

JOYFUL HARVEST FOR PRECIOUS SEED PLANTERS

Psalm 126:5, 6

Our text is a prophetic message of comfort addressed primarily to Jewish returnees from Babylon who are confronted with the challenge of re-building successful communal life from a ruined past. These people's joy of freedom from captivity is almost overwhelmed by the realities of present needs and difficulties. It affirmed God's assurance of help and blessing if they do not despair. The same assurance comes to us today.

In challenging and difficult times, we are encouraged to endure the tears and toils of spiritual sowings. Tough times never last but tough people do. No seed sown in tears with faith in God is wasted. Whatever you are going through right now, I encourage you, don't give up. Keep praying, keep trusting God, keep attending services, remain at your duty post, keep giving to the Lord, keep supporting and caring for others, especially God's people. Your harvest time is coming; very soon!

We shall consider three subtopics:

1. Planting seeds insufficient for today's meal
2. Perseveringly sowing with tears in difficulties times
3. Joy of bountiful harvest by spiritual seed planters

1. Planting seed insufficient for today's meal

Psalm 126:1-2, 5, 6, Luke 6:38, 1 Kings 17:9-16, Psalm 37:3, 18-19, 2 Chronicles 15:7

Our text metaphorically used agrarian imagery to describe the experience of Jews returnees from Babylon in 516 B.C following the edict of Cyrus the Great that proclaimed their liberty after spending seventy years in captivity. Their freedom and discharge felt like a dream. But on getting to Canaan, while joyous, they faced the harsh reality of building from the scratch. Their land had been destroyed, resources were scarce and they constantly faced opposition and apathy. This psalm captured their sorrow and feelings of inadequacy, like that of poor peasants who had to cast into the ground every precious seed they can find including taking bread out of their children's mouth to have enough to plant. At such times many tears are actually shed but it will not be forever. If you are in this same position today, I assure you, harvest time is coming.

We are by this song and psalm encouraged to put our trust in God. We are to trust God when things look dry and hopeless. The agrarian metaphor used in our text reminds us that tears of sowing with faith in God are not the end of our story. Rather, it is part of a process that will end in growth, fruitfulness and blessing. Suffering and joy on earth are not mutually exclusive. If managed effectively in submission to God and under the

influence of His Spirit, they are capable of bringing to us a better future. We should therefore not make hardship an excuse for promoting or tolerating idleness. We must labour when times are hard, in season and out of season. We must refuse to be discouraged. God promises to bless believers' labouring hands on earth and eventually in heaven. The joy in heaven will much more than compensate for our present earthly toil if we do not give up.

2. Perseveringly sowing with tears in difficulties times

Psalm 126:5, 6, James 4:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, Luke 18:1, James 5:10-11, Revelation 21:4

The principle of sowing and reaping is universally applicable in matters affecting men's relationship with God and with their fellowmen. Our choices have consequences. Sin alienates from God and brings on its course harvests of corruption, woes, sorrows, defeat, frustrations and eventually eternal punishment in Hell. Godly and righteous living has the opposite effect and consequences. To those who live godly and righteous in this world in spite of difficulties and challenges, God will never forsake them. To be blessed and remain blessed therefore, we must live right, live God honouring lives and continue to sow "*precious*" seeds. We must continue to sow no matter the wind, weather or circumstance. We must water what we have sown with prayers and if necessary with tears of passionate cry to God to bless our seeds and efforts 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Luke 18:1.

Joseph, Job, David and many others had harvest of joy after sorrow. Our tears are good for as long as it draws us closer to God. God promise to eventually wipe away all tears from our eyes Revelation 21:4. Hence we must put God first in all things and at all times. We must shun distractions and discouragement. We must keep our salvation as we strive in godly manner to make ends meet. We must personally and corporately utilize all available means to win a lost world to Christ. We must live with the future hope and expectation of great reward waiting for us at the end of our earthly life. We must live above reproach and be faithful in all things; small and great. Those that labour in faith shall not labour in vain.

3. Joy of bountiful harvest by spiritual seed planters

Psalm 126:5, 6, Psalm 84:11, Galatians 6:7-10, Isaiah 41:17, 2 Corinthians 9:6, 1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6, 19

Our entire life is the seed given to us by God that He expects us to sow (without defilement or pollution of sin) into the sand of time for harvest of eternal reward, blessings and crowns. This include our strength, intellect, gifts, talents, and resources, connections and any other endowment by which we could glorify God, expand His kingdom and bless humanity in the name of Christ. Undoubtedly, believers are pressed hard by economic hardship, affliction, persecution, ill-health and many adversities

prevalent in our world today. For some the temptation to go back is very strong. However, the assurance of divine presence and the possibility of answer to our prayers is sufficient guarantee to make us maintain our ground and look up to God 1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6, 19. God will never forsake His own.

Therefore, we should not allow anything to hinder us from fulfilling our destiny and God ordained assignment. God promises to bless us and deliver us in times of trouble. He will bless you, He will deliver you. He will provide for you, He will heal your sickness and ultimately bring you to heaven to live at the end of your earthly life. There is a present peace, there is future reward and glory waiting for us as we remain committed to the accomplishment of God's purpose in our lives, in the church and in the world of our time.