

Harvest Principle Week #5 November 25th 2018

Welcome to the fifth, and final week of our series "*The Harvest Principle.*"

The principle is simple: "*You reap what you sow*". It's a basic principle that governs the whole of life. You plant a seed and then you receive the rewards of that planting. If you sow good seeds, you can expect good fruit. If you sow bad seeds, then expect bad fruit.

Throughout the series, we've been talking about two secondary principles that go along with the harvest principle.

The first one goes like this. *You reap what you sow but it's always later.* You don't plant a seed today and tomorrow expect a harvest. It takes time and patience.

The next secondary principle is this: *You reap what you sow but it's always greater.* The sowing and reaping multiplies over time. The more you plant the more you reap, for good and for bad.

In week 2, we applied this principle to character. When we sow the right kind of character seeds, we can flourish and enjoy nearly limitless advantages, including emotional health and strength.

People of good and strong character don't depend upon external circumstances or people's opinions for their well-being or happiness. Very little can rob them of their peace of mind and their joy of heart.

We applied this principle to our finances. It turns out the wisest use of our money is not to spend it, but to sow it. We sow seeds with our finances by giving and by saving and investing. Give first, save and invest and then spend.

Last week we looked at this principle when it came to wisdom. Wisdom is all about viewing life through the lens of eternity. Wisdom is building our lives around what's really important (eternity), and not the things that are temporary (possessions, titles, health).

I encourage you to visit our website and read over the homilies from this series. You can find them under next steps and then under go deeper.

Now the readings for today have a tone of anticipation. That tone suits this time of year. Winter is upon us; the trees are bare; the ground will soon be covered with snow. I am already anticipating spring!! It is also the end of the liturgical year. And next week begins Advent where we will be anticipating the birth of Jesus.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. But we are also celebrating all that we have harvested here at Good Shepherd Parish, all in the name of Christ our King.

In our gospel today, we see that as Jesus enters into his passion, the cross will become for us the saving instrument, the means by which we are redeemed, and through His resurrection comes the victory over evil.

Revelation also tells us today that Jesus is coming with the clouds, meaning he is coming in power and majesty. And so we also anticipate his return when all things will be made new.

In the meantime, we *exist to do exactly what Jesus did two thousand years ago, to love God, to love others, and to make disciples and to reap what we have sown.*

And we are reaping a great harvest. We are seeing lives changed through this church. People are coming to know God on a deeper level.

I had a parishioner come up to me after mass one Sunday and tell me that attending this parish has had a profound effect on his life. He thought his faith was dead, that it had no meaning for him anymore.

But he found something here, and he began to change, slowly at first, but changing none the less. As time went on he felt welcome, he felt valued, he felt loved by this community. He encountered God in this place because others here modeled their love for God to him.

God reaches us through others, or said another way, God reaches others through us.

There is a lot of truth to the saying: "You may be the only gospel your neighbour, your spouse, your children, your friends, ever read. So we have to make sure it's a good reading for them!!!!

Through our outreach, we are also making a difference in our broader community, and in other countries like Haiti, and Malawi.

We support the homeless through the Downtown Mission, through our support for Street Help and through Carts of Compassion.

We help young mothers through the baby bottle campaign. We support refugees through our sponsorship efforts; we supply needy children with school supplies through the "Shoe Box" program and we help families at Christmas time through the "Giving Tree".

We have supported students in Deppe Haiti through education sponsorships.

We have supported orphaned children in the village of Njewa, in Malawi Africa, by assisting in the building of a primary school.

And we have many more outreach projects too numerous to mention but are vitally important.

And that's how we grow disciples!!! We also grow disciples by inviting others to our church to experience for themselves why we come here week after week, year after year.

I had the opportunity to talk to another parishioner recently. Her name is Larissa, and she grew up in St Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

She was very involved in her church and was also in a leadership role there. Her husband is Catholic and so she started to investigate the Catholic faith after reading about it as part of her religious studies, and as it came time for their children to receive the sacraments.

God touched her in a special way through her contemplation and her investigation into the Eucharist and what that really meant for her. She and her husband Dennis found a welcoming home here at Good Shepherd.

She sees the value in our children's programs, where her young ones can connect to the Father and experience His love for them on a level that is appropriate for them. Larissa became a Catholic last Easter and it was the support of this community and especially the Eucharist, that have made this place home for her.

As we reflect on our harvest here at Good Shepherd Parish it is also important to look ahead and to plan our next steps in our faith journey.

Our whole lives are a journey to God and we never complete that journey until the end of our earthly lives.

And so we are called to continue to grow in our service to God and others. I see some empty seats as I look out and that means that we need to fill them; so there is still much work to do.

The church, when it is being the church that Christ wants, is among only a handful of organizations, and in some parts of the world, the only organization that does what we do.

And what we do matters. What we do is critically important in the life of our community and the world. Just ask those who volunteer with the St Vincent De Paul Society. We are sowing seeds that are reaping a rich harvest of changed lives.

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

Through the course of this series, we have also discovered the need for all of us to take time to consider what seeds we are sowing in our lives; financially, in our marriages, with our children and in our relationship with God.

We need to take time and consider where we might need to sow another harvest, a different harvest, a bountiful harvest.....

On this feast of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, may we all re-commit ourselves to bringing about his kingdom right now, here on earth, by the seeds that we sow each and every day.

I leave you with the words of St Mother Theresa:

“If we pray, we will believe, if we believe, we will love, if we love, we will serve. Only then do we put our love of God into action.”