

12. The Harvest and the Harvesters (1Q 2014—Discipleship)

Biblical material: John 1:40–46, 4:28–30, 15:8, Luke 24:4–53, Acts 1:6–8, Matt. 9:36–38, Luke 15.

Quotes

- What we plant in the soil of contemplation, we shall reap in the harvest of action. *Meister Eckhart*
- In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy. *William Blake*
- How can people trust the harvest, unless they see it sown? *Mary Renault*
- The year goes wrong, and tares grow strong,/ Hope starves without a crumb;/ But God's time is our harvest time,/ And that is sure to come. *Lewis J. Bates*
- The fields...are white already to harvest" (John 4:35 KJV), or as other versions put it, "ripe for harvest."...One part of the harvest metaphor we may have missed was the importance of timing—there is a season for both sowing and reaping, and sometimes there is a season of simply waiting and watering. *Keri Wyatt Kent*
- There would be no advantage to be gained by sowing a field of wheat if the harvest did not return more than was sown. *Napoleon Hill*

Questions

What does the image of harvest suggest? How do we see our role in this harvest? What is God most looking for? How does the concept of harvest help us with the passing of time? While we may sow and help with the reaping, who has the responsibility for the harvest, and why? What is the object of the harvest from a universe-wide perspective?

Bible summary

Andrew was instrumental in bringing his brother Peter to Jesus as a disciple (John 1:40–46). The Samaritan woman at the well went and announced Jesus to her whole village (John 4:28–30). Jesus told his disciples, "My Father is glorified as you produce much fruit, proving you are my disciples." John 15:8 FBV. Luke 24:4–53 recounts the experience of the disciples after the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus promised the power of the Holy Spirit to his disciples before he left (Acts 1:6–8). Jesus was moved at the size of the harvest, and told his disciples to pray for more workers (Matt. 9:36–38). For all of us disciples, the story of the prodigal son recorded in Luke 15 is essential.

Comment

At the heart of this study is the concept of sharing in the work of God's good news with the final objective in view: the harvest. As Jesus says, "the harvest is the end of the world, and at that time there is the separation of the good and the bad. Our role as his disciples is to share God's truth, being his witnesses—a spectacle to angels and to humanity.

This is why we're looking at Andrew who brought Peter to Jesus, and the Samaritan woman who went and told her whole village about Jesus. Our role is to let others know. Most important of all is to rightly represent the God we claim to know and love. The tragedy down through the ages has been the misrepresentation of God by those who claim to be his spokespersons. Through their words and their actions, Jesus'

supposed disciples have all-too-often portrayed God falsely, either mistakenly or deliberately. Sincerity is no guarantee, with many Christians placing God in a bad light by their beliefs and actions.

At heart it is an issue of erroneous ideas regarding the nature and character of God. If you believe God is punitive, then hell is not an abhorrent idea. If you see God as imposing penalties for sin, then it is not hard to accept that he executed his Son. If God is seen as rigorously demanding, then the idea that he needs blood before he will forgive doesn't seem so strange.

All this demands that we as Jesus' disciples rightly represent him in everything in all that we say and do, affirming Jesus' statement that "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9 FBV). Otherwise we will be contributing to a bad harvest that is based on mistaken and false views of our heavenly Father. For as we sow, we reap, and if we accept false spiritual ideas they will do injury to our spiritual experience. By beholding we become changed—both positively and negatively, depending on what we see.

The wheat and tares are growing together until the harvest. Our role is growing wheat! Jesus also spoke about sowing in different types of ground, and we need to make sure we sow in good soil, and not among the thorns, on the path, or in the rocks. These different soils also represent different people in their reception of the truth. Sadly even a good presentation of God as he truly is can be rejected, or only believed for a while.

The tragedy is that Jesus has shown us a wonderful, kind, loving, and totally good God, but people don't want to know. In the same way as he was rejected while on earth, he is rejected today. Our responsibility is to try and make sure that Jesus is not rejected because of us.

May we all be true representatives of our loving Lord and live for him!

Ellen White Comments

Come where Christ is, and you will have light. Talk unbelief, and you will have unbelief; but talk faith, and you will have faith. According to the seed sown will be the harvest. {ST, October 20, 1887}

The husbandman chooses a piece of land from the wilderness; he fences, clears, and tills it, and plants it with choice vines, expecting a rich harvest. This plot of ground, in its superiority to the uncultivated waste, he expects to do him honor by showing the results of his care and toil in its cultivation. So God had chosen a people from the world to be trained and educated by Christ. The prophet says, "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant." Isa. 5:7. Upon this people God had bestowed great privileges, blessing them richly from His abundant goodness. He looked for them to honor Him by yielding fruit. They were to reveal the principles of His kingdom. In the midst of a fallen, wicked world they were to represent the character of God. {COL 285}

The Saviour by His spirit was abiding in their hearts, and His love, and light, and power shone out through them. Men, beholding, marvelled, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. And as the disciples witnessed to the mission of Christ, they bore witness also of the Father; for Christ had said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." {AUCR, June 1, 1900}