

The Law of Sowing and reaping

Today we return to Galatians and find that Paul has shifted to a teaching on The Law of Sowing and Reaping. Remember that he has already shown that there is a war within every believer between the flesh (lower nature) and the Spirit (new nature made alive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit). Keeping the Law or any man-made rules was an empty exercise in conquering of the flesh. Only the Spirit within us could produce the fruit of the Spirit and conquer the deeds of the flesh. Paul goes on to show the necessity of overcoming evil with good.

“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 he 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. ¹⁰So then, while we have opportunity let us do good to all people - and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:7-10).

O God, may we understand this portion of your word and become aware of the seeds we sow. Lord, help us become sowers of righteousness who will reap a harvest that honors God, blesses Your people and produces Christlikeness. Amen.

Paul’s terminology “sowing and reaping” reflects simple farming terms, meaning to plant seeds in the soil, “to sow,” and then to harvest a crop of fruits and vegetables for food, “to reap.”

Today’s message: **The Law of Sowing and Reaping.**

We reap what we sow, later than we sow, and more than we sow.

- We reap what we sow – corn seeds produce corn plants.
Sowing beets produces beet plants, carrot seeds bear carrot plants.
- We reap later than we sow – at the end of the growing time.
It takes time for the seeds to grow and mature into mature plants.
There is a growing season
- And we reap more than we sow – a greater harvest than the original seeds planted.

I. The Way of Deception.

“⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked;
for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

The Warning of Deception

Paul begins with a warning not to be deceived!

To be **deceived** is to be led astray, to believe in something that is not true.

I had a conversation with a young lady who spoke of her near-death experience. While driving on a freeway during a severe rainstorm her tires hydro-planed and she lost control at 75mph. She thought that driving the speed limit would be safe. She was deceived: Tires can hydro-plane at 50mph.

People are deceived concerning death - that they won't die until they are ready.

Jesus told the parable of the rich man who said to himself,
“I have many goods laid up for many years, it's time to retire –
take it easy, eat, drink, and be merry.” But God said to him,
“You fool. This very night your soul is required of you.”
(Luke 12:19-20)

People are deceived about sin. They think they won't get caught.

“Be sure your sins will find you out” (Numb. 32:23).

“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good”
(Pr. 15:3).

When David sinned with Bathsheba by committing adultery with her, and having her husband murdered to cover up his sin, everything seemed to be going well for David, except for one thing: God saw it.

“...But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord.”
(2 Sam. 11:27b)

Jesus warned that sins committed in secret will be shouted from the housetops on the day of judgment. There will be no hiding - even the smallest of sins.

God is not mocked

Mocked – lit. *to turn up one's nose*, and therefore to *scorn* or to *sneer*

When we sin we deny the Lord and treat His holiness with contempt.

John wrote, "If we deny that we have sinned we make Him to be a liar."

(1 John 1:10)

God will not be mocked, because we will reap what we sow.

One example of this is found in raising children.

Without exception what is planted in young children
becomes a part of their lives when they are older.

Job wrote,

"Those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble harvest it" (Job 4:8).

Hosea said,

The wicked "sow the wind, and they reap the whirlwind" (Hos. 8:7).

One English writer observed,

"What strikes me more and more each day is the permanence of one's early life, the identity between youth and manhood. Every habit, good and bad, of those early years seems to have permanently affected my whole life. The battle is largely won or lost before it seems to begin."

Concerning the Law of Sowing and Reaping Paul warns us not to be deceived: ...
whatever a man sows that he will also reap.

II. The Way of Corruption.

⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption

We are deceived into thinking that our sins have no consequences.

The Greeks believed in Nemesis, that when a man did something wrong that Nemesis would track them down and avenge evil. "The doer shall suffer" was their saying. Similar to ours, "*What goes around, comes around*" is an Americanized '**Karma**' meaning today's evil has a price you will eventually pay. **John B. Gough**, the great temperance orator, lived a very reckless life in his early years, used to declare in warning, "***The scars remain.***"

Origen, the great Christian scholar, who was a universalist, believed that all men would be saved, but that even then the marks of sin would remain.¹

Solomon wrote that when someone cast their bread upon the waters that it would return to him someday.

If we sow to the flesh we will reap corruption...

Corruption – phthora – degeneration – going from better to worse.

