

Sowing to the Spirit

A sermon by Pastor Brett Sisley
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TEXT: Galatians 6:7-9

- ⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

For Context, RE Spirit v. Flesh

Jn. 6:63

⁶³The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.

Gal. 5:17

¹⁷For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

Eph. 4:22-23

²²put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

Rom. 12:2

²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The Principle of Sowing and Reaping

1. A principle is a law or guaranteed formula that is inescapable, reliable, and perfectly predictable. That's what Paul is talking about in Galatians 6. "Don't kid yourself," he's saying, "it's a fact." "It's going to happen—regardless of our consent or intent."
2. Whatsoever we sow, we will *undoubtedly* reap.
3. Share story and pic of Elias' plant.
4. Spiritually, this principle of sowing and reaping begins with salvation. In that moment when we acknowledge our sin and make Jesus the Master of our lives—we sow our *lives* into the Spirit.
 - Jesus said that ²⁴...unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life (John 12:24-25).
 - We sow our lives to the Spirit when relinquish control...we let go of the reigns, the steering wheel...and give Him mastery over all we are, have been, and will be.
 - Practically, this is us submitting to God our thoughts, our ambitions, our strengths, and our weaknesses.

- These are seeds we sow into the Spirit. And once sown, they no longer belong to us; like a grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies—old thoughts, broken ways of thinking become dead to us. Poisonous self-talk disintegrates.
- And in this *soil of the Holy Spirit*, God takes our good, our bad, and even our most ugly and He goes to work...
 - He applies His truth and standard of perfection to the seeds of who we are—our broken dreams, wounded emotions...everything. He sorts out our mess.
 - He pours-in love and grace. He soaks us in hope.
 - All of His power is brought to bear on the substance of our lives, the same power that spoke worlds into existence and raised Jesus from the dead.
 - And then...dependably, inevitably: LIFE. HAPPENS. It's guaranteed. It's inescapable. Perfectly predictable.

5. The principle of Sowing and Reaping is universal...which means it applies to everything, all the time. Every day, we sow thoughts about who we are, we sow thoughts about others, we so cares, concerns, conflicts... We sow...constantly.

- This morning, I want to take this principle of Sowing and Reaping and apply it to our thought life.
 - The next few minutes, consider the thoughts you've sowed this week. This morning even. What thoughts fill our minds? What do we aspire to, fret about, gravitate toward?
 - Call all of these, and more, to mind.
- From this "base camp," my prayer is that each of us will be able to consider this question: **"What thoughts, ambitions, desires, etc. am I intentionally sowing into the Spirit?"**
- The goal of this endeavor is that we become more aware of the thoughts that fill our minds and determine the attitude of our lives—and that having become more aware, we would begin to sow these mental seeds into the fertile soil of the Holy Spirit.
- The more we do this, the more our limited, human minds will begin to emulate God's. *Limitless* describes His mind. And *limitless* describes the possibilities for those who actively sow their thoughts into the Spirit of God.
 - For with God, "all things are possible" (Mt. 19:26).
 - ⁹"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God (1 Cor. 2:9-12).

New Testament Examples of Sowing to the Spirit

Simeon: Lk. 2:25-26

- ²⁵ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ So he came by the Spirit into the temple...

- *Consolation of Israel* refers to the end of exile/punishment for human failure. Isaiah chapters 40-55 comprise “Pt. 2” of this prophetic book. Where Pt. 1 (chapters 1-39) deal foretell of judgement, Pt 2 promises renewal.
 - See Is. 40:1-2 (w/special attention to verses 3-5; w/v. 3 quoted by John the Baptist as he heralds the Jesus’/the Messiah’s arrival at Jn. 1:23).
- Imagine what this would have been like—waiting for a promised consolation within your life time, and getting older by the day. At times, the promise must have seemed less real than the lines on his face and the aches in his back. Nevertheless: Simeon sowed faith in what God had promised Him.
- No doubt it was difficult, year-in / year-out stubbornly holding to the belief that the Creator God had spoken a promise to him. There must have been others more devout, more learned, more respected; there always are.
- Simeon sowed many things to the Spirit.
 - First, he sowed his timeframe. He sowed his schedule. Gave up his plans.
 - Because of this, it says, “the Holy Spirit was upon him.” The Holy Spirit wasn’t available to everyone at this point in time. That it stayed upon Simeon is remarkable. And, as it is today, the Holy Spirit resident in him showed Simeon that he would not see death until he saw the Messiah. This was of course a blessing in itself—to see with mortal eyes the one foretold by the prophets.
- **Simeon demonstrates what it means to sow steadfast faith to the Spirit.**
 - In reality, such sowing is a group effort between us and the HS. It is the Spirit of God who reveals God’s will to us (Jn. 16:12-15) and it is to the Spirit of God dwelling in us that we sow the faith His implanted word inspires. Eternal seed; eternal harvest. Our natural must yield if God’s super-natural is to be manifest in & through our lives.

