



That We May Sow & Reap In The Word

2011-2012 Stewardship Emphasis

In the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, in the midst of the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar, Jesus told His followers of the mission that He had set before them. The Lord explained:

"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

John 4:35-38 (ESV)

Jesus used the image of planting and harvest to speak of faith, and the commission He was giving the disciples to preach the Gospel to all nations. Jesus had ventured into Samaria to speak to the people beyond the borders of Judea, sowing the seed of His Word among people who had not yet heard. Within hours, a harvest of faith began among the people of that village.

Jesus would later charge the disciples with this same task of sowing and reaping. On the day of His ascension, Jesus told them, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

That we may sow and reap in the Word...

Sowing and reaping are often used in Scripture as a description of God's Word at work in the world to bring about faith (Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 13:31, Mark 4:14, Galatians 6:8, etc.). Scripture also uses the same familiar image of sowing and reaping to refer to our task as stewards of God's gifts. For example, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians to ask for their support and offerings in service to the Lord by saying:

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 for all your generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission flowing from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

2 Corinthians 9:10-15 (ESV)

Paul describes the Corinthians' generosity as a "submission flowing from your confession of the gospel of Christ" (9:13). In other words, sharing our material resources is one of the many ways we confess our faith in Christ and testify to the grace that we have received from God.

As always in faith, we are called to match our words with deeds, living out our faith through real action in our lives. By speaking His Word and bearing witness to His mercy and salvation, we sow the Word of Christ among our neighbors in the world, through which God creates faith. By reaching out to others and supporting the mission of Christ, we put action to that message by sowing the riches of God's gifts to those in need. In both cases, God promises to use what is sown to bring about his harvest. We trust that through us, God will accomplish his work!

Merciful Father, Lord of the Harvest, we pray that you would send us as workers into your field. Use us to do Your work and will, that others may come to experience your grace and blessings. Keep us grounded in faith in all that we say and do, so that we may sow and reap in the Word, bearing witness to your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

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