

8-28-22

Galatians 6:6-8.

In a couple more messages we will be done with the book of Galatians. Like every other book of the Bible, God has shown us many things. In this passage, Paul states one of the most powerful principles in the Bible. It's called "You reap what you sow" I express it as, "You pick what you plant".

For review, Paul wrote this letter to a group of churches in what would be southern Turkey today. He established these churches on his missionary journeys, so he felt as if these Christians were his spiritual children. He was upset, false teachers had infiltrated the churches and corrupted the pure message of the Gospel of the grace of God. They misled the Gentile Christians into thinking they must become good Jews before they could be saved. Their legalistic message was that Jesus plus obeying the Jewish Law equaled salvation. Paul wrote them this strong letter to warn them not to stray from the Grace-Way. Grace means Jesus plus nothing equals salvation.

Read Galatians 6:6-8.

I was out looking at the garden that some of you planted, worked, (sowed) and now many of us and in this community are reaping the benefit of what you did, your vision. I thought to myself a couple of week ago, I wonder when veggies will be ready to be picked. I started thinking of how yummy it will be. A little while later it hit me, what if you were as excited to help them sow (work) it as you are to experience in the reaping? I know I am not the only one. I heard someone asking Kim the same question a week or so ago. Naturally, we are built to enjoy the harvest and do all we can to avoid the labor of it.

I. WHAT YOU ARE TODAY IS A RESULT OF THE CHOICES YOU MADE IN YOUR PAST

- Your life right now is basically the harvest of your habits. That's too profound to miss so let me say it again. Your life is the harvest of your habits.
- Every choice has consequences. Good choices have good consequences and poor choices have unpleasant consequences. If you lie, there will be consequences. But the truth is, if you tell the truth, there are also consequences—just different consequences.
- One of the most important values that us parents can ever teach your children is that they need to make wise choices, because choices have consequences. But what is true for children is also true for adults.
- Who you are and where you are right now in life is the result of a combination of factors. Your parents and family have influenced you. Society and circumstances have influenced you as well. But your CHOICES have been the main factors in your attitude, your position, and your character. Your circumstances have had an impact as well. But a large part of your present situation is the direct result of a series of choices you have made in your past.

There are three things about this I want us to notice.

A. You always pick WHAT you plant.

- If you plant grass seed, you don't expect to grow corn. Every kind of seed grows exactly what it is. Tomato seeds grow tomatoes. Squash seeds grow squash.

- Jacob is a good example of this spiritual principle. He wasn't the oldest son, so he and his mother hatched a plot to steal the birthright and blessing that rightly belonged to his older brother. When Isaac was a blind old man, Jacob came into his room wearing Esau's hunting clothes. He even wrapped his arms in goat hair so that his dad would think he was Esau, whose name means "hairy." Jacob planted the seeds of deception in his family, and years later he was the victim of deceit as well. His father-in-law tricked him into marrying un-lovely Leah instead of ravishing Rebecca. And years later Jacob's sons deceived him again by telling him that his favorite son, Joseph, had been killed by a wild animal.
- If you have a bitter, angry disposition toward others, don't be surprised that you receive hostility from others. But if you are planting seeds of kindness and love, you will find that other people are kind and loving.

Luke 6:44, Every tree is known by the kind of fruit it produces. You won't find figs on thorny weeds. And you can't pick grapes from thornbushes!

B. You will always pick MORE than you plant.

- Seeds don't reproduce one for one; they multiply exponentially. When you plant a seed you get a bush, vine, or tree of that seed.
- A tiny word, deed, or choice may seem small, but it can result in a massive harvest.
- Remember Abraham and Sarah? Over 4,000 years ago God promised them a son and he would be a blessing to the whole world. **(Gen. 12)** But they couldn't wait or thought they would help God out. So, they hatched a plan to have a son with Hagar, a servant of Sarah's. Hagar gave birth to a son named Ishmael. Later, Sarah gave birth to Isaac. These two brothers didn't get along. They hated each other. But that choice wasn't just about two brothers—it's about two races of people today. Ishmael was the forefather of all the Arab people and Isaac was the forefather of the Israelites. The reason millions of Jews and Arabs hate each other today is because of a bad choice made over 4,000 years ago. You reap MORE than you sow!
- Seeds are small, but they turn into large plants. You may think a tiny word or deed is insignificant, but it always multiplies and grows into large consequences.

"Sow a thought; reap an act; Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; Sow a character; reap a destiny."

C. You always pick AFTER you plant.

- When you plant a seed, it doesn't pop out the ground immediately. It takes time for a seed to grow into a plant. It takes patience to be a good farmer because you must wait for the harvest.
- The choices you make may not have immediate consequences. But there will eventually be consequences because you always pick after you plant.
- By the way, the "reap what you sow" law of the harvest not only applies to individuals, but it also applies to nations as well. In the Old Testament, Israel had turned from God and started worshipping the idols of their neighbors. The result was national calamity. God spoke through the prophet Hosea these words, **"Israel has rejected what is good...with their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction."** Then God said, **"They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind."** (Hosea 8:3-4, 7)
- I believe America is facing a national crisis because we have made the same mistake Israel made. We have forgotten the God who has given us our liberty.

