

## **Bringing in the Sheaves** (Psalm 126)

“Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,  
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve;  
Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.  
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves;  
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.”

The hymn "Bringing In the Sheaves" was written by Knowles Shaw and it finds its roots in the 126th Psalm which is a promise of restoration for Israel after her captivity in Babylon. God would turn again to bless Israel and many captives would return to the land. This return was comparable to a farmer bringing in the sheaves or bundles of his harvest which were bound together stalks of wheat or grass.

This song was composed in wondrous gratitude for God’s restoration of His people to the land and in prayerful weeping for a furtherance of this work. There are various aspects of missions we could talk about, but I’d like to talk about missions as it relates to seeing people saved. In this study, I want to look at some biblical principles we can derive from this passage and apply them to missions and a harvest of lost souls. This psalm can keep us mission’s minded and possessing a burden for the lost and unsaved who are going to hell. As the remnant of Jews returned to the land (comparable to sheaves), so we need to pray for a harvest (reaping) of souls or sheaves today as we evangelize, pray, and weep for them.

Missions begins with a burden. A burden to reach people for Christ. A burden to see a harvest of precious sheaves or souls out of lost humanity. Jesus taught in Matthew 9:37-38: “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” In reality, you and me as God’s people are to be like spiritual combines bringing in the sheaves or the harvest.

The Jewish people were held in Babylonian captivity for many years but now they were returning to the land. A great harvest was occurring of returning Jewish exiles.

Historically this happened after Israel's captive, but this Psalm also prophetically anticipates (envisions) when this will occur once again when a newly saved harvest of God's Jewish saints returns to the land of Israel for the Millennium.

We can certainly find some principles in this Psalm regarding our mandate of missions and bringing in the sheaves – a harvest of saved souls. When the sheaves or bundles of harvest are brought in before the winter comes the farmer rejoices in God's goodness and faithfulness. The harvest is a time of rejoicing. It's a time of blessing. In a similar way, when we see a harvest of saved souls, we can rejoice and be glad in what God is doing. This is what Psalm 126 is talking about. A time of rejoicing in the harvest.

Do we really want a harvest? If so, are we willing to pay the price in our personal lives and church ministry to bring in the sheaves?

Psalm 126:1-6

“When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

Once again, Psalm 126 is a picture of Israel returning to her homeland from her days of captivity and as Israel returned David described it as a time of great harvest and blessing from God! The blessing of God upon the people was like living out a dream (read vs. 1). The “sheaves” (bundles of grain – vs. 6) are referencing the returning Israelites from their Babylonian captivity. The sheaves were actually a fresh crop of Jewish people returning to the land.

The people returned from their time of captivity was comparable to a farmer “Bringing in the Sheaves” - bringing in a good harvest. It was comparable to a farmer gathering in his crops, his sheaves of wheat, and rejoicing in a plentiful harvest. The people returning to the land to help rebuild the city and temple was a sure sign of God's blessing.

By way of application, if we want to see a harvest of souls (people being saved), we need to get down on our knees, sow some tears, pay the price, and then rejoice in the harvest! This is what Psalm 126 is talking about. Bringing in the sheaves (bringing in the harvest) involves preparation and tears.

Every church should believe that the Lord has some exciting days ahead for their church ministry when it comes to seeing God blessing them with a harvest of lost souls. We don't want to be caught unprepared. We want to be ready and part of the time of blessing that God wants to bring upon our own church ministries.

Missions involves harvesting the souls of lost humanity.

There are three principles related to this harvesting: Dreaming, Weeping, Reaping.

### **1. Dreaming (we must dream the dream!) – 1-4**

The first principle we must learn is that we must dream about a harvest of lost souls coming to Christ and being saved. We must have a vision for it!

Psalm 126:1

“When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.”

According to Psalm 126, there are specific times when God chooses to work in special ways within our own personal lives, and even a church ministry, when the lives of people are gloriously changed by the Gospel. This is clearly seen in the words within this Psalm “When the LORD turned again” (vv. 1a and 4) to restore them to the land. God wants to turn His blessing upon us once again in relation to seeing the lives of people changed through the Gospel message. He wants to bless us with a harvest of souls. If this is ever going to happen it will be because the Lord turned His blessing upon us once again, giving us the privilege to lead someone to Christ and see them saved.

