

Harvest Principle You Reap What You Sow

Today, we're starting a brand new message series called The Harvest Principle and over the next 5 weeks we are going to examine this principle that governs all of life.

There is something about farming and the cycles and seasons that is particularly instructive. At this time of year, many of us take our families to a local farm and go pick apples or pumkins; or take a hay ride. Maybe you have your own garden and grow vegetables for the supper table.

Both my parents grew up on farms and so visiting my grandparents was always an adventure. Running through the fields with corn twice as tall as us, riding the tractor, exploring the barns; going down to the creek to skip stones along its surface. I have many fond memories of the countless hours spent at those farms.

And so, what is this Harvest Principle? You could say it's an essential ground rule.

It's a fact of life that works. And it works whether you like it or not, whether you believe it or not, whether you know it or not. It's written into the law of nature.

And it doesn't care if you're a Liberal or a Conservative, if you're a Christian, Jew, Buddhist, or have no faith at all.

And if you are not a church person and are visiting us today, you picked the perfect weekend to join us, because you can benefit from this principle even if you do not usually attend church.

The Harvest Principle goes like this. You reap what you sow. Its one that many of us are familiar with.

Taking agriculture as our example, you plant a seed in the ground, and if it receives the proper rain and sunlight, if the conditions are favourable, eventually, you will reap the rewards of what it is you have planted.

Now this principle reminds us that all life is connected. Our actions matter and they will impact outcomes in our lives. What we do, or fail to do now, impacts our future. When we sow good seeds, we can expect good fruit. When we sow bad seeds, we can expect bad fruit.

In our lives right now; our finances, our marriage, our professional life, our fitness; if we are in a place we don't want to be, chances are we have sown and reaped ourselves there. And likewise, if we are at a place in our lives that we are satisfied about, chances are, we have sown and reaped ourselves there, as well.

And what's true for individuals, is true for communities and nations. For example, as a nation, we've benefited from the sacrifices of those who have gone before us. We enjoy the fruits of our society because of the seeds that were sown by those before us.

On the other hand, we have also inherited evil that's been passed down to us. We

have legalized abortion, assisted suicide and euthanasia. We have sown the seeds of indifference toward God, in favour of contrary forms of spiritual practices, many that are actually destructive to the human person. We are reaping the effects of those seeds as well.

Now this Harvest Principle is not exclusively a Christian principle, but it is found in scripture. It's mentioned in the Book of Proverbs, in the Book of Isaiah. It's mentioned in St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, where Paul says, rather strongly,

7 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow.

So that's the general overriding Harvest Principle. But there are two auxiliary principles that are very important as well.

First auxiliary principle goes like this. You reap what you sow but it's always later. When you plant a seed, you don't get a plant right away, it has to grow and mature.

And this requires patience; the patience of the farmer over the course of the growing season; the patience of the beginner musician, learning to play an instrument; the patience of the recovering addict who is working toward being sober, it all takes time. You reap what you sow, but it's later.

This principle is very difficult to grasp when you're young, and yet, getting it right when you are a teenager or a young adult, provides a tremendous advantage to you because you begin to see how your actions now, will affect your life moving forward into your future.

This principle is also difficult to keep sight of because there are so many people around us who seem to defy it.

It could be that fellow student who gets by without having to study, who cheats on exams or has someone do their assignments for them. It could be the fellow worker who gets away with doing basically nothing, coming in late, leaving early, creating more work for you and still getting paid the same as you.

Or maybe it's you, or me. Maybe it's a pattern of sin that affects those around us. After all, no one can tell us what to do right?... regardless of who it hurts. It doesn't really matter... or does it? Eventually all the decisions we make come back to roost, as they say.

It's like gravity, it always gets its way; everything eventually falls back to the ground; we all eventually reap what we sow.

In our first reading, the prophet Jeremiah writes,

9 With weeping they shall come,...

What Jeremiah is talking about is Israel. In the Old Testament we see where God has given Israel blessing after blessing. And the Israelites respond with ingratitude and hostility. They continued to act like their pagan neighbours.

And initially, it seemed like there were no consequences to their actions. But eventually, they lose their blessings, they lose their homeland, and they are forced into slavery and exile. We reap what we sow, but it's always later. It's always in a different season.

And that brings us to the second important auxiliary principle, which goes like this. You reap what you sow, but it's always greater. The sowing and reaping effect multiplies

over time.

And it multiplies in proportion to the seeds sown. The more you plant, the more you reap, both for good and bad, both for better and worse.

You can see this when it comes to finances. You save and invest your money wisely and it grows over time, the more time and the more saved, the more it grows.

In our gospel Jesus has an encounter with Bartimaeus, the blind man. According to what people believed at that time, he was blind because he was a sinner, because he had done something wrong.

But Bartimaeus refuses to accept his situation and is unrelenting in his begging for help. He was trying to sow a better future for himself, and in the end, he reaps a tremendous harvest. Jesus restores his sight and tells him: "Your faith has made you well."

We reap what we sow later and greater.

So, as we kick off this series, I invite you to consider where you might have a nagging feeling. Maybe it's a sinking feeling that you're planting the wrong seeds, bad seeds.

Perhaps, you're thinking that maybe you should be planting different seeds or better seeds.

Where do you think you need to sow different seeds in your life; in your health, in your finances, in your marriage, with your children, your relationships, in your relationship with God?

I challenge you to take that to prayer this week. Sometime this week, in your quiet time, talk to God about the seeds you are sowing.

And also consider that as important and powerful as the reality of The Harvest Principle is, it's essential to acknowledge another reality of life: One more important and more powerful.

And that is the reality of mercy and grace. My friends, we are not defined by our past. We are not the sum total of our missteps and our sins.

Whatever it is that we have sown and reaped ourselves into right now, that can change.

I have learned again this week of God's mercy and grace in my life. You see, He is the first one to forgive and forget. He doesn't want us to beat ourselves up over our failings, He wants us to turn to Him, the One who loves us so much. He wants to embrace us and give us a new start; a new heart; a new purpose for our lives.

Through the indispensable and beautiful sacrament of Reconciliation, He continues to heal our wounded souls, to pick us up and walk with us down a new path. And because of His mercy and His grace, we can change.

We can start sowing another harvest, a different harvest, a bountiful harvest.....