Gal. 6:6-10; Matthew 25:14-30; Sowing and Reaping I. How we Sow II. When we Reap III. Who Benefits

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, soon the farmers will be in the field once again. We are drawing near to the season of planting- which sets the stage for our sermon today. As you know, planting takes time, and it requires patience. It is also true that getting good seeds to grow takes more effort than letting the weeds grow. For example, I have been working on my lawn these past weeks. I planted some grass seed and I continue to water that seed. But try as I might, those dandelions and clovers keep coming back every year. Weed and their seeds spread widely and grow quickly while the good seed grows slowly and only with much effort. So also the seed that is sown corresponds to the final product. As we return to Gal. 6, Paul continues to compare and contrast the two ways of life. Those who produce the works of the flesh and those who produce the fruit of the Spirit. But this week, Paul is going to bring us to the end result. What is the consequence- what will we reap if we live to the flesh and what will we reap if we live to the Spirit. So today we consider this theme: Jesus Christ calls us to sow wisely as we look to the future.

**I. How we Sow**

In our first point we consider this life of sowing. Now children, sowing here is not done with a needle and thread, but rather sowing a kind of planting that was very common to the Israelite people. So Jesus is using a farming illustration. Your life is compared to a farmer who is going out to plant his seed. The ground has already been prepared, and instead of using a planter this farmer simply takes the seed out of his bag and drops it into the furrow. But the question is, what kind of seed will this farmer use? And that is really the pressing application of this first point. Do you know what kind of seed your life is planting? There are only two kinds of seed- fleshly seed and Spiritual seed. You can sow to the flesh or sow to the Spirit as v. 8 says. Building upon what we learned in 5:19, the works of the flesh are evident. So if you sow to the flesh, you are using your time, talents and treasures to satisfy and enjoy these fleshly, fallen and wicked things. So using your money to pay the wages of a prostitute- spending your time reading the horoscopes- living your life with the present world alone in view. You are supporting the culture of this world- sowing the seeds of destruction for others to eat. That is how a person can sow to the flesh. There is an emphasis on this world- using your money and talents to satisfy the cravings of your fallen flesh or taking advantage of others. Working for the things of this world alone. Seeking temporary pleasure and the passing delights of this life. While others live their life sowing to the Spirit. These kinds of farmers spend their time, talents and treasures pursuing spiritual things- things that have lasting value- and looking for a spiritual reward. These kinds of people have their eyes fixed on the Spiritual life. Using their earthly lives in the pursuit of spiritual things. Those who sow to the Spirit use their time and gifts with a future goal in mind. Specifically they seek to do good as v. 9 and 10 state. True good- that which is done for God’s glory, works that come from a heart of faith and are done to truly benefit others. So Paul starts by putting a clear contrast before us. The seed of the flesh or the seed of the Spirit. The works of this world or the works of the world to come. This calls for great discernment- do you know what kind of farmer you are? What kind of seed are you sowing in your life? It is not uncommon to hear people talking about a young person sowing their wild oats. But this is a very dangerous thing! What is your life working towards? What benefit do you seek? Physical or Spiritual? To give one specific example. Money is just a tool- neither good nor bad. But how you use your money- what you support with your money- that use of the money can turn that dollar into a thistle seed or a wheat seed! It depends how you use it! So Paul is using the sowing of seed in the farmer’s life to compare and contrast two very different goals in life. But we also find a difference here as well. Farmers usually plant only one crop and then harvest that crop. But here we find that sowing is a lifelong task. We do not finish our planting until our earthly life ends. We will not see the end result of our sowing until we arrive at the time of final harvest! Every action, every word, every thought is a seed we sow. Each will receive its due.

