

The Clear Picture

(A Stone Against The Misty Screen)

“He also said, ‘This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces corn—first the stalk, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.’” (Mark 4:26-29) “Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. ⁶ Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.” (Psalm 126:5-6)

Pass by a building under construction and meet the Engineer in charge of the project. With no doubt he can tell you every detail of the project from the beginning to the end including the cost of materials, the durability and the strength of the building. He knows his job very well, and he applies his knowledge, all the theories and the laws he studied beforehand. And if you argue with him about some aspect of his work and the credibility of his expectations, he will refer you to his past experiences and the practical applications that he has already done to a previous similar project.

Pass on a green field and meet the farmer there and ask him about his work. He will tell you which time he should plough the land, the time to sow, the time to water, the time at which the plants will sprout and grow, and the exact time and certainty of the harvest. You find him speaking comfortably without any apprehension. Meet a doctor and speak with him about an illness in his field of specialization. He will tell all the details about that disease, and the possibilities for its treatment and outcome of any modalities of treatment.

If you go to professional people in their field of specializations, they will tell you the same about their professions. They know their jobs and they know what they are doing. They trust their laws, theories and knowledge. They trust the cement and other building materials they are using. They trust the seed to produce fruits. They trust the stones, the sand, the medicine, the books, the machines, the experiences, or anything they use in the field of their work to bring success.

But how about the workers who work with God? They are working in the field of the unseen and they sow in the invisible land. If you sit with them and discuss with them the details of their work, you may sometime find some fears on their hearts about the effectiveness and the fruitfulness of their toil. Those little fears and little anxieties are good to make the worker more alert to protect the work. But if such condition leads to discouragement and frustration of God’s servant this needs to be treated and to looked upon. Jesus recognized this phenomenon and expected it in advance in the life of his disciples but he comforted them by the above chosen parable.

The parable is all about the seed that is growing secretly in a certain period or time. And from here we glimpse some dynamic of work in the kingdom of God in stages.

1) The latent period: This is the time from sowing the seed until the 1st sign of the seed to sprout. It may take days, weeks, months, or even years. The longitude of this silent period may put us in a hopeless state and discouragement to any new plan. And this is the period that we may even loss hope in the ministry.

But, this time is essential. Paul understood this when he wrote **“what you sow does not come to life unless it dies” (1 Corinthians 15:36)**. Traditionally, sowing in Canaan and Egypt was associated with sorrows and compared as a time of death, putting something under the ground. As the Psalmist said, **“those who sow in tears..., who goes out weeping carrying seed to sow”** And this happens with any worker when he puts all his capital in a project, all his money in a company, or when he puts seed under the ground. At that moment fears will come day and night, asleep or awake he will fear that birds may come and snatch the seed. And he may say to himself, “will the project flourish and I will not loss my capital? Will the seed grow and my toil will not go in vain?”

2) The rising up period: This is the period when the seed starts to sprout from the ground but in slowly stages. First the stalk, then the ear, then full grain in the ear. In this stage the anxiety will be less, but still the fear from the heavy rain and the pests of the earth is there. But although the growth of the plants or the result of the work is slow, something is seen bringing better hope and positive expectations.

3) The plateau phase: This is the time needed for the work to reach full perfection or grain to ripe. Patience in this period is very essential. Otherwise, the premature time for harvest will give useless green unripe fruit.

4) The harvest: This is the time for harvest, the reaping with songs and joy. Waiting for the harvest time may be lengthened but certainly it will come, and then will be followed by the gathering and carrying the sheaves of wheat.

The examples of the professionals whom we described at the beginning of this message in addition to others whom we did not mention, are working according to scientific laws and theories with their trust to previous experiences. For the workers of God who are in their silent latent phase, they should cling to this promise: **“Those who sow in tears will reap in songs of joy.”** We should come to the conclusion that our work will reach to the consummation, even though initially nothing very dramatic is observed.

In order to put this parable in a wider sense of meaning we explain it this way: As the word of God is preached, the seed has been sown and nothing could prevent the harvest which would ultimately come. Therefore, let us show calmness, patience, and confident expectation rather than fearful anxiety.

My Dear and Beloved: The above stages of the secret seed growing ministry can be applied not only inside the church but as well as outside or in our secular work or jobs. And to you who are working with faithfulness and goodness in behalf of the world you can apply and can use the teachings of the Lord Jesus in your field of work, for the message of this week is for all. It is not a mere encouragement and it is not a mere parable from the Lord, but it is a stone toward the hazy screen of glass that is preventing us from distinguishing what is coming ahead. It is a stone to break that misty glass in front of the disciples, and all who delight in the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ to let them see the coming beautiful harvest and they will reap, shout, and return with songs of joy. God Bless You.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your encouraging word to me. Lord I commit myself to fully trust you and obey you and continue to serve you wholeheartedly knowing that my labour is not in vain, knowing certainly that one day I have from you a great harvest. This is my prayer and commitment in Jesus name Amen.*