

You may look at that tiny two-inch seedling and then raise your eyes to imagine what it will become in due time – a mighty mango tree that has weathered the storms of life.



It is during such moments that you start recognizing the marvellous mighty power of life that is held captive in every little seed, but is released the moment it touches the soil.

You may stand facing a garden in which row after row of corn is thriving, promising a rich harvest. What hard work has already been put into that piece of land – digging the soil, removing stones, fencing the garden, planting, longing and praying for rain, weeding and watching. What potential lies in this garden! Yet, what great efforts are still required until this garden yields a plentiful harvest.

The Bible often uses sowing and reaping, the growing of plants, rich harvest or the lack of fruit as a picture to teach us God-given principles for our spiritual life.

The wisest of all farmers

A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown (Matthew 13:3-8).

In this parable Jesus speaks of a farmer who didn't keep back his seed, but sowed richly, knowing that only plentiful sowing yields a rich harvest.

While sowing, some of the seed fell on a pathway and was eaten up by birds. Other seed fell on unprepared soil. It germinated quickly, but the tender roots soon touched underlying rock and the plant withered away the moment the sun came up. Again other seed fell among thorns, grew up, but was choked by the quickly growing weeds.

Finally – it is here that you and I find hope and a wonderful purpose for our lives - Jesus speaks of seed that fell on fertile soil, grew and yielded a rich harvest.

God – the farmer

Jesus himself explains the meaning of this parable. The farmer is God himself. In sacrificial love he sows his Word – it is the Good News of Jesus Christ who is the one and only Saviour, mighty to save us from eternal condemnation, mighty to forgive our sins and mighty to set us free from every bondage of sin and of Satan.

There is nothing as powerful as the word of God. We can find this powerful seed in the Bible. Life sprouts from the seed of God's word, *"In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us ..."* (Ephesians 1:7-8).



The pathway and the birds

Have you ever been tempted the moment you leave a Christian meeting? The targets of the evil one are the very words of God sent to save, sent to teach and reveal to us more of Jesus Christ and his will for our lives. Our heart must be well prepared to receive the word of God – meaning: we listen carefully and are willing to put into practice what we have heard – otherwise the devil

tempts us to make us forget immediately what we have heard. This can happen through *'meaningless' and 'godless chatter'* (2 Tim. 2:16), *'foolish talk or coarse joking'* (Eph. 5:4), *envious comparison with others* (Psalm 73), only to mention a few tactics Satan uses.

Rocky ground and the scourging sun

Have you ever heard God speaking to you? With great joy you took off in obedience to God. You experienced the joy of growth and revival, the thrill of springs of living water flowing up and over to others. Then you recognized people pointing a finger at you, you let yourself be put down by their contemptuous criticism and backbiting. What hurt you most was the sarcastic mockery of fellow Christians who had chosen to be content with a boring life of mediocrity, but were eager enough to discourage others like you, who were serving the Lord with gladness. You allowed your faith to be scorched. Here you are – you find yourself embittered and spiritually dry ...

Jesus said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last" (John 15:16).



What harvest will such a life yield? Is it worth remaining in such spiritual dryness?

Thorns that thrive and choke

You may have experienced the goodness of the Lord in the past. Through listening to the word of God, through your taking first steps of faith you may have experienced quick growth. Unfortunately, somewhere down the track you allowed sorrows to creep into your heart. You got trapped by the love of money and all the vanishing pleasures it can buy. Here you find yourself, self-centred as you are, choked in luxury but empty of God.

Can this really be all life has to offer you?



Our heart – a field for rich harvest

Dear friend, listen to what God's ultimate purpose for your life is!

It is certainly not a weary life of hard work, never ending sorrows or saddest self-betrayal, renouncing earthly wealth and fame. God's word says,

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened (Matthew 11:28).

... Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters ... Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? ... Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live (see Isaiah 55)

... I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10,10

This is why God doesn't get tired of 'sowing' into your life. He sends his saving, restoring, and reviving word to you in order that you may find the life worth living which he has prepared for you. He keeps investing into you as his creation, because he has designed you for the main purpose of reflecting his very image, of glorifying his name and of being a blessing to others.

Like the seedling at the beginning – God doesn't promise us a life without problems and ever lasting 'sunshine'. Many Christians can tell of awkward circumstances and 'severe storms' of trials and hardship God had allowed in their lives. Some still ponder over unanswered questions. But many can testify that these adversities haven't crushed them. No. God used them in order to enrich their lives, cause growth and produce a rich harvest of lasting fruit which in return glorifies their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

What is the key to a life of abundance?

Jesus sums it up in these short words:

listen, understand and accept.

- Receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour of your life.
- Believe that Jesus, the Son of God, when dying on the cross of Calvary, took upon himself all the punishment of sin you would have deserved.

- Receive forgiveness for all your sins through faith in the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus.
- Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ you may now walk in the newness of life and victory. Through Him there is power to overcome sin.
- Get rid of all the vanity this world keeps offering you, everything you know, which constantly hinders you from

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22).



bearing fruit for God.

- Reach out for a life of submission to God's plan and purpose for your life.
- Find fulfilment in unreserved service, making known the Good News of Jesus Christ to others.

Simon Beer



Sowing and Reaping in my Life



Plants – a picture of growth

Did it ever happen to you that you stopped, stooped down and pondered over a little seedling that had just germinated? You were amazed how fragile the little plant looked. You may have wondered how such a little thing was able to penetrate the soil that looked everything else than fertile.