Anna: Lk. 2:36-38

- *³⁶Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; ³⁷and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. ³⁸And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*
 - Anna is one of 9 women in the Bible who are called “Prophetess.” That said, before unpacking anything else from this account, we know that Anna must have sowed social moray, discrimination and gender bias to the Spirit.
 - That Anna was a prophetess stands out because the 400 years leading up to the birth of John the Baptist is known as “the period of silence.” God was supposedly silent these four centuries. But if Anna was a prophetess, she heard from God. And if Anna heard from God—God wasn’t silent.
 - From this, we know that Anna had to have sown human consensus to the Spirit of God. According to those “in the know,” God wasn’t speaking. Who was Anna—a woman after all—to think God would talk to her? And who is she to tell others, as though it were so? Anna wasn’t afraid to stand out because her fear had fallen into Spiritual soil and died. Confidence and Godly pride had taken root.
 - Maybe God’s supposed silence was self-induced. What if His people had simply forgotten that their knowledge of God was limited—that there’s always more—and that what’s given by God grows stale if not daily submitted.

Simon of Arimathea: Lk. 23:50-51

- ⁵⁰ *Now behold, there was a man named Simon, a council member, a good and just man.* ⁵¹ *He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God.*
 - This Simon was a member of the Sanhedrin (a council of chief priests, elders and scribes, before whom Jesus stood the night he was betrayed (Lk. 22:66 – 23:25). Simon was the only member of this council who had not consented to their guilty verdict and judgement of death.
 - We also know that after the Sanhedrin had found Christ guilty, they brought Him before Pilate. This places Simon and Pilate in the same place, prior to the crucifixion.
 - After the rest of the men had left Simon may have lingered—and asked for Jesus’ body following His death. Or he may have returned. Either way: Simon acted alone and risked reprisal from his contemporaries.
 - **Simon sowed to the Spirit—as opposed to human respect, status, tradition, and fear of reprisal.** It wasn’t easy—in fact it was downright “un-natural” to stand up for one who had been judged a dangerous heretic. But Simon flaunted man-made religion & established tradition to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit. *He sowed to the Spirit to reap an eternal reward*; He believed Jesus was the Son of God. And, as Jesus declared to Simon-Peter: “this was not revealed to him by flesh and blood, but by the Father in heaven” (Mt. 16:17).
 - The Holy Spirit provided Simon with eternal seed—in this case, a revelation—an unpopular truth known by only few. Obediently, Simon sowed this seed to the Spirit—as opposed to the flesh. Result? An eternal reward: we know His name! He is credited with being one of a handful who treated Christ justly. He is even distinguished from the disciples, who ran when their Shepherd was struck.

Modern Examples of Sowing to the Spirit

- Not “setting someone straight” when they spout off a politically charged belief or accusation.
- Seeking to build a bridge, instead of using an opportunity to establish a wall (IE doctrine, belief).
- It could be responding in love when you feel judged.
- We sow to the Spirit when we intentionally sow good works, and wait patiently for the harvest.
- Sowing to the Spirit can be anything we commit to God, not demanding something in return; it’s giving because of the life that’s been given us.
- It’s forgiving because we’ve been forgiven—not because we feel the other person/s deserve it.
- Any sacrifice we make to more perfectly follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ is sowing to the Spirit.
- It’s choosing to believe that what you’ve planted—you will certainly reap! Whatever God has spoken to you, called you too, gifted you for—He will bring to fruition, in His perfect timing.
- It’s choosing to think the thoughts that correspond with the truth of God’s word.