MacArthur writes,

This word is “used of decaying food, which turns from that which is beneficial to that which is harmful. The deeds of the flesh are always corruptive and can only make a person progressively worse. The ultimate corruption is eternal death, the wages of sin” (Rom. 6:23).²

This can also be rendered, “destruction” or disintegration” since “sin makes things fall apart.” If you give in to your sinful nature, you reap spiritual breakdown and destruction. Tim Keller writes,

“The destruction we reap comes from the breaking of the ‘fabric’ of the moral universe, just as certain behavior can break the fabric and coherence of the physical. There are innumerable ways that sowing to please the sinful nature reaps destruction. The whole book of Proverbs is summed up by Galatians 6 v 7-8! To sow dishonesty breaks the fabric of relationships and creates the destruction of loneliness. To sow envy and jealousy breaks the fabric of contentment and creates the destruction of bitterness. And so on, for ever.”³

Having described the deeds of the flesh in chapter 5 of Galatians Paul, here, shows that the natural outworking of any of these deeds in our lives is like planting seeds of the flesh that will produce a further harvest of corruption.

¹ William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 60.

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Galatians*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), p. 188.

³ Tim Keller, *Galatians For You*, (USA: The Good Book Company, 2015), p. 176.

The J.B. Phillips paraphrase of this section gives a clear view of this process:

“A man’s harvest in life will depend entirely on what he sows. If he sows for his own lower nature his harvest will be the decay and death of his own nature” (Gal. 6:7-8 Phillips).

When Satan [the deceiver] tempts someone to sin, he accentuates the benefits and downplays any consequences. Sin is always ultimately destructive.

James writes,

“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth the death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.” (James 1:14-16)

Satan tempts us according to our lusts (fleshly desires), promising satisfaction. However, after someone gives in to temptation, Satan the tempter, becomes the accuser. He blames us and uses our guilt, our fear of being found out, and our accentuated desire for more, to manipulate us into greater bondage and sin.

Once sin becomes a way of life, the individual is blinded to spiritual realities, is corrupted from inner purity of heart and is headed down a road to destruction, separated from the ways of God. Death is separation here and for eternity. Sin that began as a small temptation to fulfill a desire, became a monster - a master.

Sin will cost you more than you ever intended to pay.
 Sin will keep longer than you ever intended to stay.
 Sin will take you further than you ever intended to stray.

Sowing wild oats in our youth means a harvest of weeds in middle age.

Sampson was a judge in Israel - a ‘he-man’ with a ‘she-weakness.’ He was gifted by God with supernatural physical strength, so that he could defeat enemy armies by the hundreds, being Israel’s very own ‘terminator’.

Once Delilah found out the secret of his strength, she cut his hair, leaving him as weak as any other man.

The Scripture records that when the Spirit of God departed from Sampson he wasn’t even aware of it. Sampson reaped a tragic harvest.

After Sampson was taken captive; he was blinded and enslaved.

Sowing to the flesh means a harvest of corruption.

III. The Way of Satisfaction

⁸...but he 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.

In stark contrast to sowing to the flesh that reaps corruption,
sowing to the Spirit produces eternal life.

Sampson repented and God restored his strength for grand finale' of his life.

David repented and wrote Psalm 32 and 51.

He finished strong so that God called him a man after His own heart.

Just as we have experienced consequences and corruption because of what
we have sown, we should be encouraged to plant for a new crop.

It's never too late to do what is right!

To sow to the Spirit is pictured as *doing good*.

1. Feed our soul so that our faith grows.
2. Serve others selflessly.

Verse 10 adds,

¹⁰So then, while we have opportunity let us do good to all people - and especially to those who are of the household of faith"

Some people aren't open to hear the gospel but are open to love in action.

- Do good to "all people"
- Model goodness in the church - the "household of faith."

'Especially' implies an intensity in doing good.

How we treat each other is our greatest attraction to a world
seeking love, kindness, and compassion.

Final Exhortation:

There is a double emphasis in these verses

to "not lose heart"

and to "not become weary" in doing good

The battle is won or lost if we give up.

Never stop praying.
Never stop loving.
Never stop doing good.
Never stop sowing.

James summarizes,

“And the wise are peacemakers who go on quietly sowing for a harvest of righteousness - in other people and in themselves” (James 4:18 Phillips).

The value of the harvest is always greater than the cost of the seed.

We may not reap quickly, and we may not see all that we reap; but we can know that there is a great harvest for those who sow to please the Spirit.