In Matthew 9:38 we discover the God is “the Lord of the harvest.” This means that God is the real soulwinner! He is the one who convicts and convinces people who are lost for their need for salvation. We are just the vessels God uses. If we are going to see people saved the LORD (the Lord of the harvest) must turn again to bless us with these souls. There is no harvest without God's spiritual intervention in the lives

of people, without the movement of God, without the working of the Spirit in the lives of people.

“Turn again our captivity” (vs. 4). God knows how to turn the tables! He can take us out of a hole (like His people were in) and bring us into a time of blessing! The psalmist is praying that the LORD would complete the restoration of His people to the land. We need to be praying that the Lord would save souls again! The Psalmist compared the returning exiles to “as streams in the south” (vs. 4). This is a figure of speech that is comparing the people coming out of Assyria to flowing streams of water. They probably are referring to the streams in the desert, which is south of Judah. In the dry season these streams would have little or no water but in the rainy season they would overflow their banks.

The imagery is this. Under God’s streams of blessing the highways would be full of returning captives. The changed lives of people, as they returned to the land are compared to an overflowing riverbank. You know, sometimes the banks begin to overflow with God’s refreshing water! When God brings His showers of blessing upon us, we begin to experience the overflowing abundance of His generosity. For instance, when we begin to see new families and people come into a church ministry and see the lives of people changed through the Gospel, we begin to the streams flowing and experience God’s showers of blessing. When we see souls saved and God beginning to do wonderful things in our own personal lives and churches, we know that the Lord wants to bless us.

God wants to turn again and bless our churches and lives in remarkable ways! Do we really believe this? Do we want it? Do we want the blessing? God “turned again” to bless His people (Ps. 126:1,4).

Job 42:10 says something similar:

“And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.”

The Lord at any moment can turn to us and begin to bless our lives and churches in amazing ways! What was true of Israel historically will be true of Israel in the future (Ezekiel 16:53, 55). God will turn again to bless Israel! God is not finished with His people! But I’m thankful He is not finished with us either! He is ready to turn again His favor and blessing upon us! God is not finished with us! God is not finished with

you! He wants to use us in His service which includes witnessing to people and seeing others saved.

The Devil might want us to think that God is done blessing and that we have lived beyond God's blessing! Don't believe it! Since when do we believe the devil? Listen, God is ready to turn His blessing and favor upon you once again! He wants to do some great things in your life and church ministry. If we will yield to Him and if we are willing to pay the price (working hard, praying, and shedding some tears) God will bless us once again in many ways!

God is always working. He is always doing something in the hearts and lives of people. But sometimes God chooses to work and move in special ways at special times in our personal lives and within our church ministries. Are we ready for the blessing? Are we ready to bring in a harvest? Do we believe that there can be a harvest? Do we want the blessing of bringing in the sheaves?

"When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion (returning His people to the land), we were like them that dream." DREAMING! Yes, there are times when He wants to bring great reaping into our personal lives and church ministries. In fact, the blessing is so wonderful that it's like we are living out an unbelievable dream. We are in dreamland! You know, in one sense, we must first dream the dream (possess the true vision of seeing people saved) and then we will be ready to experience the dream! We were like them that dream!

The implication here is this. When God begins to bless and bring in a spiritual harvest it's comparable to a dream. It's almost unimaginable! It's unbelievable but exciting. We sometimes say, "I cannot believe this is happening." Yes, believe it! Nothing is too hard for God!

Exodus 36:5-7 reveals the way God can bless:

"And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much."

In building the tabernacle God moved in the hearts of His people and supplied the needs to such a degree that Moses has to tell the people to stop giving! This is the dream of every preacher, but in this instance, it was really happening! It was a reality! When God decides to bless in wonderful ways, He will always supply the needs and we will experience the joy and fruit of His blessing upon our personal lives and ministries.

The times of blessing sometimes follow a time of drought, difficulty, and defeat. This was true in Israel's experience. I've discovered that God sometimes uses the hard times to bring us to our knees and then brings times of refreshment into our personal lives and church ministry through seeing the lives of people changed.

