

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of March 15, 2020

THEME: "The Sower"

SOWING SEEDS

Sunday **Read Mark 4:3-12**

"Behold, there went out a sower to sow." In His teaching, Jesus often compared a person sharing Biblical truth to a planter sowing seeds to reap a harvest. The seed, in the parable of Jesus, is the metaphor He used for the Word of God: seeds of Scripture. The Christian who shares a verse of Scripture while speaking to another person is actually planting a seed of God's truth into that individual's heart and mind. So every verse of the Bible that a Christian stores in his memory equips him for planting seeds into the minds of people. The more Scriptures a Christian knows, the more seeds he has to plant. Daily reading of the Bible gives the believer more seeds to plant where he goes. Making the effort to commit verses to memory enables the believer to have the right seed to plant at the proper time and place. The seeds are packaged with many different labels covering a whole range of topics. Some seeds are good for producing salvation resulting in a person moving off the road that leads to destruction and on to the road that leads to heaven. Other packages of seeds have to do with Christian growth toward maturity. There are seeds that are appropriate for many different times and places, such as to give God the glory for His amazing prophetic truth that clarifies so many current events today. To have a harvest of souls, seeds must be planted. It truly is a worthy occupation for every believer in trying to be obedient to our Savior's command and bring glory to God!

THE FIELDS

Monday **Read John 4:35-38**

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." We see in this Bible reading our Lord telling us to look around the part of the world in which He has placed us where we can plant seeds in anticipation of reaping a harvest. It may be that seeds have already been sown by fellow believers, but need watering. Some may be ready to be harvested. Some fields in which Jesus wants us to plant seeds of Scripture are our neighborhoods, our places of employment, our school campuses, and the marketplaces. They are fields where we spend a lot of time daily. Other fields are those through which we pass occasionally, maybe while traveling, where the seeds will have to be watered by others, and still others may have the joy of reaping a harvest because of those who had planted seeds while passing through. Sometimes we have the joy of reaping in a field where others have done the planting and watering. Philip, of whom we read in Acts 8, had that wonderful experience. Someone back in Jerusalem had planted seeds by providing a eunuch with a copy of the Gospel of Isaiah that he was reading on his trip home. The Holy Spirit directed Philip to a place where he was taking a rest stop on his journey. When Philip arrived at that very location, he was able to clarify what the eunuch was reading by explaining salvation through the Lord Jesus. A soul was harvested because of seeds that had been planted and watered by others: efforts the Holy Spirit was able to have the eunuch's heart ready for harvesting, and Philip was obedient to go to that field.

PLANTING

Tuesday **Read Acts 16:25-31**

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Here in Acts 16, we read of the harvesting of another soul; this time the field was a prison in Philippi. Having been placed into prison because of their witness for Christ was an opportunity for them to sow seeds in another field where there were needy hearts. God used their songs of praise they were singing to rattle the place, resulting in the prison doors being unlocked and open for prisoners to escape. An extremely upset guard, fearing the ramifications of dereliction of duty, was ready to commit suicide. That was simply the Holy Spirit preparing a heart to receive the gospel. Because Paul and Silas remained imprisoned despite the opportunity to escape, they had the opportunity to fellowship with the prison guard. After explaining the gospel to the guard, Paul and Silas were invited to the house of the guard where the whole family apparently accepted Christ along with some others. Yes, seeds

planted in the prison resulted in a wonderful harvest of souls for the glory of God. It is worth our notice that the message that penetrated the heart was this: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."*

WATERING

Wednesday Read I Corinthians 3:6-9

"I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase...We are laborers together with God." Paul emphasizes that the work of soul winning is a joint effort. This is important for Christians to realize so they do not become overly aggressive in their desire to have people come to a point of decision. The passion is to be commended, but patience sometimes truly is a virtue. The sowing of seeds is step one in the actual communication of the gospel, and then comes the watering. Whether or not the seed is a quick producer of fruit is determined by the Holy Spirit, and many times there is a need for a great deal of watering. I think it highly unlikely that, except for the Lord Jesus Himself, that there are souls won to Christ because of the efforts of one person. It truly is, as Paul mentions, a team effort. Although it is sometimes obvious when we are doing the original planting, we really have to leave that up to God. It does take spiritual discernment to judge when to say what; that discernment comes by being in tune with the Holy Spirit so He is controlling the discussion. Many times people will ask a question, to which the believer is compelled to give a response with a humble Christlike attitude. We read this important instruction in I Peter 3:15: *"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness."* That may be planting a seed or watering a seed already planted by others. Responses should be Spirit controlled!

WAITING

Thursday Read John 16:7-11

"And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." It is vital for Christians to realize that it is God the Holy Spirit who has the responsibility of convincing an unbeliever of his need for a Savior in the business of building the church by soul winning! Trying to do what only the Holy Spirit can do can put a roadblock into this most vital work of God. Doing the task of planting and watering are obviously very important, because it gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to do His work in the heart into which the seeds were planted into the minds of the listeners. While waiting, another very critical responsibility of believers is to engage in intercessory prayer. We are told this in James 5:16: *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* In addition to sowing and reaping, the believer is compelled to wait and pray; by so doing, we turn things over to God to do His work. There are times when we, while waiting, can do more watering by various actions and sometimes words, but patience to allow God to do the convincing is imperative!

REAPING

Friday Read Acts 8:29-38

"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It surely is a high privilege to be the person chosen by the Holy Spirit to reap the harvest by helping a person to come to the point of asking Jesus into his or her heart and become part of the family of God; that is, unless, God chooses to do that final step alone after sufficient planting and watering had been done. As we read in Acts 8, Philip had this high honor by meeting with the Ethiopian eunuch. In Acts 9, we see how God used Ananias to help Saul have an understanding of this new relationship with our Savior. In Acts 10, it was Peter on whom God called to experience the joy of seeing the Roman centurion and his family become true born again Christians and part of God's family. It is important to remember that these new believers are babies in the family of God and need to be nourished and provided with loving care; what some call disciplining. The beginning of a new life in Christ is extremely important because of a prowling enemy intent on preventing growth! When the work of planting, watering, and harvesting are complete, the work of processing begins!

REJOICING

Saturday Read Luke 15:3-7

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." I think there is no greater joy on earth than the celebration of a birth. We know this from the physical realm when one in our family is blessed with a new born; and it is equally exciting, if not moreso, when a child is born into God's heavenly family! Just as the name of a baby born on earth is recorded in a registry at the state capital, so the names of those born into the family of God are recorded in heaven in what is called the Lamb's book of life. Jesus made mention of the joy of the birth of a person into the family of God as a reason for celebration in Luke 10:20, where we read this: *"Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."* Another reason for rejoicing about our names being written in the Lamb's book in heaven is what we read in Revelation 20:15 at the final judgment: *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* No wonder there is a great rejoicing over the birth of a person into God's family in heaven and in the family of believers on earth!