SOWING AND REAPING

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” - Galatians 6:7-8

There is a PRESENT DANGER of which we need to be aware. In this scripture passage, Paul is using the present imperative with the negative — indicating that this was a problem currently happening. This deception is common all around us: in the lives of the lost, and, sadly, in the lives of believers, as well. The PREVAILING DUTY placed upon us is to “be not deceived.” Don’t go astray! Don’t err! Don’t go out of the way! Paul told Timothy that in the last days “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13). James tells us, “Do not err, my beloved brethren” (James 1:16). He then goes on, in the last chapter of his epistle:

“Brethren, if any of you err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the ERROR OF HIS WAY shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” — James 5:19-20.

But what is the Bible warning us about? What is the PRECIPITOUS DECEPTION with which so many are plagued? It is the idea that I can mock God; that I can save one thing, but reap something else. God’s law of sowing and reaping is universal, applying to all men, all the time, with no exceptions. If you sow little lies, you will reap big lies and the troubles that accompany them. “It’s just a little sin or, “it’s only a small compromise to my integrity,” will inevitably impact what you are tomorrow. By our thoughts, attitudes, and actions, we are constantly planting for a future reaping. Time almost always passes between the sowing and the harvest, but be sure that the harvest is inevitable. Listen to what is written in Deuteronomy 32:19-25:

“O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their rock had sold them, and the LORD shut them up? For their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. For their vine is of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in the time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”

That is a sobering reality that we must not forget! "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." - Romans 14:10-12

Do you so labor, or is that day of reckoning so easily shoved to the back corners of your mind?

There is a POSITIVE HARVEST coming. Be sure of that. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap!” Sow to the flesh, and you will reap corruption. What does that mean to “sow to the flesh”? It means to choose actions and attitudes that will gratify your flesh. When we sow to the flesh, we are making provision for it. “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfiil the lusts thereof” — Romans 13:14.

In what ways do we sow to the flesh? We commonly do this through music, videos, computer games, surfing the net, and laziness. Do you know that you can also do it through going to church, giving, and even fasting? Listen to Zechariah’s message to the Israelites:

“Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all unto me, even to me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye yet for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?” — Zechahariah 7:5-6.

These people were doing “good” and “spiritual” things, but it was to the flesh. When we sow to the flesh (“be not deceived, God is not mocked”) we will reap corruption! When you sow to your child’s flesh, catering to his or her wants, do not ask later why you have reaped corruption. It will be a sad harvest, but not a surprise.

Paul doesn’t just give negative sides to the sowing and reaping. Sowing good seed brings forth good fruit! How do you do that?

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” — 1 Corinthians 10:31.

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him do it as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” — 1 Peter 4:10-11.

There is a sure reward for those that sow righteousness (Proverbs 11:18), because God is not mocked! Praise the Lord, that when we sow in righteousness, we reape mercy (Hosea 10:12). When we sow in tears, we will reap in joy, and when we go forth bearing precious seed, we will Doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us (Psalms 126:5-6!)

Evangelist Mike McDowell

“Seeing is not believing; seeing is seeing! Believing is being confident in God’s Word without seeing.”

The Beacon

VOLUME THREE: ISSUE 07

RUNNING THE RACE

I WANT TO CONTINUE MY OBSERVATIONS concerning the “race” that Coach Christian has begun (having first qualified to enter by being redeemed by the blood of Christ). For a runner, preparation and training for a race is a very important part of any success. So, too, preparation and training must be an everyday regimen for the Christian until the day the finish line is crossed! How well we prepare now will follow our coach’s instructions, and how much we rest in His victory will determine how we finish the race! We will be pushed to the limits in our training! We will learn how to breathe and pace ourselves, all the while relying on God’s strength, His power, and His Word as we run; trusting Him to keep us going through His grace. In faith, we stretch our spiritual muscles by memorizing His instructions for our daily exercises. With the positive attitude we repeat our motto, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Part of our training (of necessity) requires us to be faithful: faithful to train every day; faithful in using our time; and faithful in the effort and energy we put forth to be our best. Our daily practice of listening to our coach and doing what he says — through praying and reading God’s Word (our manual), witnessing to others, and putting into practice every day what we learn — will determine how strong and successful we become.