"The Bible states: "we were like them that dreamed." Again, God's blessing was comparable to a dream. He was bringing His ancient people back to the land of Promise and Blessing. It was a great harvest, and it was like a dream come true! It was like an unbelievable dream! You see, when God begins to move, we begin to enter the land of dreams as we see God bless in wonderful ways. When the announcement reached the Jewish communities in exile, the people were electrified and ecstatic. The Persian King Cyrus had decreed that the captives could return to their land. It seemed almost too good to be true! As they gathered their few pitiful belongings together, they were like people walking around in a trance or a dream. It's almost too good to be true, but in this case, it was true! God had decided to move and bless His people once again.

This was not a mirage in the desert. It's not a mocking trick played by the light. It really was happening! Some will say, "Surely we will wake up and find out that it was all a fanciful and fake dream." But not this time – not when God decides to bless! The enemy was no longer at the gate, Israel was freed from her captivity, and she was returning home! It was no dream!

The principle I want you to get from this first point is not hard to see. Dreaming is linked to the harvest. We must dream the dream of seeing a harvest of people saved. We must possess a real vision of wanting people to be saved and bringing in the sheaves! And when it happens, we will know that God has turned His blessing upon us! I'd rather live in a dream world, when it comes to God's blessing, than to live in a world that lacks vision for the future.

Some people say, “We are living in the last days. All hope is gone. Let’s pack our bags, put on white capes, wait for Jesus to return, and give up the ship. Nothing will save us now.” Their message is all gloom and doom. But let us remember that God chooses to often work in the hearts and lives of people during times of distress and upheaval. We might be living in the last days, but we can still live in the land of God’s blessing! These are exciting days to be living. God wants to do great things, new things, fresh things, and exciting things in our midst and within our own personal lives, even when there is ongoing wickedness and wokeness going on in this world. One of the blessings God wants to bring is a harvest of souls!

We were like them that dreamed! Did you ever have a dream and didn’t want to wake up? I remember one dream that I had. It was a dream that I did not want to awake from. I was in an ice-cream shop where I could choose any flavor ice-cream that I wanted and eat as much ice-cream as I wanted (milkshakes, chocolate fudge sundaes, Dairy Queen blizzards, banana splits). I could eat the ice-cream whenever I wanted it, and here is the good news, all the ice-cream was free! This must have been one of those dreams that takes us back to our childhood days! If we were honest, we probably all had dreams that we wanted to keep dreaming, instead of waking up facing another day of reality and work.

The Bible is teaching a very important principle here. Sometimes we must dream the dream! It’s a dream about God bringing His blessing upon our personal lives and church ministry. It’s a dream (vision) of seeing people saved – bringing in a harvest (the sheaves). We often think of a dream as something that is unreal. However, when it comes to vision for a church, God blessing our ministries, and seeing souls saved, I believe we must have vision and dream the dream! We must believe we are living at a time where God wants to bless our church ministries and do some wonderful things in our own personal lives and the lives of others as they respond to the Gospel and are saved.

Unless we dream the dream, we probably won’t experience God’s blessing! Unless we get out of our ecclesiastical castles and start praying, crying out, shedding a few tears, and looking ahead for God’s blessing; we probably won’t get it.

God brings in the harvest and we live out our dream of seeing souls saved!

## A. The result of God bringing in the harvest

### ➤ Gladness (vs. 2a) – “laughter”

Our dreaming and blessing results in great joy. Israel’s return to the land was a time of gladness after a period of sadness and difficulty. Great joy always accompanies God’s rich blessing! It’s a time when God’s people shout for joy as they see God doing great things in the lives of His people. As we see God bless us, we should naturally pass-through times of wonderful joy.

The joy that the returning remnant of Jews experienced after their time of exile is but a prelude and picture of the final joy Israel will experience when a newly redeemed remnant (harvest) of Jews return to the land for the Millennial Kingdom.

Isaiah 35:10

“And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

The harvest brings gladness to our souls!

When God abundantly blesses our lives and church ministries great joy should accompany this blessing. Times of refreshment and joy are the result of God moving in our heart and the hearts and lives of others! When God brings in the harvest it calls for celebration! By the way, if I go into a church where there is no joy and life I wonder if the people are part of the “First Church of the Deep Freeze” pastored by Jack Frost.

