

Group Resource

## Sermon Notes – Sunday, November 2, 2014

**Series:** From Promise to Provision  
**Message:** Seedtime and Harvest  
**Scripture:** Matthew 13:1-7; Genesis 8:22

- I. The Word of God declares that God has given us **very great and precious promises**. (2 Peter 1:4)
- II. It is disheartening to see followers of Christ missing out on the life that God has planned for them or to see them be unproductive in their Christian walk.
  - a. In 2 Peter 1, the Apostle Peter reminds us that he wants to keep us from being: “ineffective and unproductive in our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
  - b. Followers of Christ have a responsibility to redeem the time and to make the most of every opportunity. Many people are ineffective and unproductive because they don’t know God’s character and nature or they have not fully made him Lord over their life.
  - c. Bishop Gideon Thompson made this declaration: You cannot claim by faith what you deny by principle. For example, the Bible says that a person who wants friends must show themselves to be friendly. (Proverbs 18:24) Likewise, the one who desires the full measure of God’s blessings in their life must make Christ LORD of their life.
- III. The principle of **seedtime and harvest** is a fundamental precept of God. It includes the seasons of sowing and reaping; planting and harvest.
  - a. In Genesis 8, the Lord shares with Noah his mindset after the flood. He first shares that, “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood.” Then, “never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.”
  - b. Then in verse 22, God makes this bold proclamation: <sup>22</sup> “As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”
  - c. Seedtime and harvest means that there is a process of transformation that takes places between the seed being planted and the fruit that develops.
- IV. In Matthew 13:1-8, Jesus shares the Parable of the Sower which exemplifies the process of seedtime and harvest. The difference in the fruitfulness of the seed was not in the actual seed but in the soil on which the seed fell.
- V. **18** “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means:
  - a. **Seed sown along the path - 19** When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.
  - b. **Seed sown along rocky soil - 20** The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. **21** But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.
  - c. **Seed sown along the thorns - 22** The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.
  - d. **Seed sown on good soil - 23** But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

- VI. God's promises are often given to us in seed-form, but they are just as potent as the fruit that will develop. We look at our seeds and ask "How can this produce what I need?"; God looks at our seed and says, "How can it not?"
- VII. **1 – God constantly supplies the seeds that we need to thrive.**
- a. The Bible contains over 3500 promises which are seeds that God sows into our lives. Jesus explains in Luke 8:11 that the seed in the parable is the "Word of God."
  - b. **2 Corinthians 9:10** *Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*
- VIII. **2 - We have the responsibility to nurture the seeds that God plants in our life.**
- a. Nurture means to feed and protect, support and encourage, or to foster growth. We must create an environment that is conducive to growth of the seed.
    - i. In the parallel passage in Luke, the seed planted on good soil stands for *those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.* (Luke 8:15)
  - b. To nurture the seeds that God plants in our life, we must **protect** and **water** them. The parable identifies three circumstances which were detrimental to the growth of the seed.
    - i. Protect the seed from neglect (those who hear the Word but not understand)
    - ii. Protect the seed from immaturity (Those who do not count the cost and in the time of testing fall away)
    - iii. Protect the seed from corruption (Those who are enticed away by the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth)
  - c. How do we water the seeds that God plants in our life?
    - i. *Faith waters the promises of God.* The Faith that God desires within us is faith that leads to obedience.
    - ii. Seeds requires additional nutrients besides water for healthy growth. Likewise, in the spiritual sense, true faith will prompt us to add Godly virtue to our lives.
      1. <sup>2</sup> PETER 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.
      2. <sup>5</sup> For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; <sup>6</sup> and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; <sup>7</sup> and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. <sup>8</sup> For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.
    - iii. We must add to our faith: goodness; knowledge; self-control; perseverance; godliness; brotherly kindness and love.

- IX. 3 - God watches over each seed so that when properly nurtured, it always produces the intended harvest.**
- a. When the Lord spoke to the prophet Jeremiah, he asked him several questions so that Jeremiah could understand his purpose and calling and walk in what the Lord had ordained for his life.
    - i. *Jeremiah 1:11* The word of the Lord came to me: "What do you see, Jeremiah?" "I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied.
    - ii. *12* The Lord said to me, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."

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# Let's Talk Notes– Sunday, November 2, 2014

**Series:** From Promise to Provision  
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- 1) Find a promise in the Word of God and share why the verse(s) is/are impactful to you. See <http://www.intouch.org/you/gods-promises> for a comprehensive lists of biblical promises.
- 2) The Scriptures remind us that God operates in times and seasons. Genesis 8:8 says that “As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.” Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 also reminds us that there is a time and season for everything. What are some practical ways that you can discern what season you are in? How can you adjust your actions and mindset to better appreciate your current season? (**See** Psalms 30:5; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Romans 8:18; Matthew 5:11-12; James 1:2-4)
- 3) **Read Matthew 13:1-23.** What reason did Jesus give the disciples for speaking in parables? What is the difference between hearing and understanding the Word of God?
- 4) To nurture the seeds that God plants in our life, we must **protect** and **water** them in good soil. Pastor Joseph identified 3 circumstances that were detrimental to the growth of the Godly seeds in our lives: neglect, immaturity and corruption. Can you think of any examples from your own life where the soil of your heart was not protected and resulted in the seeds that God planted not bearing fruit?
- 5) **Read** the parable of the Mustard Seed in **Matthew 13:31-32.** The parable stresses the great results that can come from small beginnings. Though the kingdom may now appear to be as small as a mustard seed, one of the tiniest of seeds, it can become mighty like the mustard plant which shelters the birds on its branches. What seeds has God placed in your life that you need to cultivate?
- 6) Pastor Joseph shared that like a good gardener, God gives us healthy boundaries to help the planted seeds grow and ultimately bear much fruit. Using the Scriptures, identify a boundary that God has given us for our benefit. How is the boundary challenging? How is it helpful?