

Today, is Father's Day, so "Happy Father's Day!" As someone said, "Father's Day is like Mother's Day, except the gift is a lot cheaper." And that's true, but there are some fine dads in our church and we want to honor them because it's not easy being a dad.

*A woman wrote to a magazine to tell about an event that had occurred in her family when she was about eighteen months old. Her mother was out and her dad was in charge of her and her brother who was four years old.*

*She says that she had just recovered from an accident in which she had received some injuries and someone had given her a little 'tea set' as a get-well gift and it was one of her favorite toys.*

*Her dad was in the living room one evening engrossed in the evening news and her brother was playing nearby in the living room when the little girl brought her dad a little cup of make believe 'tea', which was just plain water. After several cups of this tea and lots of praise from dad for making such a yummy concoction, the little girl's mom came home. Her dad made mom wait in the living room to watch this eighteen-month-old bring him a cup of tea, because it was 'just the cutest thing!'*

*Her mom waited, and sure enough, here the girl came down the hall with a cup of tea for her daddy. Mom watched dad drink this special tea, then asked, 'Did it ever occur to you that the only place that baby can reach to get water is the toilet?'*

Okay, so there may be times when dads are a hamburger short of a happy meal, especially when toddlers and toilet water is involved, but I guess that's just one of those burdens we get to carry as dads. Happy Father's Day.

Last week we talked about burdens. If you recall, in the first few verses of **Chapter 6**, Paul gave us a hypothetical situation of a believer who had fallen into sin and was dealing with heavy burdens – these burdens were likely their struggles with their sin or the consequences of their sin that were more than he or she could bear alone. We also talked about the heavy burdens of life – the tragedies, the disappointments, the losses, the cares, and the stresses in life – things that happen to us all – and because of these heavy burdens that cause us to stagger under the weight, Paul says that those who are walking by the Spirit, those who are spiritual, should help others to carry their heavy burdens – thus fulfilling the law of Christ – the law of love, that obligates us to do what love requires us to do.

We are to help others with their heavy and staggering burdens, but in **verse 5**, Paul also tells us that we all have our own responsibilities to shoulder as well. As Paul said, we have our own backpacks to carry – in other words, there are certain personal

responsibilities that we must carry ourselves – there are certain responsibilities that we cannot pass on to another. We have to carry our own backpacks.

Now in our passage this morning, we are going to pick up where we left off. So, turn with me to **Galatians 6** and we are going to start with **verse 6**.

**<sup>6</sup>The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.**

Those of you who know me, know I am uncomfortable dealing with those things that have a direct impact on my personal livelihood, but unfortunately, this verse is going to force my hand a bit.

So, let's put this verse in context first. As you know, the Galatian church was in the early stages of development and teachers and pastors were likely devoting a lot of their time and energy and effort towards the instruction of new believers and managing these new congregations. It was a full-time job for them, and Paul knew all too well that those who communicate the Word of God were not in a position to carry their own load like he mentioned in **verse 5**. They were unable to meet their own financial obligations while at the same time faithfully serving their churches. So, in **verse 6**, Paul urges that those who are being taught are to share all good things with those who share the Word of God to them. Later, Paul makes this really clear in **1 Cor. 9:11** where he says, ***"If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?"***

If we have been blessed by those who communicate God's Word, if we have received a spiritual benefit from their ministry, then we should share the material blessings that we have received in life. In context, that's what I believe Paul is saying here and it should come as no surprise.

From the very beginning, caring and sharing with others was one of the earmarks of the early Christian church, even while under severe persecution, the church continued to care and share with others, so this instruction by Paul to the Galatians to share with their teachers and pastors was really just part of the church's DNA.

And it's also important to note that Paul was reluctant to receive financial support for his own work in the ministry – he didn't want to be a burden; however, Paul consistently taught that those who work in the ministry should be supported.

Now we come to a passage that is somewhat perplexing to me. Paul continues with **verses 7 and 8** and says, ***"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."*** <sup>8</sup> **For 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.**

I wrestled with this passage because I wasn't entirely sure how it was connected to the verses around it. For example – are these two verses that speak to the principle of sowing and reaping connected to **verse 6**, which is about financially supporting those in the ministry? Is Paul talking about the choices we make with our resources? Is that the connection, or do I hop, skip, and jump all the way back to **Chapter 5** where Paul talked about the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit? If you noticed, Paul mentions the flesh and the Spirit in **verse 8**. So, after pondering this for a several days, I decided to play it safe, and apply it across the board to **verse 6** and to **Chapter 5**.

Paul says in **verse 7**, “**whatever a man sows, this he will also reap**” or we might say, “*You reap what you sow.*” Reaping and sowing are farming terms and whether you know anything about farming or not, you have probably heard that expression at one time or another. “*You reap what you sow.*” It's a metaphor for the choices we make and the results of those choices. Now, I don't know about you, but when I hear the expression, “*you reap what you sow,*” I often think about the stupid things we do and the results of the stupid things we do. I tend to see that expression in a negative light referring to sin and the consequences of sin.

