

Sowing and Reaping

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Hosea speaks to us a word from God about a harvest of judgment that is coming. God urges, at the beginning, the people to blow a trumpet, to sound an alarm.

Scriptural Text: Hosea 8, ESV

Israel Will Reap the Whirlwind

¹ Set the trumpet to your lips!
One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD,
because they have transgressed my covenant
and rebelled against my law.
² To me they cry,
“My God, we—Israel—know you.”
³ Israel has spurned the good;
the enemy shall pursue him.

⁴ They made kings, but not through me.
They set up princes, but I knew it not.
With their silver and gold they made idols
for their own destruction.
⁵ I have spurned your calf, O Samaria.
My anger burns against them.
How long will they be incapable of innocence?
⁶ For it is from Israel;
a craftsman made it;
it is not God.
The calf of Samaria
shall be broken to pieces.

⁷ For they sow the wind,
and they shall reap the whirlwind.
The standing grain has no heads;
it shall yield no flour;
if it were to yield,
strangers would devour it.

⁸ Israel is swallowed up;
already they are among the nations
as a useless vessel.
⁹ For they have gone up to Assyria,
a wild donkey wandering alone;
Ephraim has hired lovers.
¹⁰ Though they hire allies among the nations,
I will soon gather them up.
And the king and princes shall soon writhe
because of the tribute.
¹¹ Because Ephraim has multiplied altars for sinning,
they have become to him altars for sinning.
¹² Were I to write for him my laws by the ten
thousands,
they would be regarded as a strange thing.
¹³ As for my sacrificial offerings,
they sacrifice meat and eat it,
but the LORD does not accept them.
Now he will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins;
they shall return to Egypt.
¹⁴ For Israel has forgotten his Maker
and built palaces,
and Judah has multiplied fortified cities;
so I will send a fire upon his cities,
and it shall devour her strongholds.

A few weeks ago, my brother and I visited a property owned by a family at Bethany Baptist Church. The family was planning to connect some lakes on their property with some channels to allow canoes and boats to move from one lake to another. It was the chosen method of creating these channels that interested my brother and I. This family hired a team to use explosives to blow up dirt, mud, and water that presently existed between the lakes to create these channels. My brother and I stationed ourselves with a small group of people, about one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards away from the blast site.

“BOOM!!!” Water and mud exploded from the earth, rising to what appeared to me to be fifty, sixty, or more feet in the air. There was this giant plume of mud and water ascending into the sky was unlike anything I had ever seen before; it was amazing and it was remarkable. As I watched this brown column reach its summit, I notice, as it began to descend, it was curling in our direction. I looked around at our little group and I wondered, “Is anyone else concerned about this?” One of the young women dashed to safety under the roof of one of the all-terrain vehicles nearby. I reasoned I had politely observed the lady’s first rule and ran, diving under the roof with her. Mud splattered all around us and the experience was exhilarating.

Not too far from where we were standing, many of the puddles of mud that eventually came splashing down to the ground were two to three feet in diameter. Thankfully we all escaped unsullied by the falling mud.

In our text, and all through Hosea, God warns His people of future judgment that will fall upon them as a result of their idolatry, sexual immorality, deceit, murder, and spiritual neglect of true worship. God calls them to run for the cover of His mercy. He tells them if they do not repent and seek His mercy, they will suffer righteous judgment. In Hosea 7, we read, in our previous study,

¹³ Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, for they have rebelled against me! I would redeem them, but they speak lies against me.

When I think of the experience my brother and I had at our friend's property, I think of the people in Hosea's day. That day, while the mud was still in the sky, we perceived it was going surely to fall on earthy. What goes up must come down! We had a narrow window of time to act in order to find cover.

Through the Prophet Hosea, God, in grace and mercy, had given clear warning. The plume had already risen in the air and He gave sure warning that judgment was going to fall upon them,

^{1a} Set the trumpet to your lips!

A trumpet is used to sound an alarm of peril and of future danger. God is telling them to blow the trumpet because they, as a people, needed to prepare themselves for the judgment that is going to fall upon them.

^{1a} One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD...

