

# Harvest Principle

Week #3 November 11 2018

Give. Save. Spend.

Welcome to the third week  
of the series that we've been calling  
"The Harvest Principle."

The principle is this,

**"You reap what you sow."**

It's a basic principle  
governing the whole of life  
that we learned from agriculture and farming.

You plant the seed in the ground  
and if it receives proper rainfall and sunlight  
eventually usually you reap  
or receive the rewards  
or the effects of the planting.

And you reap in the same kind  
that you have sown.

Sow a tomato seed,  
and you can expect tomatoes.

Everything reproduces itself  
after its own kind.

When we sow good seed  
we can expect good fruit,  
bad seed brings bad fruit.

It's true  
not everything in our lives  
is the result of what we've sown for ourselves  
but everything or nearly everything  
we sow will yield something  
for ourselves or for someone else.

Today is also Stewardship Sunday  
And when planning this homily series  
The Finance Committee and I  
thought that this Sunday, Stewardship Sunday  
would be an great time  
to bring you up-to-date  
on our current debt  
of this beautiful building  
and our plan on how we hope to pay this debt.

And this Homily series is a great help to us.  
With the Harvest Principle  
There are two important implications  
That need to be mentioned.

The first one goes like this,  
“you reap what you sow,  
but it's always later”.

You don't plant the seed today  
and today or tomorrow  
you discover a harvest.

That's not the way it works.  
The way it works,  
it takes time and that's why  
this principle can be frustrating  
and that's why this principle  
can be deceptive.

Sometimes it requires  
patience, sometimes vigilance.

The second implication goes this like,  
“you reap what you sow  
but it's always greater”.

The sowing and reaping effect  
Multiplies over time.  
The more you plant,

the more you reap,  
both for good and for bad  
and for better and for worse.

Last week we talked about this principle  
when it applies to our character  
and we learned  
that as we make prudent,  
wise, and right choices  
in building our character  
we can expect blessing in return.

Jesus teaches that those  
who sow mercy and forgiveness  
find mercy and forgiveness in their lives.

Those who sow charity or peace  
can expect charity and peace in their lives.

Today, we want to look at  
how this principle of sowing and reaping  
applies in our finances  
because it turns out  
you reap what you sow  
when it comes to your money.

To get a grip on this truth  
The story we're looking at today  
takes place in the northern kingdom  
where there was a great prophet  
named Elijah  
and a corrupt king named Ahab  
who led the people of Israel into the worship  
of false gods  
as well as other reprehensible practices.

And so God sent Elijah  
to challenge the king  
and to call him  
out for his poor leadership.  
Elijah did just that  
Predictinga three-year drought over the country,  
a consequence for the people's sin.

As you can imagine calling out the king  
was a dangerous thing  
so God gave Elijah an exit strategy.

He told Elijah to go to a place called Zarephath  
where he would find safety  
and security and provision.  
This He told him would be provided

by a widow.

This was unexpected news for Elijah since widows, in that culture and time typically lived in poverty.

But Elijah is faithful **and we hear;**

<sup>10</sup> *So he set out and went to Zarephath.*

*When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks;*

*he called to her and said,*

*“Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.”*

1 Kings 17: 10

So Elijah gives the woman a little test, a small request just to see if she'll help, if she'll cooperate with him.

<sup>11</sup> *As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said,*

*“Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”*

1 Kings 17: 11

So he expands the request.

*<sup>12</sup> But she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”* 1 Kings 17: 12

The poor widow not only can't provide for Elijah but she's almost out of food for herself and her son. She is basically waiting to starve to die. So...

*<sup>13</sup> Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son.”*

*<sup>14</sup> For thus says the LORD the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the LORD sends rain on the earth.”*

1 Kings 17: 13, 14

Elijah tells her first of all not to fear. Follow your plan to prepare food for yourself

and for your son,  
but with a slight alteration.  
Prepare the food  
but first give a portion of it away.  
**In other words, he asked her to believe  
in the harvest principle.**

Give away some of what you have now  
in return for the promise  
of all you'll need moving forward.

Now, what would you have said  
to that proposal?  
What would you do in that situation?  
Taking the invitation,  
made the investment,  
step into that risk,  
given Elijah the food.

On the one hand,  
it seems reasonable to say,  
"No, not at all."  
I mean she's starving.  
He's a stranger.  
Her first responsibility is toward her son.  
It would be reasonable to say no.

On the other hand,  
what did she have to lose by giving?  
Her plan only deferred inevitable starvation;  
it didn't eliminate it.  
His plan is either going to speed up the inevitable or  
it's going to bring blessing and miracles.

Listen to what she did...

*<sup>15</sup> She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. <sup>16</sup> The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.*

1 Kings 17: 15, 16

So the principle of the harvest,  
Is that she sowed seeds of abundance  
out of her pittance.

By giving away what she had  
she got all she needed and more.  
It just came later and greater.

Well, initially,  
I said that this was a message about money.  
So how does the harvest principle

apply to money?

Well, of course, as you know  
when it comes to money  
there are all kinds of things we can do with it.  
We can spend it,  
we can lose it,  
we can waste it,  
we can gamble it.

But the wisest use of money  
is to sow seeds with it.  
and there are two ways that we can do that.

The first way,  
the most important thing that we can do  
with money,  
the most strategic thing that we can do  
with money is give it away  
because of the harvest principle.

You see, Christ followers  
don't give thinking that they're losing something.  
Christ followers give with confidence  
because they're gaining something.  
Scripture tells us over and over again  
that not only are we not diminished

when we give, but we'll reap benefits  
in proportion to our giving.  
Giving is investing in our eternal future.  
See, because here's how it works.  
Even despite advancement  
in modern medicine,  
the mortality rate still hovers around 100%.

And we know at least intellectually  
we know we can't take it with us.  
We can't take it with us  
**but God has promised**  
that we can send it on ahead.

We can build treasure in heaven.  
Jesus preached this all the time,  
over and over again.  
He urged us to build treasure in heaven  
and we do that by giving,  
giving to God first of all  
by giving to his church  
and giving to the poor.

The goal of our giving  
is to reach a sacrificial place  
that God has promised to bless

both in the time ahead  
as well as right now.

The second way  
that we win with money  
is by saving and investing.  
While giving is sowing seeds  
for our eternal future,  
saving and investing i  
s sowing seeds for our immediate future  
and the immediate future of our family  
and our children.

How much should you save?

Well, like giving,  
it all depends on how much you want to reap. And  
just as with giving  
if you're not doing anything right now,  
do something.

Anything, any effort towards saving  
and investing instead of just spending  
is a smart thing, a good thing, a great thing. When  
it comes to money,  
give first, save next,  
and then live on the rest,

spend the rest but spend within your limits.

As mention this Sunday is Stewardship Sunday  
A great day to look at how this Harvest Principle  
can help us to start working  
at paying off our debt.

I have asked members of our  
Finance Committee to be present at each mass to  
bring you up-to-date  
on our debt and how we hope  
to work at reducing that debt  
and plan for our future.

This evening/morning\_\_\_\_\_

( speak about your own giving...Fr. Al...how he gave  
even in his death)

So I ask you to give generously.

You reap what you sow,  
you reap what you sow later and greater.  
It's a truth we do well to recognize  
and to honor in our lives.