*I read the story of a 14-year-old boy from Seattle who wanted to steal some gas from a motor home by siphoning it from the gas tank. If you know anything about siphoning gas from a gas tank – you know it is fairly easy to do, but it can also be tricky and really distasteful if you are not careful. Timing is important. In essence, you stick a rubber hose in the gas tank and suck on the other end of the rubber hose, like sucking on a thick milk shake, until the gas gets very close to your end of the hose and you can pull the hose out of your mouth, letting the gas continue to flow into your gas can – hopefully before you get a mouth full of the nasty tasting gasoline. **So, it seems like a piece of cake, right?***

*Well, not to the young boy from Seattle. As he was attempting to siphon gas from the motor home of Dennis Quigley, Dennis was still inside and happened to hear strange noises coming from outside. When Dennis went out to investigate, he found the young boy curled up in the fetal position on the ground vomiting violently. **What in the world happened?***

*Well, the young boy made a serious mistake. Intending to siphon gasoline from the gas tank, he somehow put his hose into the wrong hole on the motor home – and,*

*unfortunately for this boy, he sucked from the sewage tank. It was determined that the young thief would not be charged as both Dennis and the police agreed that the boy had definitely reaped what he had sowed.*

These are the kinds of foolish antics I typically think about when it comes to the expression “*you reap what you sow*” but Paul’s focus appears much broader in nature. If you noticed in **verse 7**, Paul used the phrase “**whatever a man sows**” which would then apply to any and everything we sow – both good and bad seed.

So, let’s talk about this principle of sowing and reaping, and how it applies to our lives, because once we sow, whatever we sow, and wherever we sow, it’s going to grow. That’s a principle for everybody – both believers and non-believers alike. It applies to the physical world, it applies to our resources, it applies to our relationships, and it applies to our spiritual lives. Someone once said, “*You get out what you put in,*” and that seems to ring true here.

Now before we go any further, I think it’s important to provide a disclaimer. The principle of sowing and reaping is not spiritual karma that ensures we will always get good when we do good, or always get bad when we do bad. That was the ABC’s of legalism that the Judaizers were teaching the Galatians to earn God’s favor. Instead, we need to see the principle of sowing and reaping as a way to understand that in our daily lives we all have choices to make, and our choices have natural outcomes. Every time we choose an action, we also choose the outcome of that action. If you chose to sow to the desires and the lusts and the cravings of your flesh – that is, you do the things that appeal to your old fallen nature, you should anticipate, you should expect to reap from the flesh, and if you chose to sow to the Spirit – in other words you are walking by the Spirit and doing the things that build up your spiritual life, you should expect to reap from the Spirit. **Does that make sense?**

Okay, let’s consider some of the truths pertaining to sowing and reaping and the first one is the fairly obvious.

We reap *what* we sow. If a farmer plants wheat seed, guess what, wheat comes up – not carrots. There is a direct correlation between what we sow and what we reap, and the one who sows determines the nature of what will be reaped. We cannot sow disobedience to God and then expect to reap His blessing. You can’t sow to the flesh all day long and then complain when you reap a harvest that is disappointing. **What did you expect? Did you think you could be angry and bitter and grouchy and irritable and bossy and rude and quick-tempered – and then**

cancel it all with a quick prayer asking for God's blessing? It doesn't work that way. What you sow, you reap – and you would be deceived to think otherwise. We reap *what* we sow.

Paul also tells us we are to be careful *where* we sow. He says in **verse 8**, “**For 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.**”

We have two choices – we only have two fields to sow our seed in – that's it according to Paul. We can either sow to our own flesh or we can sow to the Spirit. Each of us by our thoughts, and our attitudes, and our actions are constantly sowing for a reaping in one of these two fields. Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, to have ill-will towards someone, every time we entertain an impure thought and submit to its lusts and passions, every time we seek to gratify our own selfish desires and worldly gains – we are sowing to our flesh – we are sowing to our old fallen nature. But the Christian who is walking by the Spirit and sets his or her mind on the things above, sows to the Spirit and shall reap eternal life – which, in this case, refers to the quality of the believer's life, in the here and now, as he or she abides in fellowship with Christ. So, be careful *where* you sow.

Now there's something else about sowing and reaping. A farmer expects to reap *more* than he has sown. That's why he plants in the first place – to see multiplication. For example, by planting a single apple seed, it will produce an apple tree, with apples, and more seeds within the apples. You reap *more* than you sow.

Jesus spoke of this very thing in **Matthew 13:23** when He said, “***And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.***”

Just like the farmer, it is same way for us when sowing righteousness or sowing sin – we will reap a much bigger crop of either joy or sorrow in one's life. You reap *more* than you sow.