### ➤ Singing - “tongue with singing” (2b)

Our dreaming and blessing also results in singing! Singing comes from an overflowing heart of joy and gratitude for the harvest (what God is doing – how He is blessing). When we are seeing the lives of people changed by the Gospel – we have something to sing about! We should have a song in our hearts that makes its way out of our lips. Singing is a natural response and expression of praise to God for the great things He is doing!

John Philips said this about the returning captives:

“One would need to be a clod not to sing as the sealed gates of the city rolled open at last and the cooped-up people were set free to roam the surrounding hills as they wished.”

In a similar way, when the lost are saved, they are set free and there should be great rejoicing!

Psalm 137:3-4 says:

“For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?”

During Israel’s backsliding their songs ceased. The application is very clear. When we live in the strange land of sin, disobedience, and unbelief; we lose the songs of joy and praise. However, when we trust God for His blessing, and when we see God begin to move in our hearts and lives once again, the songs begin to reverberate and come flowing out of our lips. Such will be the case with a redeemed and returning Israel (God’s future harvest) to the land for the Millennial Kingdom.

Isaiah 51:11

“Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”

This will actually be a harvest of saved Jewish people returning to their homeland during the Kingdom. There will be great joy and singing when the harvest comes in! The practical lesson is this. We are to live on the joyful side of life – not the lemon side! Our lives should respond with joy and experience joy when we see God working in our personal lives and the lives of others in seeing people saved, their lives transformed, and serving the Lord.

“Come Thou fount of every blessing  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace  
Streams of mercy never ceasing  
Call for songs of loudest praise!”

## B. The response to the harvest

- The unsaved perspective: “The Lord hath done great things for them” (vs. 2c)

This is the reaction of the heathen or the unsaved Gentiles (Assyrians) toward Israel and what God was doing for them, as they were released from their captivity and returning to the land. “The Lord hath done great things for them” (vs. 2b). The pronoun (“them”) is referring to Israel and how the unsaved world was viewing Israel at this time. Even the heathen (Assyrians) took note when God was doing something wonderful in the hearts, lives, and ministries of His people. This reminds us that inadvertently or unintentionally, even the heathen people bring thanks and praise to God, when they talk about what God is doing in the lives of His people.

Israel’s return and blessing of the Lord was a tremendous testimony to the non-Jewish people. They seemed to sense that things happened for the Jews that could not be explained on the natural level. I wonder what our testimony is among the unsaved and heathen of this world? The world is waiting to see something extraordinary take place among the people of God – and it is not Christian Rock concerts, hippie music, tattoos, grotesque body piercings, and acting like the unsaved! The unsaved need to witness a true difference if their lives will be touched. It’s difference (not sameness) that makes a mark on the lives of the unsaved.

### Psalm 40:2-3

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.”

Many churches today are filled with nominal Christians at best who live and mimic the unsaved world in just about every way imaginable. The testimony of the unsaved toward God’s people should be this: “These people are different and God is blessing their lives. Something is different about them and what has happened to them is what I need!”

Charles Dickens had the right idea. The sour old miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, was changed over one night. He was seen hopping and skipping around in his bedroom on Christmas like a little schoolboy. He ordered the biggest turkey in town and sent it to poor Bob Cratchet. He went to bed miserable, but he woke up with joy bells ringing in his soul. This is the evidence of conversion, and this is what the world is waiting to see!

- The saved perspective: “The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad” (vs. 3a).

You will notice the change in pronouns. Now Israel is speaking to God and declaring what great things He has done for them! They are seen praising God with a heart of thanksgiving. They are praising God for His great work in the hearts of people’s lives and among their congregation. We should express the same kind of thanksgiving and gratitude today as we see God working in the hearts and lives of people. I am thankful for the harvest God has already given but I can’t wait for the next round! There are more sheaves coming! There is more blessing to be had!

Again, we must remember what God has done: “The Lord hath done!” Ultimately it is the Lord doing it! It is the Lord bringing the blessing. It’s the Lord bringing in the sheaves!

Psalm 127:1

“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it.”

The true blessing is not a manmade, manufactured, and manipulated. It’s not artificial! It’s not false fire! It’s the real fire! This is God changing the lives of people and bringing in His blessing and times of refreshment upon a church ministry and within our own personal lives. If anything of lasting value is going to take place – God will have to do it! And when people’s lives are truly being changed, we can only attribute the action to God.