Begin every morning with a positive attitude. Thank the Coach for the way in which He trains us, and then shout out, “I will win through Christ! I will press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling, if in Christ Jesus!” Go all-out in your training — be a full-time runner, not a part-time athlete! As the preparations and training progress, we forget the past, and train our mind to stay in the race.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” — II Corinthians 10:4-5.

Think this while running!

Evangelist Wayne R. Walley
The answer for spiritual drink in summer drought, found in Psalm 63, involves remembering and meditating upon the Lord’s lovingkindness and help, which then leads to prayer and rejoicing (Psalm 63:3-4). And the answer for turning brown to green, in Psalm 143, also focuses upon hearing of the Lord’s “lovingkindness in the morning” (Psalm 143:4), and therefore trusting in Him. “Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee” — Psalm 143:8.

The ultimate source of spiritual water (the spout for drought) is the indwelling Spirit of God: “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” — John 7:37-39.

The Holy Ghost takes up residence within the child of God at the very instant of spiritual birth, by grace through faith. Won’t you drink today?

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that thirsteth, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” — Revelation 22:17.

Pastor Timothy P. Geist

**THE FIERY DART OF CONFUSION**

It is not a secret that Satan attacks the believer through many “fiery darts” (Ephesians 6:16). A fiery dart is a pointed and purposeful attack thrown from your enemy with the purpose of disabling you. These are not physical attacks, but unseen ones, designed to encumber your usefulness to God. Presently, we look at the fiery dart of depression. Another dart is that of confusion.

Confusion is having your mind in a state of disorder or bewilderment, being mixed up and unable to properly discern a matter. Too much confusion will lead to a chaotic and unstable life. There are, unfortunately, many in this world — including believers — living in an almost constant state of confusion.

There is confusion about MATERIAL things. We see this in the emphasis and importance placed on belongings and all the newest gadgets. Few, it seems, truly understand the difference between a need and a want. There is also confusion about PHYSICAL things. Sadly, there is little instruction given about matters such as appearance (how men and women ought to look) and what modesty is according to the Word of God. There is confusion about MENTAL health issues. With the rise of psychiatry (the diagnosing and treatment of mental disorders) and psychology (the study of mental states), we see an increasing emphasis placed upon self-will, self-image and self-confidence. Probably the most significant area of confusion among men is in SPIRITUAL matters. This is evident in the degradation of true New Testament Christianity into what we see as the “norm” today. Atheism, false religions and general apostasy have become commonplace. Though it may be disheartening to see these things come to pass, we must not become discouraged ourselves, remembering that the shield of faith is still our protection (Ephesians 6:16). There are some things about confusion that must be understood if one wishes to combat it. First and foremost, confusion is a work of Satan: “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” — 1 Corinthians 14:33.

Confusion hinders the Lord’s work; it causes disorder amongst the brethren, stimulates emotion over reason, and ultimately produces sin. The prophet Jeremiah makes mention of this when addressing Israel’s turning-away from God: “We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us, as we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God” — Jeremiah 3:22.

The prophet Daniel also makes mention of the matter when speaking about the sin of Israel: “O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespasses that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee” — Daniel 9:7-8.

Confusion ultimately brings shame upon the believer, and leads to disobedience whenever one willfully decides to follow his or her natural inclinations rather than submitting to the clear teachings of God’s Word. The scriptures, in Psalm 5:3-4, 26, also indicate to us that confusion can cause a believer’s downfall. Living in a state of confusion will hinder God’s will for one’s life — it will cause you to be unable to make right decisions, it will slow your growth as a believer, and, in the end, bring dishonor upon your great Saviour.

James 3:16 tells us confusion is a result of enying and strife in our lives. Enying is discontentment in regards to the blessings of others, causing us to become resentful toward them. It will bring dissatisfaction of your own blessings. Strife is unnecessary competition. It is becoming envious with others without cause, and it breaks down one’s spiritual strength and causes reliance on the flesh. James 3:14 tells us that enying and strife are Satan’s ingredients in a confused life — causing discontentment, instability and double-mindedness.