**II. When we Reap**

So Paul continues, you reap what you sow as v. 7 says. You cannot fool God- He sees what kind of seed you are using and He will reward you accordingly when the harvest time arrives! Not only do the seeds themselves carry the reward within them- God as the Judge of all the earth will do what is right! He will give to each according to their labor. So those who sow to the flesh- those who sow the seeds of selfishness, division, sensually, sorcery, anger and strife- these will reap the reward of corruption as v. 8 says. Now to be clear, there are consequences that those who live to the flesh will have to bear in this life. A life of selfishness and anger will bring a life of conflict and pain in this world to be sure. But Paul is looking further ahead. Those who sow to the flesh will reap corruption. The word corruption means decay and something that will perish. In the eternal sense, this means that those who live to the fleshly desires in this life will suffer the consequences of eternal destruction and lasting death in the life to come. This truly is a bitter pill- a bitter harvest! If you sow to the wind, you will reap the whirlwind a Hosea 8 says. Nothing good will come to those who sow to their fleshly desires and give in to their fallen flesh. However, those who sow to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit as v. 8 concludes. Notice here that good works are not only the fruit of a Christian life, they are also the seed that a Christian plants! The seed is the good works that we sow- our obedience to the commands of God- our works done in faith and gratitude are the seeds that will bring blessings. Now to be clear, Jesus is not saying that we will earn eternal life. He is not saying that our works will merit our salvation. However, there is clear promise of reward that Jesus is making! As we found in the parable of the talents, God blesses those who use His gifts rightly! To make the same point in our illustration, who gives us the good seed to plant? Who causes that good seed to grow? Who rewards that work that is performed with a heart of faith? The good seed is a fruit of the Spirit- it is Spiritual seed that the Holy Spirit gives. He gives us the will and the way- and the glory of it all is that God sees fit to reward us for doing the good that He enables us to do! He rewards us for planting the good seed that He gave us! So God’s people are committed to using their Spiritual gifts with an eye toward the future. Not only blessing others in this life as we will see in our next point, but also looking forward to the reward that God promises to us in the future as well. The result of the sowing is a harvest that comes later- and that harvest is eternal life. We reap what we sow- and God’s people will reap eternal life! Here again we see that the harvest comes later! The result of our work is not always seen immediately! These good works go on before us- the reward waiting for us! Note again the encouragement of v. 9- in due season you will reap. So do not give up- do not grow weary of doing good! The long delay between planting and harvesting should not discourage the farmer- but rather we can wait for the harvest with joyful expectation! So don’t give up- God sees the work you do by faith! He sees the seed that you are sowing- and He will not forget! The reward is delayed- not forgotten! It will surely come! Or as Heb. 6:10 puts it, God will not overlook your work and the love that you showed in serving the saints. So like the farmers of the soil, there is a delayed reward. The seed takes time to produce a harvest- and we are given the years of our earthly life to sow good seed. But rest assured, the harvest is coming! The reward that God promises His people will be seen! He will say to those who sowed good seed- well, done good and faithful servants! Come enter into the joy of your master! Eternal life is the promised harvest reserved for those who loved and obeyed the Lord.

**III. Who Benefits**

In our last point we now consider who it is that benefits from this good seed that we sow? Who is to benefit from the good works that we do on earth? We have already seen that we benefit- we are ones who enjoy the Spiritual reward for sowing Spiritual seed. But we notice that not only do we benefit, but others clearly benefit as well when we sow to the Spirit. Good is done to all when we sow Spiritual seed! So as v. 10 instructs, do good to all. The word for good here is the word for benefit- to bring blessing and good. It is beneficial work- that blesses those who receive it. And the recipients of this good is clear- to all. Do good to all. Everyone- every person that God places in your path is a worthy recipient of your kindness. Do good as much as you opportunity to do. As you have time, according to your seasons and ability. God gives us eyes to see and hearts to understand how best to serve others- to seize the opportunities he gives us. We do the good as He has prepared in advance for us to perform as Eph. 2 puts it. We need not feel guilty that we cannot help everyone. For the poor we will always have with us. And we should think carefully how we help- so that our actions really do benefit and not cause further harm. As we have opportunity and for the benefit of others means that there will be limits on what we can and should do. For example, giving cash to people who will do evil with that money is not wise. It takes wisdom to know the best way to help. So we are to do good to all- and especially to those who are of the household of faith as v. 10 concludes. There is primary focus placed upon doing good within the context of the church. There is an emphasis on supporting Chrisitan ministries and using your gifts for the good of fellow brothers and sisters. Not that we should ignore those outside the church, but the emphasis and focus rightly starts within the communion of the saints. This is because the church is called to do something that no other ministry or organization can do. There are lots of non-profits in the world that help the homeless and give food to the poor. But only the church can be the place where the gospel is proclaimed. One way to apply this fact would be to make sure that church plants and the local budget of the church are supported before supporting the local food pantry for example. So the primary focus given here is that God’s people place an emphasis and priority on the local church and mission work; and after that turn our attention to other ministries. A Christian’s primary allegiance is to the Kingdom of God and the needs of the saints. This emphasis on the church is already seen back in v. 6 where those who are blessed by the preaching are called to bless the one who teaches. To be clear, the gospel ministry and the preaching of the word are completely dependent on the support of God’s people. In other words, if the local members of the church do not support the work and ministry of that church with their gifts, the presence of that church in the community is in jeopardy. So do good to all men, but especially do good to the people who are of the household of faith. Perhaps it is helpful to view your life in concentric circles. You start by doing good with in the home and then the local church is supported. After that we move to evangelism, missions and church plants. And then we can support the broader ministries and works of mercy in the community. In this way, good works that benefit God’s people and the community are both performed.

As we close, imagine for a moment that your life is a field. As you walk around in this field of your life, what kind of plants do you see? Do you see weeds that have grown up from wicked seeds you have sown? Its time to repent and pull out those weeds! Do you see good and beneficial plants maturing in the sun? Rejoice and thank God for His Spiritual seeds He has given you. As Rom. 2 confirms, God gives to each one according to his works. You cannot fool God- He sees what kind of seed you plant! He knows what kind of work you are doing! Supporting the gospel ministry and doing good is the sowing of seed that holds rewards for eternity. While sowing seeds to the flesh and rebelling against God will lead to eternal damnation and corruption. Jesus Christ calls us to sow wisely as we look to the future. So let us each work in the field today- for the harvest is coming! May our work be done in gratitude for the salvation that we have received- working for the glory of God and for the good of our fellow man.