- I believe the Church in America is facing crisis because we have made the same mistake Israel made. We have forgotten, no longer pay attention to who God is to us, obedience to Him is based on we feel or if we want to. Christian families are in crises we are making the same mistakes as Israel, we are depending on ourselves, serving ourselves and other gods, partaking in relationships that are not God honoring, where God is not first in both person's life.

Edward Gibbon was a British historian and Member of Parliament. He devoted much of his life studying the Roman Empire. His most famous work is his six-volume, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," written between 1776 and 1788. The Roman Empire was a great civilization. When it fell to the Visigoths in the 5th century, it had already been weakened from inner moral decay. Gibbon points out four of the main reasons Rome crumbled from within. See if these reasons don't sound exactly like America/Churches/ Marriages/Families today.

(1) Rapid increase of divorce; the undermining of the family as the basis of society. (FACT: America leads the world in the number of divorces, and there are forces trying to radically change the definition of marriage and the family).

(2) Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the population.

(3) A mad craze for sports, blood sport becoming increasingly brutal.

(4) The decay of religion, faith fading into mere formalism, moral decadence.

- Now at this point, you may be feeling discouraged about the condition of our country, churches, and families. Or you may be feeling bad about the choices you have made in the past.
- But here's the good news. There's hope for you and there's hope for America. You can't do anything about your past, but you can certainly do something about your future. Let's look at this from a different angle.

II. WHAT YOU WILL BE TOMORROW WILL BE THE RESULT OF THE CHOICES YOU MAKE TODAY

- The Bible says we can be engaged in only two kinds of planting—planting in the sinful nature, or planting in the Spirit.

A. Be careful! Selfish living is self-destructive.

- **Read verse 8.**
- Billy Graham said, *"many people spend all week sowing wild oats, and then they come to church on Sunday and pray for a crop failure."*

John Stott, the New Testament scholar wrote: "To 'sow to the flesh' is to pander to it, to cuddle and stroke it, instead of crucifying it. The seeds we sow are largely thoughts and deeds. Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fantasy, or wallow in self-pity, we are sowing to the flesh. Every time we lie in bed when we ought to be up and praying, every time we read pornographic literature, every time we take a risk which strains our self-control, we are sowing, sowing, sowing to the flesh."

- The Bible doesn't say if you plant poor choices, you MIGHT pick a crop of bad consequences. That's why Paul started this verse with this warning: **"Don't be deceived. God is not mocked."** That's a word that means to "turn up your nose" at God.
- You can't live in sin and just thumb your nose at God and think you're going to get away with it. It's just not harvest time yet.
- King Ahab wanted to buy the vineyard of Naboth, but Naboth wouldn't sell it to him. **(Lev.25:23)** Ahab got into bed and had a pity party. His wicked wife Jezebel took care of the situation. She had Naboth murdered and went in and told her pouting husband the vineyard was his. **(1 Kings 21:1-16)** But there was a prophet of God in the land named Elijah. He basically said, "You can't get away with this! You're going to reap what you sow. Just as you spilled Naboth's blood in his vineyard, one day your blood will be spilled, and the dogs will lick it up!" Yuck. But the queen laughed at Elijah and thumbed her nose at God. She said, "I'm the queen, you can't touch me!" But in the end, that's exactly what happened to the wicked queen. It took a long time. I'm sure she thought she had gotten away with murder. It didn't happen overnight, but eventually she received her "Payday someday."
- If you choose to disobey God and sow to the flesh, payday is coming.

B. Be patient! You may not enjoy your harvest until eternity.

- **"But he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."**
- We can't do anything about yesterday, its in the past. The only way we can change tomorrow is to do it God's way today in the present.

Matthew 6:33-34, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

- You can't do anything about last year's harvest, but you still have time to do something about next year's harvest. Let's take a brief look at the text we'll be studying next week, because it is a continuation of the law of the harvest.

Conclusion

If you're only into planting so you can pick personally, then you've missed the point. We plant good choices so others who come after us will have a good harvest. That's why I'm burdened for our nation, our church, our marriages, and our families.

What we will be tomorrow is based upon the choices we make today.

What kind of legacy are you going to leave behind for others? When you're in heaven will those who are left behind be blessed by your life?

What are you saying to your children, grandchildren about God, His ways, and His church by how you are living today?

We will reap what we sow, this makes me ponder, how many of the troubled things I have gone through we a result of what I sowed?

How will you change tomorrow? By focusing on today, seeking first the kingdom of God. If we continue to sow corruption, compromise, disobedience, convenience, then we will reap consequences accordingly. The chickens will come home to roost.