

## SOWING & REAPING 10.2.19

1\* We continue our teaching series looking at the book of Galatians

2\* and tonight we come to the subject of sowing and reaping:

3\* Galatians 6: 7-10: Make no mistake about it, God will not be mocked. For whatever you plant will always be the very thing you harvest. The harvest you reap reveals the seed that was planted. If you plant with corrupt seeds of the self-life into this natural realm, you can expect to experience a harvest of corruption. If you plant the good seeds of the Spirit-life you will reap the beautiful fruits that grow from the everlasting life of the Spirit. And don't allow yourselves to be weary or disheartened in planting good seeds, for the season of reaping the wonderful harvest you've planted is coming!

These verses always remind me of Christine Noble who used to be our apostolic link to Pioneer. She would visit our home often and became a faithful friend to me, praying for our kids and assuming the role of adopted grandmother (much to my kids annoyance at times!) She would speak into their lives and the lives of any of their friends who happened to be around during her visit. I distinctly remember such a time with Olly, our neighbour and friend of my son aged 11 or so, who happened to drop into the conversation that he'd been watching horror films. Christine burst in with the Q. 'What do you get when you plant lettuce seeds?' Rather puzzled and bemused Olly replied, 'Lettuces?' 'Correct' she said, girding herself up, 'And what do you get when you plant tomato seeds?' 'Tomatoes' Olly replied, feeling pleased with himself. 'And what do you get when you sow seeds of horror?' Christine then asked and the penny dropped! 'Exactly - be careful what you sow into your life Olly!' Christine ended the conversation with these words as my son Nick died of embarrassment. Olly seemed relatively unscathed!

But this scripture shows she had a point, even if her advice was not particularly welcomed!

Whatever we sow into our lives, or the lives of others, will bear fruit of some sort or another. Another way of saying this perhaps is 'that every word, attitude, or action has an outworking and consequence.'

4\* Genesis 8:22 promises that 'while the Earth remains, seedtime and [a corresponding] harvest ...shall not cease.'

God of course calls us to plant good seed - into our own lives and into the lives of others. Good seeds might be prayer, Bible study, speaking wise words, generosity in giving, forgiving, loving and serving - - we are called to drop 'seeds' every day from our lives lived in relationship and responsiveness to God.

In fact God supplies us with good seed to sow - so we have no excuse!

5\* 2 Corinthians 9:10-11: He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

6\* This passage is important because it shows that God supplies us with the bread of personal provision, while also supplying extra seed to sow generously, so that it can produce a harvest. If we think God won't supply our bread, we will hoard our seed or use it only to make personal bread, when we should be sowing it into others and bringing about a harvest (multiplication of seeds) of righteousness and thanksgiving to God. To use all our seed for making bread ultimately leads to loss, poverty and starvation for everyone, including us.

This has a wide application I think – are we using our seed/resources – time, finance, gifts, skills, God's words and blessings, our prayers etc purely for our own needs and ends or are we sowing into others to bring about a harvest?

God promises He will richly supply our personal needs and give us more so that we can sow generously and keep producing a harvest. This is abundant living! Our declarations put it so well – 'We are blessed to be a blessing' Deuteronomy 28:6

7\* Joseph Prince (Book: Destined to Reign) puts it like this: When God called Abraham He said that He would bless him and that he would be a blessing. We are Abraham's seed and we too are to be a blessing. How can we be a blessing without first being blessed by God? We cannot be a blessing if we are always flat on our backs with sickness and living from hand to mouth. God wants us healthy, strong and having enough to be generous to others. This upholds the fact that on the cross Jesus took our sins, sickness, sorrows and poverty – all the things introduced by the Fall of Mankind.

8\* On the same theme, Patricia King has written a course entitled: Living in Abundance and Warring against Lack, which reinforces the point that God wants us to sow and reap and be living in His abundance. She has collated the promises of God and relevant scriptures into a booklet called, 'Decrees for your financial breakthrough'.

At this point, being very Western, and indeed many of us, British, some of us will start to react and recoil inside. We will start to think of the people and times when this abundance has not been in evidence. We may begin to think 'This sounds like the 'Prosperity Gospel.' And the Prosperity Gospel is thought to be 'You give God this and He'll make you wealthy!' And that wouldn't be very spiritual would it?!

I'm convinced from scripture that God wants us to live abundant lives. Lives that are thriving and prospering and giving hope to others – hope being the root word in 'prosper' from which the word 'prosperity' comes. That is the true Prosperity Gospel and we are denying ourselves, and others, if we think God doesn't want us to prosper or if we see prospering equating to being less spiritual and holy!

9\* John 10:10 TPT: shows that it is the thief (Satan) who comes to rob, kill and destroy you, but He (Jesus) came so you may have life in abundance.

