've trusted Jesus to be my Saviour tonight. So that we can rejoice with them. And they might seek counsel from the pastor or another trusted Christian friend.

So they can grow in their faith. Pray in Jesus' precious name.