Dr. Bob Cook once said:

“If you can explain what is happening – God didn’t do it.”

When God begins to really bless you can’t explain it! All you can do is drink it in! You know that God is working and doing great and marvelous things in the hearts

and lives of people. The Lord hath done great things for us! Let's give Him thanks today!

Psalm 92:1

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High."

Missions involves harvesting the souls of lost humanity. Dreaming is the first principle that we follow if we are going to see people saved. But there is also a price to pay.

## **2. Weeping (we must shed some tears) – 5-6**

The Bible says we are to "sow in tears" (vs. 5). We are reminded that "he that goeth forth and weepeth" (vs. 6) will bring in a harvest. The sowing in tears accompanies the planting of seed for the harvest to come. The tears are part of the sowing process and they are needed to bring in the harvest. The expression "sow in tears" (vs. 5) is linked to the "bearing (carrying) precious seed" (vs. 6). It's as if the writer is saying: the precious seed that really needs to be sown for the harvest of God's blessing are tears. Tears cannot be separated from the sowing of the seed; the tears need to be part of the sowing process, at the time the seed is put in the ground. Without tears we cannot have a harvest.

Someone said:

"Tears are a language that God understands."

Tears are the seeds that God uses to bring forth a harvest! Are we willing to sow tears so we can reap God's harvest of blessing? Ministry is not always easy! Too often we don't want to pay the price. We don't want to do what God tells us to do in order to see Him really bless! We want to take the easy path, but God says there is a path of tears, weeping, and begging that precedes the time of harvest and blessing.

The background of this sowing with tears is rather interesting. There was a certain sorrow or frustration connected with sowing seed for the first crop. Here is a farmer whose barrel of grain is low. He can use the grain to feed his family now or he can sow most of it in hope of an abundant supply in days to come. He decides to sow it,

but as he dips his hand into his apron and scatters the seed over the plowed land, his tears also fall into the apron and therefore mix with the spreading of the seed. He is thinking of his wife and children, of the skimpy bowls of porridge, of how sacrificially they will have to live in the days till harvest. He feels as if he is taking food out of their mouths. On the other hand, he looked ahead to the final harvest and the great blessing it would bring to himself and family.

The psalmist found encouragement in the principle of sowing and reaping. The setting in verses 5-6 is agricultural. After a piece of land has been neglected for a long period of time it becomes extremely hard to work. A lot of blood, sweat, and tears, a lot of hard work must go in to preparing the soil so a farmer can have a new harvest. The planting would be difficult, but persistence would bring in a future harvest.

This analogy of sowing and reaping is being applied to the hard spiritual work that the people did in encouraging a remnant of Jews to return to the land of blessing and to rebuild the ruins of Jerusalem and the temple. By way of application, the sowing of the Gospel seed involves a process of sowing and reaping. And tears and agonizing over the condition or plight of lost souls, wanting them to be saved, are sometimes associated with this sowing! The sowing with tears refers to agonizing over the work. In this context it would signify anything that someone did to help advance and rebuild God's earthly theocracy of Israel in that day, such as praying and encouraging the people to respond to the Lord, return to the land, and begin rebuilding God's work in the land of Israel.

The practical lesson is this. If a person is sowing the seed of the Gospel with tears they are bearing a burden and want to see God bless his work and change the lives of people with the Gospel. The burden is expressed through prayer, intercession, tears, and hard work. There were many tears shed in relation to Israel's return to the land and being reestablished in their homeland. In a similar way, there are many tears that need to be associated with a harvest of souls – in seeing people saved. Maybe we have lost sight of this in our days of sophistication over simplicity. We need to get back to simple things and tears are simple things! There were tears associated with a burden, tears associated with a vision, tears associated with prayers, tears associated with the spiritual plight of people, tears associated with a need for God to move and bless.

Sometimes it takes tears to get God's attention! Sometimes it takes tears to receive God's richest blessing. Like the farmer sowing seeds, while tears are falling into his apron, so we need to shed tears for people going to hell as we pray for them and as possess a burden and vision for their salvation. Sometimes tears come before the sheaves! Beloved, there has to be a time of sowing before reaping and tears are the seeds that God will often use!