Abundance of course, doesn't necessarily mean 'wealth,' but it does mean the fullness of life – in fact an overflowing life. A life where we see God's provision in all areas and where there are seeds from the overflow to sow. And sow we must if we are to reap a harvest that sees souls saved and brings thanksgiving to God.

Recently CL went through some challenging times financially. As a church where people tithe and give offerings and where we are able to give generously to many causes, we have always seen God meet our needs. But last year on paper, and in reality in certain months, it looked like our core finances were vastly reduced as a not insignificant number of CL members and givers were re-positioned by God elsewhere for His purposes, and there were also changes in giving from other regular sources. It looked like if we didn't cut our giving or slash budgets, we might face not being able to keep all our staff. As part of our response as a Leadership Team we began to declare and decree financial breakthrough using Patricia King's Resource.

Clive saw the title of the book in the bathroom and quizzed me on whether it was some 'methodology – a get rich quick scheme?' I informed him it was a book of declarations and biblical promises around finance that involved growing in faith for finance and being responsive to God's leading regarding sowing and giving!

All I can say is during the following two weeks, God focused me on giving and sowing. Clive and I have learned and practiced for many years the principles of tithes and offerings – knowing from experience that we cannot afford not to give God our first and best - 10% of our earned income to the church and other offerings and gifts in other places of our choosing as He prompts and leads. We both know first-hand that if we don't give our full tithe and offerings, it results in limitations in many areas of life because as the Good Book makes clear – it closes off Heaven's riches, and if we don't give to God, the enemy (or Devourer as referred to in the scriptures on it) takes it in other ways. Financially, it's like having a purse with holes in it and there's never enough, no matter how much you put in it!

But until using the declarations, I don't think I'd fully seen my offerings as sowing, resulting over time in harvest. As I focused on the promises of God, many conditional on being a generous and responsive people, God had me becoming more generous in different ways. He prompted me to give time generously; to make and give gifts to people as He directed, to be hospitable with our home and, of course, He asked me to give to financial needs that presented to me at that time. And in that two weeks it appeared there were way more 'opportunities' for all these things than usual!

I'm sure, in reality, there are just as many opportunities presenting themselves every week, as I saw in that two weeks – it's just that I was more attentive at that time!

I didn't really think too much more about it but continued to remember to pray for release every now and again and it's only now I look back that I see how faithful to His words and promises God has been – to us personally, and to CL. Personally we received a small, unexpected inheritance that enabled us to clear some mortgage as well as to give. And our AGM revealed to everyone, that despite a faith target of £100,000 last year and a significant monthly drop in members core-giving - but with our continued giving of around 30% out of CL, and trusting God, our faith target has been met – Thank You God and long may it continue! If you were at the AGM you will know our faith target for 2019 is just under £100,000 so let's all get sowing and praying!

I don't uphold the TV evangelists who say 'Send me £50+ and God will make you rich!' In fact I believe that if the TV evangelist truly believed that, he'd be sending all of us £50+!

But I do believe and uphold that God's word in many places in the Bible promises release of Heaven's riches when we tithe and give, which is not only about money, but the invaluable 'shalom' – peace, completeness, harmony in relationships, health and wellbeing, and it promises harvest when we sow.

I will also say, that in the context of our relationship and worship of God, if we declare or decree, believe and trust in His promises, which will involve our faith in action, things will get established that won't otherwise get established!

**10\*** Job 22: 26-28 (NASB): For then you will delight in the Almighty and lift up your face to God. You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; and you will pay your vows. You will also decree a thing, and it will be established for you; and light will shine on your ways.

I think the second part of that scripture is reliant on the first part being actioned by us!

**11\*** 2 Corinthians 1:20: For all of God's promises find their 'yes' of fulfilment in Him. And as His 'yes' and our 'amen' ascend to God, we bring Him glory!

God has particularly been highlighting this last verse as I mentioned at the AGM last week. He is saying 'Yes' to His promises over us, and looking for our trusting 'Amen!'

God wants us to experience fulfilment of His promises. He wants to bless us so we can bless others. He wants us to sow good seed so there is a harvest of souls and thanksgiving. It's time to take hold of these promises and declare and live them daily – with no Plan B if fulfilment takes time! It's time to sow generously without becoming weary of doing good as our opening Galatians passage states, because God definitely has a harvest for us!

**12\*** As well as intentional sowing, we must intentionally reap. No farmer sows his crops and neglects to harvest them at the right time! Neither must we.

