

☞ It's Time to Seek the Lord

I believe God has some "new wine" he wants to pour into the Church today. We need to be renewed and willing to stretch with the new wine of His presence. We need to be made new. We've been talking about some things we can do to be renewed...

☞ **We need to wash in the Word and get a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit.**

We need to make some personal changes and get rid of some junk.

We need to turn to God and pray.

We need to prepare the way for God.

☞ **Raise the Valleys – things in our life that are less than God's best.**

Lower the Hills – areas of our lives that are resisting God.

Smooth out the Rough Places – the inconsistencies in our faith-walk.

☞ **Hosea 10:12**

Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unending love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

We want those showers of righteousness! We want those times of refreshing!

1. ☞ **It's time to PLANT**

- **Sow** righteousness (Be truthful; do right; be good)

☞ **A. You reap what you sow**

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. **8** The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

-- *Arabian proverb... He who plants thorns must never expect to gather roses.*

Hosea 10:13

But you have planted wickedness, you have reaped evil, you have eaten the fruit of deception.

Sow a thought and you reap an act; Sow an act and you reap a habit; Sow a habit and you reap a character; Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

☞ **B. You reap in proportion to what you sow**

2 Corinthians 9:6

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

--Jack Exum...While in Canada, I visited one believer who operated a large grain farm. His spread included some twenty-five hundred acres. I asked him how he planted the seed. He reached in a bin and pulled out an ear of corn. Then he proceeded to pop out the kernels one by one as he walked along, demonstrating the planting process. Do you believe that?

No, sir! That's not what he said nor is it what he did. He showed me a distributor that was some thirty feet wide. "We take that double tandem truck, fill it with certified seed, back it up to the distributor, open the slots, and pour in the seed." He went on to say, "If you're ever going to be cheap, don't be cheap with the seed."

One bushel of seed invested yields thirty bushels of grain harvested in a good year. Thirty to one; not a bad return, if you are ready to believe and willing to invest. God says, "Believe Me, trust Me, try My plan, prove My ways, and see the kind of harvest I will give."

Talk about ideas that come to mind regarding planting:

Giving – have you been sowing into God's kingdom? Blessing follows.

Evangelism – have you been sowing seeds of evangelism? (You're Invited cards)

Friendliness – need a friend? Be a friend!

Renewal – plant righteous living.

C. You reap after you sow

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Never think that God's delays are God's denials.

We often expect God to give a harvest of souls or finances when we haven't planted yet. Or we want renewal without making any preparations. God says, "You plant; I'll bring the harvest." "You give; I'll bless." "You prepare the way, I'll bring renewal."

Malachi 3:10

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

☞ Malachi 3:1

"See, I will send my messenger, who will **prepare the way** before me. Then **suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple;**

Let's plant... righteousness living; evangelism; kingdom giving; preparation for renewal.

2. ☞ It's time to PLOW

- **Soften** the soil of your heart

(Parable of the sower: the path where birds ate it; the rocky places where it was scorched; thorny ground where it choked; and good soil where it produced a crop)

☞ A. We need to break up our hard heart

Psalms 34:18

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Hardening of the heart is more serious than hardening of the arteries.

☞ Psalms 51:17

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

--Bob Hartman (Petra)... Don't let your heart be hardened - don't let your love grow cold; May it always stay so childlike - may it never grow too old; Don't let your heart be hardened - may you always know the cure; Keep it broken before Jesus; keep it thankful, meek, and pure

☞ B. We need to break up our excuses

Luke 9:59-62

He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." **60** Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." **61** Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family." **62** Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Some people intend to follow the call of God, but put other things first and then never heed the call. Has God spoken to your heart? Has he called you to something? Stop resisting! No more excuses! God's plan will be the most fulfilling thing you'll ever do! Even if you haven't received a specific call, it's time to do what you know is right! It's time to follow Jesus wholeheartedly!

I was driving down a bumpy country road when I saw a bag of cement beside the road. It appeared to have fallen off a delivery truck as it hit one of the bumps in the rough road.

Being a person who does not like to see anything wasted, I stopped to pick up the lost bag of cement. When I reached down to pick up this heavy bag, to my surprise, I discovered it was not soft and limber, as I had expected but had solidified into an immovable piece of cement.

Often our lives are like that bag of cement. They take on shapes that were not intended and become hardened in that shape. That bag of cement was meant to become a part of some beautiful structure but, because it did not reach its place of service, it became a useless rock in the form of a bag of cement. God wants to make something beautiful of your life. Don't let his purpose be thwarted by a bump in the road of life.

Let's plow up the hardness and soften our hearts before God.

3. 🚩 **It's time to PURSUE**

- **Seek** the Lord *until* he comes (Pursue; tread a path)

🚩 **A. We need to pursue God's kingdom & will**

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

The kingdom of God should be our number one priority. We should be concerned about the things of God before we are concerned about other issues. In the order of the day – Talk with God first thing. In giving – Give to God your first fruits. In making decisions – What is God's will?

Colossians 3:1-2

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Spurgeon wrote: "If you are not seeking the Lord, the Devil is seeking you. If you are not seeking the Lord, judgment is at your heels."

🚩 **B. We need to pursue God himself**

Amos 5:6

Seek the Lord and live...

--AW Tozer... The church will come out of her doldrums when we find out that salvation is not a light bulb only, that it is not an insurance policy against hell only, but that it is a gateway into God and that God is all that we would have and can desire.

🚩 **Jeremiah 29:13**

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

There is an ancient tale from India about a young man who was seeking God. He went to a wise old sage for help. "How can I find God?" he asked the old man. The old man took him to a nearby river. Out they waded into the deep water. Soon the water was up just under their chins. Suddenly the old man seized the young man by the neck and pushed him under the water. He held the young man down until the young man was flailing the water in desperation. Another minute and he may well have drowned. Up out of the water the two of them came. The young man was coughing water from his lungs and still gasping for air. Reaching the bank he asked the man indignantly, "What did that have to do with my finding God?" The old man asked him quietly, "While you were under the water, what did you want more than anything else?" The young man thought for a minute and then answered, "I wanted air. I wanted air more than anything else?" The old man replied, "When you want God as much as you wanted air, you will find him."

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

☞ If you're not hungry, perhaps you're filling up on other stuff. So, **eliminate the junk food.** (possessions; pleasures; power; etc.) Plus, you can always begin by **asking God for a new hunger.**

Let's pursue God himself wholeheartedly as our top priority.

This theme of renewal is popping up everywhere. Stuck Small Group; Unstuck online videos; Renewing Your Mind online videos; Reset book, etc. God is reaching out...

Isaiah 55:6

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

It's time to Plant; Plow; Pursue

☞ Let's do this. **Plant the good we know to do; Plow up the hardened parts of our lives; Pursue God wholeheartedly as our top priority.**

The King is Among Us