The proper way to respond to the fiery dart of confusion is found in Psalm 71:1. “In thee, LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.”

To trust in God is to have complete faith (Ephesians 6:16) in His power to overcome your confusion and guide you in the path of truth. You can do this if (1) DO the right thing yourself! (Psalm 37:3); (2) COMMIT your ways unto the Lord (Psalm 37:5); (3) LEARN to accept God’s Wisdom and, (4) SEEK better understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6). It is imperative that we learn to trust in the promises of God throughout all of life’s uncertainties and problems, as well as its tranquilities. Satan endeavors to keep you under his control by hurling the dart of confusin” at your spiritual life. Gird up the reins of your mind, and trust in the Lord.

TAKE UP THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT! LEARN TO USE THE SWORD OF SPIRIT TO SEE THE VICTORY!

**Evangelist Chris Majors**

“A man who has really within him the inspiration of the Holy Ghost calling him to preach cannot help it. He must preach. As fire within the bones, so will that influence be until it blazes forth. Friends may check him, foes criticize him, despisers sneer at him, the man is inordinate; he must preach if he has the call of heaven.”

C. H. Spurgeon
THE NEEDED SPOUT FOR SUMMER DROUGHT

FEW OF MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS across our nation believe that I live in the Pacific Northwest and have a lawn that dries up and turns brown every summer. But, as sure as summer shall not cease to arrive annually while the earth remains (Genesis 8:22), so too shall the bulk of my unshaded lawn. Oak Harbor not cease to brown and dormant in the relative drought of summer.
I’ve come to accept this particular aspect of my physical life. If I want green grass, I can either manually water the lawn or get my sprinkler system repaired and kept maintained. I know the needed spout for summer drought, but I’ve resigned myself to let summer win this battle.

Spiritual drought is far more serious! David was moved by the Spirit of God to describe a spiritually dry spell in this manner: “my moisture is turned into the drought of summer” (Psalm 32:4). He then penned a musical meditation — “Selah” — stop the music and think about that!

David expressed similar thoughts of spiritual thirst in other psalms:

“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary” — Psalm 63:1-2.

“I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land; Selah.” (Psalm 86:7-8)

Indeed, personal spiritual drought is significantly more sobering than brown patches in a fading green lawn, and should not be shrugged off with careless indifference.

The question begged is, “How do I find drink in the drought?”

The answer found in Psalm 32 is a confession of transgressions that leads to the forgiveness of sin:

“My soul is consumed with thirst; it longs for you, O God. My heart and my flesh fail because of the noise of the enemy and because of the tread of the oppressor; all day long do they multiply their fury against me. For I am a man, not God, O God; speak to my heart!” (Psalm 38:9-10)

That willingness of truth is punctuated by the psalmist with another call to contemplation — “Selah!”

And, as a Christian ponders the great blessings of transgressions forgiven, his sins covered (Psalm 32:2), and his iniquities no longer reckoned to his account (Psalm 32:3) he can thank God for the promise of I John 1:9:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The Christian should practically and regularly find cleansing and refreshing in this promise of God.

THE FIERY DART OF CONFUSION

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“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” — I Corinthians 14:33.

Confusion muddles the Lord’s work. It causes disorder amongst the brethren, stimulates emotion over reason, and ultimately produces sin. The prophet Jeremiah makes mention of this when addressing Israel’s turning-away from God:

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Confusion ultimately brings shame upon the believer, and leads to obedience whenever one willfully decides to follow his or her natural inclinations rather than submitting to the clear teachings of God’s Word.

The scriptures, in Psalm 35:4-26, also indicate to us that confusion cannot be cured. Living in a state of confusion will hinder God’s will for one’s life — it will cause you to be unable to make right decisions, it will slow your growth as a believer, and, in the end, bring dishonor upon your great Saviour.

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TAKE UP THE SWORD OF FAITH! LEARN TO USE THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT! SEE THE VICTORY!

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south pacific facts

Tonga

The Kingdom of Tonga (affectionately known as “The Friendly Islands”) is a Polynesian nation located about 500 miles southeast from Fiji. It comprises some 170 islands, 36 inhabitants. The sun rises and awakens Tonga before any other nation in the world.

