

“Serving Outside the Church”

Gal 6:7-10

9.04.22

The last two weeks we have been looking at God’s goal for all believers- to become like Jesus. Two weeks ago, we spent time looking at the vision and how taking steps along the vision pathway will help you to become more like Christ. Last week, we took one of the steps on the pathway underneath the category of disciple and explained that to become like Jesus will require serving for Jesus “came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.”

We talked about three directions of serving- to the Lord, to other believers and to unbelievers. And we discussed one of the two locations of service. Last week, we took a look at serving inside the church. Today, we look at serving outside the church. As we serve inside and outside the church, we are becoming more like Jesus for that is how He lived on earth. And for our church to reflect Christlikeness, we are to be building up the Body within and reaching out to the lost with the gospel and with practical help.

Before we go out and serve in the community, let’s take a little time to get encouraged by a passage of scripture that provides a key principle about serving as well as a promise and motivation to keep on serving.

Please turn to Galatians 6:7–10 (ESV). Page 975 in Red Bibles.

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

In verse 7 we see the principle. You could also call it a God ordained rule. Or you could call it the “Law of the Harvest.” “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.”

The Principle/ Rule/ Law of the Harvest

What you sow is what you will reap.

This is a picture of this principle is the practice of farming. When you sow seeds you will reap a harvest. There is a correlation between what you sow and what you reap. If you sow corn seeds you will get stalks of corn. If you sow seeds from green beans you will receive green beans.

Though sowing and reaping is a picture of farming; it is a universal principle all over the world and throughout all time.

It is evident in school. There are homework assignments to do- that is sowing. If you don't do the homework or study for the test the harvest will be a failing grade. But if you do the homework and study then you will harvest a better grade.

It is evident with finances. If you spend all the money you earn, there will not be any money stored up for when you need it. But if you save money, it will be there when you need it.

It is evident in relationships. If you are self-centered and treat everyone else like they are not as important as you, someday down the road you will reap a harvest of loneliness. But if you are other-centered and care about people, you will not harvest loneliness.

It is evident in families. If parents are child focused and spend all their extra time making sure their kids can do all the extracurricular activities then in time the harvest will result in a starved and struggling marriage.

But if you prioritize your marriage and serve your children then you will harvest a healthy marriage and family.

It is evident with God's Word. If we disregard God's commands and wisdom then we will harvest difficulties and struggles. If we obey His Word, then we will harvest right living and righteousness and joy.

If we sow quality and quantity time in God's Word and prayer we will reap a harvest of a and special, personal relationship that is so satisfying. And we will be changed for the better.

For those who think that they are immune to the principle of sowing and reaping; they are deceiving themselves. The law of the harvest is like gravity. It affects everyone.

Those who think they are above this rule are mocking God. To mock God is to "Turn up the nose at." You cannot turn a nose up to someone who is bigger and greater than you.

In the One Year Bible, I just finished reading Job. Through the first 37 chapters of the book, God is quiet. He allows Job and his friends to share their views on why Job experienced the tragedies that he did. But then chapter 38 arrives and God speaks. Job 38:1–8 (NLT), "Then the Lord answered Job from the whirlwind: ² "Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words? ³ Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them. ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. ⁵ Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line? ⁶ What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone ⁷ as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? ⁸ "Who kept the sea inside its boundaries as it burst from the womb..."

For those who question the law of the harvest, Who are you to question God's wisdom with such arrogant words? You cannot mock God. He is greater than you.

Another aspect to sowing and reaping is the kind of sowing you are doing.

Verse 8, “For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

We can either sow selfishly and to build up our little kingdoms on earth or we can sow to obey and please the Spirit and experience eternal life.

It is not just the kind of sowing, another aspect is how much or generously you sow determines what you reap.

The more seeds a farmer sows the greater the yield. The less seeds a farmer plants the smaller yield. Paul writes, “2 Corinthians 9:6 (ESV), “...Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

In the context of Galatians 6, the more you give financially to God’s work the greater the harvest or reward. The more you sow good works the greater the harvest. Or the less you sow good works the less the harvest or reward.

The point of this principle of sowing and reaping really speaks to free will. You get to choose how much you will sow. What and how generously you sow determines what you reap. Do you want to reap a great harvest? Then sow many great seeds of giving generously and seeds of service.