Here's another truth. A farmer can also expect to reap *proportionately* to what he has sown. This seems almost contradictory to what I just said, but if you step back and think of a field, if a farmer only sows seed in half of it, he can't expect the entire field to produce a crop. The more seed planted, the more crop that is harvested, and the Bible applies this truth to our giving. Paul spoke of this in **2**

**Cor. 9:6**, where he said: *“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”* Essentially, those who show generosity will be blessed more than those who don’t.

And lastly, sowing and reaping are separated by *time*. A farmer would never plant a seed on Monday and then come back hoping to harvest the fruit on Tuesday. Nothing grows overnight – instead, we reap in a different season. Too many believers are sowing wild oats throughout the week and then going to church on Sunday and praying for a crop failure hoping their life-style won’t catch up with them, but of course, it always does – in due time. Unlike the crops of the field which get harvested at approximately the same time each year, there is no regular timetable for the harvest of life. Some crops we reap quickly; others take a long time. But do not be deceived – the harvest season will come.

**“Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”** But what about grace? We’ve been talking about the grace of God for weeks. Does the principle of sowing and reaping apply to believers who are saved by grace and live by grace? Yes, it does. A believer will never reap the ultimate consequences of their sin – that being death and judgment and eternal separation from God, because the Lord has already reaped those deadly consequences on behalf of the believer on the cross. But with that said, the believer may still reap the heartaches, and the hurts, and the shame, and the pain of their sins in the here and now – so in that respect, the principle of sowing and reaping absolutely applies. You can shoot an arrow into the sky and ask for forgiveness and repent while it is in the air, but that won’t stop the arrow from hitting the ground. Forgiveness and repentance will pardon your sin but it does not necessarily cancel the consequences you reap.

Now there is one more thing I want to say about the principle of sowing and reaping, and it’s a caution. There is a popular gospel teaching out there called the “prosperity gospel” which attempts to tweak this principle of sowing and reaping as a way to leverage health and wealth and success and happiness from God and it’s eerily similar to the legalistic teaching from the Judaizers of earning blessings from God. If I give enough and if I believe enough then God is obligated to bless me here and now. And if God does not bless me, if I am not healthy and wealthy and successful and happy, then obviously I have not given enough and have not believed enough – something is wrong with me and I am not in God’s favor.

You know, when I look at the life of Paul, I don’t see health and wealth. I see a man who was faithful and obedience to the Lord, he was God’s guy in the early



church, and he was also repeatedly jailed, beaten, went hungry, shipwrecked, snake bitten, was given a thorn in the flesh that would not go away, and he was later beheaded for his faith. **It doesn't add up does it?** We could look at the other apostles as well and it would be no different for them.

I was reminded of when Satan tempted Jesus before Jesus began His earthly ministry, and Satan said, *“If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You’; ‘On their hands they will bear You up, so that you will not strike Your foot against a stone.’”* Satan used Scripture to try to force God’s hand and manipulate Him. Jesus wouldn’t do that and we can’t do that. We cooperate with God; we do not try to manipulate Him.

**<sup>9</sup>Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. <sup>10</sup>So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**

**Why does Paul tell us this?** Because it can be discouraging to continue to do good, to sow to the Spirit, and not see a reward. Again, seed that is planted does not bear fruit immediately. Seed must be given time to take root and bear fruit. Here Paul challenges the Galatians to keep on loving and caring and sharing because God promises to reward those who are faithful in the long run.

Let’s be honest, there are times when the work is very difficult! There are times when we do get weary and tired! There are times when we do not feel appreciated. There are times when we want to throw our hands up in frustration and quit! Years ago, I asked a pastor if he ever felt like quitting, and he replied, *“Every Monday.”* I have felt like that as well, but I have to be reminded that the Lord of the harvest is in charge and in His due season, a season appointed for you and me, we will reap.

So, don’t lose heart. Continue to trust and obey, and continue to seize the opportunities to love and care and share with one another because how we treat one another is a strong testimony to those outside this church. How we treat each other is our greatest attraction to a world seeking love, and kindness, and compassion.

*I read a story about a pastor of a small, rural church in Scotland. He had been forced out by his elders, who claimed they saw no fruit from his ministry. The village in which the pastor served was a difficult place. People’s hearts were cold and hostile to the truth. During the time the pastor served, there had been no*

*conversions and no baptisms. But he did recall one positive response to his preaching.*

*When the offering plate was passed during a service, a young boy placed the plate on the floor, stood up, and stepped into it. When asked to explain, he replied that he had been deeply touched by the minister's life, and while he had no money to give, he wanted to give himself wholly to God.*

*The boy who stepped into the plate was Bobby Moffat, who in 1817 became a pioneer missionary to South Africa. He was greatly used of God to touch many lives. And it all started with that small church and the faithful work of that unappreciated pastor.*

Perhaps you see no fruit from your work for the Lord. Remain faithful! Do not lose heart, but ask God to strengthen you with His power, and in His due time and in His way, He will produce a harvest. Don't stop! Don't grow weary! Keep on going.

Source Material:

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