This word picture is of a vulture circling and circling. Why do vultures circle? It is because they have found something that is either nearly dead or dead and that is the spiritual condition of this people. They are nearly, or they are dead, and the vulture is already circling over the House of the Lord. The vulture, I believe, is the kingdom of Assyria. Israel is the dead rabbit.

God is going to use Assyria as His instrument of judgment against Israel. Why?

^{1b} ...because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law.

The wages of sin is death.¹ God's Covenant is a special promise to His people. It is a special relationship He draws His people into with Himself. It is a relationship in which He promises to be their God and they become His people, a people who live in personal relationship with Him.

But, instead of enjoying God and in the midst of this Covenant with Him, instead of serving Him with their lives, they choose to find enjoying and meaning for life outside of God, outside of their relationship, and inside the realm of disobedience and idolatry. God is warning His people of judgment that if flying right over their heads and God's warnings are never false; they are always true. God offers no empty words and no hollow threats. He never blows hot air. God's warnings are more certain to come to pass than the Law of Gravity and we ignore them to our destruction.

God's warns us of His righteous response to our sin not because He hates us. Quite to the contrary, He warns us of His righteous response to our sin because He loves us. He records His warnings to us to provide a window of time in which we can seek refuge in Him and find safety.

Israel, in Hosea's day, chose to ignore God's warnings and the Apostle Peter, in the New Testament, tells the same is true for many of us in the 21st Century. Peter is writing about us living in our day, in 2 Peter 3. He is writing of God's judgment and he says,

¹ Romans 6:23

³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”

Peter is prophesying about us. Do we believe this prophesy is true? Do we not understand that scoffers have come and they follow their own desires? They say, “God, in His warnings, people have been talking about God and His warnings forever. These warnings have been going on and on and on but nothing has happened.”

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

We should not think that though the window of time may be wide it does not mean there is no such window and the window will always remain open. In the motivation, at the end of Verse 9, Peter is teaching us the reason God’s judgment has not already fallen upon us is because He is waiting for the last of His people to repent of sin and find His mercy. Hosea seems like a harsh, hard letter, but it is one of the most gracious, loving letters we can possibly read. Then Peter writes,

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness...

In other words, if we understood God’s warning and believed it what kind of life would we live in response? The principle we learn from Peter is that our self-deceived heart naturally ignores God when He lovingly warns us against the judgment that will ruin us. We naturally do not believe Him. We naturally do not take Him seriously and many scoff at God’s loving warnings instead of running for cover. That window of mercy, that window of opportunity to run for cover, will one day close upon us and it will be forever closed and it will be too late. That is the reason God tells us, in Hebrews 3,

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness...”

I urge each of us, as we open our Bible to Hosea 8, we are right to open our Bible with ears that are eager to hear what God says, and as we hear what God says we believe what God says and as we believe what God says to act upon what God says. This will change our life.

What happens to a person who ignores God’s warning and continues to live in disobedience and unfaithfulness to God?

⁷ For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.

They sow a wind of rebellion and they reap this whirlwind of ruin.

Last year, on November 17th, I arrived at church early in the morning. As I got out of my car, I thought, “What an incredibly, lovely November morning.” The air was unseasonably warm and a stiff, warm breeze was blowing across the parking lot. Little did I imagine, I could not imagine, that slight breeze I was feeling that morning would turn into an F4 tornado² and level the houses and whole neighborhoods straight to the ground.³

That is the kind of image Hosea is painting, “You were sowing the wind. That wind may seem harmless you are sowing, but that wind being sown in rebellion turns into a tornado of ruin and it will reap the whirlwind upon ourselves.” Hosea then mixes metaphors to drive home a point. He make a metaphor of this wind turning into a

² Wind speeds: 166-200 miles per hour.

³ Pekin, East Peoria, Washington, Illinois.

whirlwind, but there is also this metaphor of sowing and reaping, an agricultural metaphor, a picture of a farmer sowing seed in the spring, having the crops grow, and then harvesting his crop in the fall.

One of the reasons I love living in Illinois is the joy of seeing corn being harvested in the fall of the year. What a beautiful thing it is to behold: to walk a bare field, plant seeds, the plants grow to maturity, and then begin to dry while yet in the ground and then be harvested.