We see the principle. Now let’s look at

The Promise and motivation: **In due season you will reap if you do not give up.**

Verse 9, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

We live in an instant gratification society. We expect to be rewarded very quickly after we take a step. Isabelle Drury in her article, “The Problem With Instant Gratification & How It Affects Our Society” writes, “The need for instant gratification has seeped into

every corner of society, from retailers offering same-day delivery services, to instant streaming services, yearly upgrades of our tech, and an internet connection that will load a webpage in seconds.

The instant experience isn't just handed to us, it is expected. 47% of users will leave a webpage if it doesn't load in 2 seconds or less, others have said they won't bother watching a film if they can't find it on Netflix or on-demand. It is said the internet is making us impatient, instant gratification can even be as simple as constantly pulling out your phone to scroll through social media when you have to wait in a line."

The law of sowing and reaping often isn't instantly gratifying. It takes time for what is sown to reap a harvest.

For example, a farmer that works hard and plants his seeds in the spring will not see any results for a while. He won't really know how much he will harvest until the proper time- in due season- the time set for his crops to ripen. It will be months after the farmer sowed that he will see the harvest.

So too for the believer. Giving generously doesn't always provide a harvest or reward immediately. In fact, you may have helped someone in need and it seemed to have been a waste of money. Maybe it does look like a waste immediately after but you have not seen what it will look like in due season.

Maybe you are serving people who are not appreciative. They just take and take and you give and give and you wonder is it worth it. In the immediacy it may not seem worthwhile but in due season the truth will be revealed. There will be a harvest for you!

God calls us to serve- to do good things throughout our lives and not grow weary.

The words "grow weary" hopefully are an encouragement to you. God recognizes that serving and giving is not easy. He recognizes that we could reach a time when we are

tired. When we are exhausted. When we are discouraged. Is what I am doing and giving really worth it? Is sacrificing my time, my talent and my treasure really worth it? It is hard to answer that in the short window of time but it will be evident later on- in due season.

We launched CBC DWT back in October 2013. Gal 6:9-10 were our key verses as a church. They still are.

For the first three years, we set up the worship space, ABF and children's spaces every Sunday. And then when the services were over, we put it all back in the trailer. We had very faithful people who came early to help set up and very faithful people who stayed after to take down. Rain or shine. Sun or snow. Hot or cold we set up and took down the equipment.

We did it focusing on the promise that doing good would reap a harvest if we did not give up. It has been more than 5 years since we moved into this building. And we continue to move forward in faith in the promise that in due season we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. We have witnessed some little harvests along the way. God has added some wonderful people to our body. But someday- in due season will be strike 12 and a big harvest will result. I still absolutely believe it. Do you?

Instead of having your head down in weariness. Lift up your head so that you can see the opportunities in front of you to do good. For you will be able to see

When the opportunity arises do good to everyone.

Verse 10, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Last week we looked at serving one another in the church using our spiritual gifts. Here we are reminded again that we are to serve one another for we are the household of faith. We are family serving in this local body.

But we are also to **seek to minister to others outside the church**. What are the opportunities? Are we to work hard to create them? Or is God involved? The good news is God is on the job. He has prepared these opportunities for us. “No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.” Ephesians 2:10 (The Message)

To see the opportunities requires our heads to be up scanning ahead and to be submitted to the Spirit for He will guide us to the will of God.

About 15 years ago, Andrea and I started a ministry called No Strings Attached. We wanted to place ourselves in the proximity of people we didn't know. We wanted to be where God could connect us to those He was seeking out. We wanted to let people we came into contact with to know that God loved them and desired to connect with them.

In this ministry we tried many different outreaches. We gave away cold water bottles on hot summer days. We paid for a gallon of gas and washed people's windshields while they filled up their tanks. We cleaned the bathrooms of businesses so the employees could get a break. We delivered hundreds of goodie bags to people working on Christmas Day, etc.