- Main island: Tongatapu.
- Capital: Nuku'alofa.
- Population: 106,500 souls.
- Languages: Tongan; English.
- Climate: Tropical.
- Main industry: Subsistence agriculture; foreign remittances.
- Religion: 90% of Tonga is Christianized. The Free Wesleyan Church is the state religion of the nation, to which about 40% of the population belongs. Among other religions are the LDS (18%), Roman Catholicism (15%), and the Free Church of Tonga (12%).

An Australian evangelist, Bob Bunter (sent from Emmanuel Independent Baptist Church, Canberra), has been laboring in Tonga since 1994. Two independent Baptist churches have been planted in Tonga.

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labours into his harvest” — Matthew 9:38.
SOWING AND REAPING

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"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any minister any service, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" — 1 Peter 4:10-11.

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Evangelist Mike McDowell

"Seeing is not believing; seeing is seeing! Believing is being confident in God’s Word without seeing.”

Two Unanswerable Questions

The ONLY BOOK IN THE BIBLE that ends with a question mark is the book of Jonah. The book describes how the bigoted prophet was pouting because the LORD was merciful and gracious to the wicked city of Nineveh by sparing it. The last verse of the book ( Jonah 4:11 ) records God asking Jonah, who was angry over the death of a shade plant, "Jonah, if you pity the plant, why shouldn’t I pity the people of Nineveh? People are far more important than plants! "

Jonah called the "unfinished book" because Jonah had no answer to this question. He should have!

There are two questions found in the Word of God that have no answer! Yet, they are extremely important questions that must be faced. The first question confronts the natural man; the second confronts the saved man.

**QUESTION ONE — Hebrews 2:3**

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

This question cannot be answered because, apart from the salvation freely offered through Jesus Christ, there is no escape! Jesus Christ is the only way anyone can receive the gift of eternal life. If a sinner rejects Christ, there is no other way to be saved. There is no escape! See: John 14:6; Acts 4:12; John 8:24. Jesus is not "a" way; He is "THE" Way. Do not neglect this so great salvation; do what the people of Nineveh did so long ago — repent, and turn to Christ in faith.

**QUESTION TWO — Romans 10:14**

"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

This question cannot be answered because God’s only appointed way of communicating the Gospel is through the "foolishness of preaching" ( 1 Corinthians 1:17 ). God does not send people back from the dead ( Luke 16:27-31 ), nor does He emblazon the good news across the sky or write it upon the mountains. It must be preached! If God’s people and the Lord’s churches aren’t doing God’s work of preaching the Gospel ( Mark 16:15 ), then no one will hear and no one will be saved. "Jonah, go to Nineveh ... and preach" ( Jonah 3:1-2).

Pastor Robert J. Sargent

Running the Race

I WANT TO CONTINUE MY OBSERVATIONS concerning the “race” in which God’s Church has been called to participate. For a runner, preparation and training for a race is a very important part of any success. So, too, preparation and training must be an everyday regimen for the Christian until the day the finish line is crossed! How well we prepare, how well we follow our coach’s instructions, and how much we rest in His victory will determine how we finish the race!

We will be pushed to the limits in our training! We will learn how to breathe and pace ourselves, all the while relying on God’s strength, His power, and His Word as we run; trusting Him to keep us going through His grace. In faith, we stretch our spiritual muscles by memorizing His instructions for our daily exercises. With a positive attitude we repeat our motto, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Part of our training (of necessity) requires us to be faithful: faithful to train every day; faithful in using our time; and faithful in the effort and energy we put forth to be our best. Our daily practice of listening to our coach and taking the training is to our advantage — we will learn how to train our bodies for the future. In training our bodies will be trained for the future race.

Begin every morning with a positive attitude. Thank the Coach for the way in which He trains us, and then shout out, "I will win through Christ! I will press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!" Go all-out in your training — be a full-time runner, not a part-time athlete! As the preparations and training progress, we forget the past, and train our mind to stay in the race.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" — 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. Think this while running!

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