God uses this wonderful cycle of crops to teach us a vital spiritual lesson, the lesson regarding sowing and reaping. It is not just in Hosea, but it is in other places in Scripture as well.

Proverbs 22:8 **Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity...**

Galatians 6:7 **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.

This is probably the clearest passage regarding sowing and reaping. The application we see for us is to not grow weary in doing good, for in due season, we will reap if we do not give up.

There are three laws of sowing and reaping which are vital for us to remember. **First, we reap what we sow.** Whatever one sows, that he will also reap. If we sow wind we will reap the whirlwind. If a farmer plants corn he is going to reap corn and not beans. There is no exception to this law which exists. Spiritual seeds always produce a harvest.

That is not always true in the physical realm. Sometimes a farmer may sow seed and not get any harvest, but spiritually seeds always produce a harvest and the kinds of seeds we plant determines the kind of harvest we will experience. If we sow for the glory of God we will reap life eternal and joy unfathomable. If we sow to wind of worldliness we will reap the whirlwind of death and a thousand sorrows.

It is Gospel true that we are saved and delivered from God's righteous judgment by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. We are saved by grace alone and not of our own doing and not of our works lest any of us should any of us boast.⁴

Genuine faith in Jesus, however, changes the kinds of seed with which we sow and it changes the kind of harvest we then enjoy. God's grace does not negate the necessity of sowing good seed in our life. God's grace, instead, kindles the sowing of good seed. God's grace does not move us to become careless in our sowing. God's grace moves us to become constant in sowing good seed. The truth is this: if, in unbelief, we sow sin and selfishness we will reap destruction in our life. However, if, in faith, we sow worship unto God we will reap eternal life.

Since we will absolutely reap exactly what we sow, we do not lose heart in "doing good". We do not lose heart in those things that bring glory to God. We do not lose heart in committing our self to communicating Jesus and His Gospel through our words and through our life. Paul knows such a life is not easy. Sowing good seed is often laborious and hard. Sowing bad seed is usually very easy, but we do not lose heart in the labor of sowing good seed because we know for sure we will reap if we do not give up.

The second law of sowing and reaping is: We reap more than we sow. The sowing of wind leads to the reaping of a tornado. We sow one seed of corn in the ground and we harvest a whole ear of corn. The average ear of corn has approximately four hundred to six hundred kernels arranged in sixteen rows.

If we sow the wind of folly we will reap the whirlwind of destruction and devastation. No sin, however small, is harmless. Satan loves to convince us a little bit of fleshly living will not bring grave consequences to our life. Indeed, God tells us our follies multiply our sorrows. For instance, a little indulgence in lustful thinking can kindle a flame of sexual sin which burns down our entire family. A little allowance of spiritual neglect in our home can lead to unbelief in our children's life.

⁴ Ephesians 2:8

I think of Eli who had two children, Hophni and Phinehas, who died ignoble deaths under the judgment hand of the Lord. God tells us Eli is a godly man, but his sons were “worthless men for they did not know the Lord”.⁵ Here is the indictment upon Eli,

¹ Samuel 3:12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³ And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.

We are not told how Eli did not restrain them, but he did not restrain them by teaching them Scripture, by continually praying over their lives and calling them to repentance and faith.

Dads, you are sowing seeds for the joy of your family by the way you use your time and energy. Your spiritual commitment to teach your sons and daughters the Word, to disciple them, to discipline them in love, to pray over them, to show them how to live for the glory of God will yield a great harvest. But, if we neglect this we are sowing the seeds of spiritual neglect in their life.

Young people, sometimes youthful transgressions are excused by the thinking, “I am young. I am sowing a little of my wild oats.” Most sins which destroy older men and women were begun in their youth. There was a maxim I learned as a young man and I believe it is biblical and true: Sow a thought and you reap an act. Sow an act and you reap a habit. Sow a habit and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap eternal destiny.⁶ We always reap more than we sow.

The third law of sowing and reaping is: We reap later than we sow,

^{7b} ...and they shall reap the whirlwind.