One one particular Saturday we had several different outreaches going on. On that Saturday we also decided to try a new outreach seeking to connect with people who were using a laundromat to clean their clothes. We planned to pay for a load of laundry to wash and/or dry depending on how many people were using the laundromats at the time. We thought this would be a great outreach because it wasn't cheap to do laundry and people had to wait for their laundry to dry so there would be time to engage in spiritual conversations.

We sent three groups out. One group went to the laundromat in Eldridge, another group to a newer laundromat in Bettendorf and another group to a laundromat called The Pink Poodle in downtown Davenport.

Because, downtown Davenport was less safe, I chose to pair up two men to go there. I sent Pastor Scott and a 19 year old young man who was a new believer. I thought that would be a good combination.

The Eldridge and Bettendorf outreaches went well. The teams came back excited with reports of the people being blown away that a church would pay to clean and dry their clothes. It opened up good spiritual conversations.

The Davenport outreach did not go so well. Pastor Scott and this young man showed up at the Pink Poodle with coins to pay for people's laundry and donuts to give out. When they entered the laundromat only a young girl and her brother were inside.

Pastor Scott asked the girl if her parents were around. She looked uncomfortable by that question. But Pastor Scott was there to bless people so he asked to pay for a load of her laundry. She said no. So he offered her and her brother a donut. The girl said no to the donuts and grabbed her brother and quickly left the laundromat.

Soon the mother showed up and got in Pastor Scott's face and yelled at him saying, "What are you in our neighborhood?" Pastor Scott tried to explain but she would not let him speak. She screamed, "You get out of here before I call the cops." Pastor Scott and this young man quietly left with their tails between their legs.

The police were called and the woman was asked to give a description of the two men. Unbeknownst to us, the community had been on high alert as a white male had tried to abduct children from that neighborhood a week or so before.

We found this information out because that Sunday, Pastor Scott shared his humiliating experience during his sermon. In the service was a youth that worked with inner city kids in Davenport from that neighborhood. He had heard about two white males that had been in that neighborhood the day before and how a description of the older male had been drawn by a police sketch artist and was hung up around the neighborhood. When Pastor Scott shared his story Luke started laughing out loud. After the service, Luke got ahold of the family in Davenport, explained the situation and the sketches of Pastor Scott were taken down.

God is calling us to serve people- people who are easy to serve and people who are not easy to serve. **To be like Jesus, who we serve isn't determined by ability or merit but by need. We are to focus on needs over worthiness.**

We are called by God to serve people whether they are “credible candidates” or not. **When we generously extend mercy and grace to others does God hold us accountable if it gets misused by others?** No! God will hold us accountable for lacking in compassion.

Here is encouraging news for those who choose to be merciful. Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” As we show mercy so it will be shown to us. Here again is the law of the harvest- what you sow is what you reap.

Be generous reap generosity. Be merciful- experience mercy. Serve faithfully and you will be the recipients of service when you definitely need to be served.

By faith believe that the harvest is coming so
Don't give up doing **good**.

Don't grow weary. Don't allow your present feelings to stop you from continuing to serve. Don't give up. Keep serving, keep giving, keep your eyes open and head up for the opportunities that are to come.

This morning in ELD and here in DWT, there are opportunities for us to serve individuals and our communities. We are ministering to physical needs. We are ministering to emotional needs. We are ministering to relational needs and we ask God to use us to minister to spiritual needs.

As you serve, please do not allow the project to be more important than the person or people you are serving. This might just be a divine appointment that God has set up for you and them.

Allow serving today be an opportunity for a spiritual conversation this week. As you go back to work or are around other people this week set out a faith flag. A faith flag is a statement that you say to see if you can illicit a spiritual response.

What I would encourage you to do is to tell others at work or your neighbors what you did today. Tell them about the project that you did with your church family. Share your excitement.

Andrea has had several conversations on the plane with people about our church and about Christ because she has shared about SERVE Fest or about our church cleaning porta potties. For many unbeliever, that news is a little shocking. Their perspective of the church is often negative. All a church wants is what? Money. Or all a church is a bunch of self-righteous and hypocritical people. But to share that our church serves people and groups in the communities surprises them. It is a nonthreatening way to have spiritual conversations. And it has broken down a few walls. She has heard people say they wished they could come to our church.

Don't give up doing good for the glory of God.

Let's pray

o.b.g.