So practically speaking what does sowing and reaping a harvest of righteousness and thanksgiving look like? A quick Summary & Pointers:

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1. Whether we think about it or not, we are intentionally or haphazardly sowing seeds into lives every day (by our attitudes and actions) and they will produce fruit of one form or another. It's good to consider what type of seed we are planting on a daily basis
2. God's desire is that we should produce good fruit from intentionally sowing good seed in such a way as to make Him visible to others and bring glory to Him  
14\*
3. God will supply us with good seed to provide for all our needs and extra to sow generously into the lives of others. Pray into what is bread and what is seed to sow. Don't eat the seed provided for sowing!
4. If we worship, pray, pay our tithe (the first 10% of our gross income) and sow there will be a release of Heaven's riches and a harvest of souls  
15\*
5. It's important to hear God on what and where to sow because we need to sow into good soil (Mark 4:3-9: The Parable of the Farmer scattering seed shows that sowing into good ground yields 30, 60 or 100 times more than the amount of seed sown)
6. It's important if we want to see a great harvest that we are generous with our seed – because sowing sparingly only gives a small reaping and we are looking to release God's abundance (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)  
16\*
7. However, even if we only have a small amount of seed, it can go along way when we are generous with it (like the boy's picnic that fed 5000+ people when put in Jesus' hands) 2 Corinthians 9:6-8)
8. It's important to remember the poor. If we want to be sowing more into the poor – ask God for the seed to do so – and when it comes, don't eat it – sow it! Many overseas projects work on this principle – giving a sewing machine, or pigs, or some means of creating a small business venture. This can bring change to whole communities. (PK example in Cambodia: Bag of soap and offered Kingdom business to local people with vision to be provided for by God. Purity Laundry Service with sheets cleaned and prayed for – soon got into hotels. Bag of beads became a Kingdom jewellery service called Kingdom Crown Jewellery and its success led to many families being blessed.) If we want to help people out of poverty – give them seed and get them to sow it, not only eat it, and they will begin to see the increase. Debt advice agencies that work on this principle have begun to break people out of their debt this way.

17\* 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 sums up all these points: A stingy sower will reap a meagre harvest, but the one who sows from a generous spirit will reap an abundant harvest. Let giving flow from your heart, not from a sense of religious duty. Let it spring up freely from the joy of giving—all because God loves hilarious generosity! Yes, God is more than ready to overwhelm you with every form of grace, so that you will have more than enough of everything—every moment and in every way. He will make you overflow with abundance in every good thing you do.

18\* Just as the Scriptures say about the one who trusts in Him: Because he has sown extravagantly and given to the poor, his kindness and generous deeds will never be forgotten. This generous God who supplies abundant seed for the farmer, which becomes bread for our meals, is even more extravagant toward you. First He supplies every need, plus more. Then He multiplies the seed as you sow it, so that the harvest of your generosity will grow. You will be abundantly enriched in every way as you give generously on every occasion, for when we take your gifts to those in need, it causes many to give thanks to God.

19\*

9. Don't stop sowing in difficult times – persevere, trust and be patient and the harvest will come
10. Don't forget to reap! Call in the harvest in prayer. Look for fruit ripe for the picking.

I studied God's words on sowing and reaping and produced a declaration for CL to use. They can be used personally or corporately. We still need to continue to declare God's truth over our CL finances and would love it if we could do this together. You will find a copy of the declaration at the front and I will send these notes and related scriptures to CG leaders tomorrow. And let's remember:

20\* Proverbs 11:25 TPT: Those who live to bless others will have blessings heaped upon them, and the one who pours out his life to pour out blessings will be saturated with favour.

Connect Group Discussion & Prayer Points: Discuss points 1-10 and see where we stand and what God is calling us to at this time where He wants us to live in overflowing abundance and reap a great harvest. Identify any hindrances stirring within and pray them through or get some healing prayer to remove them! If we've been tithing and sowing, we can expect and call in the promised harvest.

If there is breakthrough needed, consider God's words and use the declarations we have. Keep sowing - sow what and where He tells you to sow. See some of Patricia Kings declarations below (based on scriptures) should you wish to use them:

1. I love the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, and strength, and give him my first and best, therefore I am blessed (Malachi 3:10-12)
2. Under God's wings and in His shadow I find refuge, protection, favour and breakthrough (Psalm 91).
3. In Christ I have overcome lack and poverty
4. I am prosperous in every aspect of life because my soul prospers in God (3 John 2).
5. My God meets all my needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19), and He supplies seed for me to sow.
6. I sow bountifully and therefore I reap bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Proverbs 11:25)
7. I give cheerfully, for God loves a cheerful giver ( 2 Corinthians 9:6-8)
8. By faith and with full confidence, I call in the plentiful and rich harvest of every financial seed I have sown (Genesis 8:22).
9. I sow into good ground and therefore reap 30-60-100 fold (Mark 4:8)
10. I am generously mindful of the poor and therefore God abundantly blesses me and brings increase to my life. (Psalm 41:1; Proverbs 22:9)