This is yet in the future. One never reaps corn or beans in the same season those seeds are planted. Some crops have a very short maturation season and some crops have a very long maturation season. Satan loves to make a person believe the fact that they did not reap God’s judgment on the day they planted the seed of sin means judgment does not exist or that God does not really care and He looks right over the sin as though it is a little, small thing. No, the law of sowing and reaping tells us we will reap later than we sow. Whether God’s judgment is swift or slow, it is certain.

There is a positive and negative side to the laws of spiritual sowing and reaping. Israel got on the down side, on the negative side, of those laws and they will suffer immeasurably for it. What kind of seed was Israel planting in Hosea’s day?

Israel has become a negative example to us as to what to avoid. We find in the text **four disastrous seeds of rebellion** they are sowing in their Nation. **The first is the seed of false testimony,**

² To me they cry, “My God, we—Israel—know you.”

Notice the personal way they talk about God. They say, “My God!” They do not say, “Oh, Lord,” or “Great God,” but they say, “My God.” Then they say, “we know You.” That word “know” is a term associated with intimate, relational knowledge of a person, but do they truly know God and is their testimony genuine and authentic? The answer is, “No!”

^{3a} Israel has spurned the good...

That is God’s description, “You say you know Me, but you have spurned the good and the enemy shall pursue you.”

⁵ 1 Samuel 2:12

⁶ *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey.

Jesus Himself warns us against the seed of false testimony in Matthew 7. This is a huge danger for those who attend church weekly or who have grown up in a Christian home. We testify to that which we do not experience,

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

Israel spurned the good and they turned away from the good God communicated to them and in turning from righteousness they turned away from knowing God. Instead of knowing God they had forgotten Him,

^{14a} For Israel has forgotten his Maker...

What does this mean? Israel has not forgotten the Lord in the sense that they never mentioned Him or thought of Him or gathered together to worship Him. No, Israel thought of God a great deal. They often met together for worship, for sacrifices, and for singing. How did they forget God if they cried out, “We know You, O Lord.” They forgot God in the sense that they compartmentalized Him, they marginalized Him, and they set Him off in the periphery of their life. They gave Him a few hours of their attention and then they turned away to what they considered to be important matters of life. They chased after this world’s peace and prosperity instead of God to make them happy. They included other gods in their worship. They trusted other nations for protections. They satisfied their sexual desires outside of God’s Law. God was given a religious nod, but then ignored in the things which were truly important to them.

Do we do this today? Do we forget God in the sense that we marginalize Him and set Him off in the outer edges of our life, that the place at the center, which is the place filled with that we consider really important, is devoid of God Himself? I say, “Yes, we do!” We forget God when we begin to live the bulk of our life without using our time and our energy for His glory. We forget God when we find reasons that excuse us from obeying Him. We forget God when we let a boyfriend or girlfriend, child or spouse lead us into sin. We forget God when we love money or power or success or family or self or sex instead of loving God. We forget God when we faithfully read our text books, our magazines, our e-mails, and the news but we do not read His Word. We forget God when we are excited about our jobs, our cars, our houses, our hobbies, our television shows we watch, but we do not have time to invest in serving Him. We forget God when we sign up to serve in the PTA, the JFL, the Race for the Cure and a hundred other worthy and noble organizations, but we have no time to invest in Good News Clubs, in Women’s Pregnancy Centers, or Sunday school classes, or a host of any other kinds of ministries which advance the name of Jesus through His Gospel.

The danger is this: God becomes the forgotten God when He is pushed to the edges of our life instead of being the very center. I have to ask, “Is this me? Have I forgotten God? Is it possible I am sowing seeds of forgetfulness toward God?” What a whirlwind will be reaped in such a life.

I repeat God’s message of warning because I love you and I desire your present and eternal joy. I do not wish for any one to be overcome and over ridden by guilt or fear, but I wish you to be overcome and over ridden by a sense of the glory of God in your life and how awesome and magnificent His grace and wisdom and eternity and loving kindness and righteousness and sovereignty and goodness is. When we know Him, we love Him and this people had lost the knowledge of God so they did not love Him and they did not give themselves to Him. David writes, in Psalm 27,

⁴ One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

That is a person who knows God and who does not forget Him. He is not being driven by guilt or out of the fear of consequences. He is being driven out of the beauty of God.

