

Seedtime!

"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

I am writing these words from my mom and dad-in-law's house in the Ozarks in Southwest Missouri. We have had a wonderful visit with them. While here, we were at an out-side event where we witnessed a rain of pollen! Periodic sneezing took place as the sky filled with pollen and seed. My mind went to the promise of Genesis 8:22, that while the earth remained seedtime and harvest would continue.

A pessimism has filled many a Christian's heart as they consider the times in which we live. Some may wonder, is there any use to continue the spiritual pollinating process, i.e., seeding with the Word of God? As I was in the springtime pollen bath, God impressed me in the yellow-blue Ozark sky, that He is not through with the earth yet and He has not yet commissioned the angels to reap the final harvest.

I pray these few words will be an encouragement to each and every one of us to keep planting the seed and continue the work of God until Jesus comes! *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).*

Our Lord said, *"Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13)*. The word "occupy" comes to us from the Greek word, *pragmateuomai*, which means to carry on a business. We need to keep doing business for Christ in His kingdom until He comes again. Here are three things I want to bring to your attention about seedtime:

I. There can never be a harvest without seedtime.

If you were to ask the average church member if they want their church to grow in grace collectively and grow numerically as we reach souls for Christ, I believe that ninety-nine out of a hundred would say, "Most certainly." Yet we must fight our unwillingness to be a verbal and life-witness to people everywhere. We must make a concerted effort to allow God to take our life and take our words, or more importantly His Word as we interact with the world around us.

Haggai was a prophet to the restored remnant of Judah. The seventy years of captivity had ended. The new and restored temple was being built. Haggai asked a most provocative question: *"Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing" (Haggai 2:3)?* He saw the men of Judah falter and perhaps wonder are we on the right track in this re-building process? Then Haggai encouraged the high priest and people with these words: *"Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts" (Haggai 2:4).* Our Lord is telling the people through the prophet, I am with you, continue on! Don't give up, don't waver. Then Haggai makes an agricultural comparison with this piercing question: *"Is the seed yet in the barn?" (Haggai 2:19).* He is saying, you want a harvest, but the good seed is still in the barn. You must be willing to get the seed out of the barn and disperse it throughout the fields if we are to reap the results that we so desire.

II. There is a mystery involved in the seedtime.

Sometimes God's people can become unbelieving believers in their attempt or more accurately lack of attempt in evangelism. We have believed for our own salvation, but we live in unbelief that what God did for us, He is willing and wanting to do in the lives of many more people.

One of the things that keeps us back from an aggressive mode is our inability to discern and

understand the process of conversion, or seedtime and harvest, if you please. Nicodemous, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night to inquire of him. Jesus told Him in no uncertain terms, "*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again*" (John 3:7). Then in the next verse, Jesus said, "*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit*" (John 3:8). In the third chapter of John we do not read of Nicodemus praying the sinner's prayer or converting. Yet, we read later in John 7:43, "*So there was a division among the people because of him.*" Then in John 7:48, the question is asked: "*Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?*" Then one of the best known rulers of the Jews, bursting with conviction, inquired in John 7:50,51, "*Nicodemus saith unto them, he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them, Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*" So we see the seed of the Word is cast into the spiritual wind by Jesus Himself in John three and by chapter seven it is working amazingly! The Spirit then activates that precious seed and it is planted in the ready soil of Nicodemus' heart. And finally, we read in John 19:38, "*And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.*" The seed took! It was a mystery, but it worked! "*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*" (Isaiah 55:11). Like wind pollination, God will take His Word and furnish a harvest, if we will let it go! Don't leave His word with the "chosen frozen" of our inner circles. Take it to the street, place of work, school and yea, even to the uttermost parts of the earth! Let us believe God to honor His Word. It is His job to implant the seed, it is our job to broadcast (scatter) the seed! Notice these words of Jesus, "*And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how*" (Mark 4:26,27). The Lord declares that in the seedtime there is a mystery when He says, "*he knoweth not how....*" We don't have to know how or why, but we are required to be obedient in getting the seed of the Word out.

III. There is the promise that harvest will come if we obey in the seedtime.

In the next two verses beyond the statement of Jesus that man would not know how the seedtime works, He pronounces the promise of a harvest! "*For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come*" (Mark 4:28, 29).

According to the same principle, the Psalmist said, "*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him*" (Psalm 126:5, 6). The New Testament re-enforces this teaching by this promise: "*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*" (Galatians 6:9).

Let this time of the year remind us that until God has finished with the earth in this dispensation of grace, we are to work until Jesus comes!

- Pastor Pope -

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