The second disastrous seed of rebellion is the seed of idol worship,

^{4a} They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not.

In other words, Israel did not consult God when they considered who would rule over them. They chose leaders for themselves who suited their own criteria. There are two applications to be drawn from this. First, consult God when voting in new leaders for our community and for our country. Choose candidates on the basis of God's holiness. Vote for elected leaders with God's glory as our top priority. Do not vote for the person who promises to make our life easier and give us various benefits, whatever the benefits may be. Vote with the worship of God in view. This is Israel did not do that. They did not choose leaders who would bring glory to Him.

Second, choose spiritual leaders for your self with God's qualifications in view. Do not choose spiritual leaders to fit some criteria you happen to personally enjoy: they may be witty, they may be inspiring, they may be attractive, they do not offend.

When I was in Texas I asked a new family how they decided to come to Countryside Church, the church in which I was the youth pastor. "Oh," they said, "we let our fifteen year old son decide that for us. We visited churches and we told him, 'Whatever church you like, that is the church we are going to.'" On my inside, I thought, "Are you kidding me!?!? You are allowing your fifteen year old son to use whatever criteria he happens to have to determine who your spiritual leaders are? Are you kidding me?" That is what the Nation of Israel is doing, "Let us choose some criteria that is pleasing to us as opposed to thinking of God's glory and of His sovereign authority,"

^{4b} With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. ⁵ I have spurned your calf, O Samaria... ⁶ For it is from Israel; a craftsman made it; it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.

I believe Samaria is a reference to all of Israel and the calf is the reference to the idol they formed to the image of God into a calf and used it for worship. It had a stamp on it, "Made in Israel." Israel made some calf to use in their worship of God.

Keep in mind, in the midst of this false worship, they did not abandon God and His worship altogether. They simply twisted their worship. The sin in their worship was very subtle to the point many did not think any part of it. That is how idolatry often happens in the midst of God's people. They thought to themselves, "Anything that aids us in worship..."

How did they value whether or not their worship was true? It was on the basis of their feelings. If they left the assembly after worship and felt closer to God, they said, "Man, that was a great worship hour. Having that calf there really caused us to feel as though we were really close to God. We love that calf because that helps us to think of God as being really powerful and really mighty." There was only one big problem. Commandment Two was the problem,

Exodus 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God..."

The principle we learn is one does not have to become conscience of idol worship in order to engage in idol worship. We can believe we are worshipping God when, in fact, we are worshipping our self, our feelings, our prosperity, our fleshly pleasures, our worldly success.

The third disastrous seed of rebellion is the seed of ungodly reliance,

⁸ Israel is swallowed up; already they are among the nations as a useless vessel.

This is such an incredible principle. Our worth is tied to our worship of the true and Living God. We do not apart from our connection with the Lord.

Some may collect baseball cards. Certain baseball cards are worth a lot of money. For instance, a 1952 Mickey Mantle card is worth almost \$300,000.00. A 1909 Honus Wagner baseball card is worth \$2,800,000.00. Those are pieces of paper with ink on them. What gives those pieces of paper that much worth? It is its connection to Honus Wagner, one of the first baseball greats. It is not the paper and it is not the ink. It is the connection to the person.

What gives us value? It is not anything we have rolling through our self, as awesome as we may be. What gives us value? It is our connection to the eternal, sovereign, Living God in worship. That is why it is said we are a useless vessel, a piece of pottery to be chunked aside,

⁹ For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone; Ephraim has hired lovers. ¹⁰ Though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up. And the king and princes shall soon writhe because of the tribute.

Israel is a prostitute who actually has to pay her lovers. Is that not interesting? Think of how desperate a condition God is describing. Israel is afraid of an invasion and of being conquered. In fear they decide to make some alliances with Egypt, but then they decide to make alliances with Assyria. In relying upon other nations for protection, they spurn God. Fear tempts us to find sources of help and securing which are outside of Him.

Does fear ever tempt us to look outside of God for provision and shelter? I know it does me. Fear is an incredible motivator. For instance, a single man fears loneliness and runs to illicit relationships for shelter. A business woman fears bankruptcy and runs to unethical practices for shelter. A diseased man fears death and runs to the false gospel of Benny Hinn and fake healers for shelter. A teen fears ridicule from friends and runs to conformity with the world for shelter.

When we are afraid we should know Satan is right around the corner, using our fear to tempt us toward an ungodly reliance upon false saviors. God cares that we rely upon Him and not on anything or anyone else to find our security and our significance. The Prophet Isaiah writes,

Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the LORD!

Psalms 20:7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

That is our conviction. We will sow seeds of faith, not seeds of destruction with these ungodly alliances and relying upon others outside of God for protection and provision.

The fourth disastrous seed of rebellion is the seed of religious hypocrisy,

¹¹ Because Ephraim has multiplied altars for sinning, they have become to him altars for sinning.

Israel's problem is not that she did not have enough religion. Israel's problem is that they lack true religion. The more religion multiplied, the more the people sinned. They continued in all of the external forms of religion, but they neglected two necessary components: faith and repentance.

External religion always leads us away from the Lord if it is not accompanied by genuine faith and repentance. That is why it is so dangerous to go to church. If we do not go to church with a heart of faith and repentance, our presence in church can actually lead us away from the Lord rather than toward Him. We damage our soul through religious forms if they are not accompanied by sincere faith, and this makes us ask the question: Why do I attend church on Sunday morning? God's purpose for us being here is that we would come with a humble heart, ready to confess sin, ready to give praise to the Lord, ready to learn more from His Truth, His Word, and His Gospel, ready to share God's love with others.

God designs the assembly of His people to be an incredible blessing to our life, but if we come to gather together for selfish purposes, to connect with business associates, to check off the religion box that we got that out of the way this week, or to please some family member because grandma or mom or brother or sister expected us to be there, if we come to church with those things in view we actually damage our soul.

The answer to the problem is not to stop coming to church and gathering together. No, the answer to that problem is to simply say, "God, You are giving me this as a gift to bring joy and peace and righteousness into my soul and I need that. When I come I am going to come with Your purpose in view. I am going to grab onto You in faith

and I am going to humble myself before You and repent of my sin,”

¹² Were I to write for him my laws by the ten thousands, they would be regarded as a strange thing.

What an indictment! God took such care to write the revelation of Himself in a book so we would know Him, who He is, and what He is about. He used human authors, but the words in His Book are His words and not man's. Do we ever find the Bible strange and unfamiliar? I believe God is calling us to read His Word with a mind to understand and a heart to worship.

Moms and dads, let me give to you a word. Do not let this Book be strange to you and do not let it be strange to your children. The future harvest of your life, and your children's life, depends upon this Book becoming very, very familiar, so familiar it seems as though it is a part of you. I know this commitment to read Scripture with children, explain it, and talk about it and live it out is one of the most difficult and perhaps frustrating commitments God asks us to do.

I had three boys and thank the Lord they are all healthy and very active. Do you know how hard it is to corral three boys for a time of family worship? It is hard. It is one of the hardest things I have done in my life. The moment I got everyone together, one of them wanders off, “Where are you going?” Then, while I am talking to him another wanders off, “I am just trying to lead the family. What is going on?” By that time the whole spirit of the thing is messed up because I am frustrated, “LET'S WORSHIP THE LORD NOW!!!” I know it is hard, but if we get on the right side of sowing we will reap a harvest that is unbelievable in its joy.

Each one of us will have a harvest. What will your harvest be?

Someone may ask, “Pastor, what do I do if I recognize I have sown the seeds of false testimony, of idol worship, of ungodly reliance, or religious hypocrisy?” There are two applications. First, repent of past sowing. Sow no more seeds of the flesh. Seek God's mercy for the past and move forward in repentance. There is always hope when we are with the Lord.

Second, begin sowing to the Spirit in faith. Believe God. Believe His Word. Count Him as precious. Look to Him for your joy. Live in the light of His pleasure.

Further, in Hosea 10, he turns this sowing and reaping from a negative to a positive, and what a word of encouragement he gives to us,

¹² Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

We need to break up that fallow ground of pride that keeps us from experiencing the joy of God's harvest. This is my prayer for each one of us.