2 Corinthians 9:6 gives an enduring principle:

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

This sowing of the Gospel seed involves much more than money. It can speak of sowing earnest prayer, hard work, and sacrificing our time for the work of the Lord and ministry. If we sow, we will reap the blessing!

Sowing in tears surely involves possessing a deep burden to see God bless and it involves the hard work of praying in a harvest. We must get on our knees and pray and begin to sow with tears, through the agony and hard work of prayer and encouraging others, if we are going to see God bless. It's not like we must walk around crying every day, but we must possess a broken heart over the lost and their eternal fate. We must get off our lazy boy chair and start praying with a real burden if we are going to see God bless. Satan wants to keep us from tearful prayers for he knows that it always moves the heart of God!

Someone said:

"And Satan trembles when he sees, the weakest saint upon his knees."

These expressions of "sowing in tears" and "he that goeth forth and weepeth" simply mean that we will agonize over the work through prayerful intercession, hard work, and when we do, we will see the true blessing of God. Are we willing to bear the burden and shed the tears? God wants our tears before our treasure; God wants our tears before our talents.

This is not shallow emotionalism! We are sometimes afraid of tears today, but someone needs to care if God is going to move in the hearts of His people again, and if people are going to be saved from hell and their lives changed. You see, the harvest is varied or manifold. It might include Christians getting right with God,

attending a local church, or souls getting saved who were on the brink of going to an everlasting hell.

Someone said:

“If Jesus shed His blood for us; surely we can shed some tears for others.”

We can shed tears for His blessing upon the work of God and for the souls of lost people. The Bible says, “Jesus wept.” He wept for a dead man (Lazarus) in John 11. He also wept over the city of Jerusalem and the lost estate of His people.

Luke 19:41

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.”

When was the last time you wept over some poor lost soul that was going to hell? If Jesus wept, cannot we weep? “He that goeth forth weeping” (bearing the burden, praying fervently with tears) will get the harvest. He did not say in Psalm 126, he that goeth forth with synthesizers and Christian Rock Bands, or he that goeth forth with pragmatic marketing techniques. No, he that goes forth with tears!

Many times, the trouble in ministry is that it is not watered by tears and deep burden for people. Years ago a visitor went to Dundee, Scotland, deeply concerned that his ministry was producing such meager results. He decided to visit the scene where years before the saintly Robert Murray McCheyne had ministered in such evident power of the Spirit of God.

McCheyne died at the age of thirty not before he had had moved Scotland. The visitor asked the old sexton (church maintenance man) at ST. Peter’s if he could tell him the secret of the amazing influence of Robert McCheyne. The old man led the young minister into the vestry. “Sit down there,” he said. “Now put your elbows on the table.” He did so. “Yes, that was the way McCheyne used to do it,” said the old man. “Now put your face in your hands.” The visitor obeyed. “Now let the tears flow!” “That was the way McCheyne used to do,” the old man said.

Friend, there is a time for weeping! There is a time for bearing the burden and shedding the tears so we might see God truly bless and see souls saved!

Someone has wisely said:  
“Winners of souls are first weepers for souls.”

Our prayer should be:

“Let me look on the crowd as my Savior did,  
Till my eyes with tears grow dim.  
Let me view with pity the wandering sheep  
And love them for love of Him.”

### **3. Reaping (we must reap the benefits) - 5-6**

The text finally speaks of God’s blessing: “reap in joy” (vs. 5) and “bringing his sheaves with him” (vs. 6). This refers to the farmer carrying a bundle of wheat or some other crop on his shoulders that he had sown in the ground. Somehow I can just picture this scene! There is a farmer walking through the field carrying the crop that he had sown! There is great “joy” (vs. 5) in this and “rejoicing” (vs. 6) as these texts reveal. God’s true blessing, the blessing of the lives of people being changed, is compared to a harvest that should produce great joy in our hearts and lives.

The joyful reaping or harvesting actually refers to the Jewish people who decided to return to the land in faith to rebuild, which was the result of the prayers, encouragement, and the hard work of others. By way of application, when we sow with tears, we will get a harvest, souls will be saved, and there will great joy. Tears pay off! The psalmist was convinced that continued labor and prayer, no matter how agonizingly difficult, would result in more people returning to the land of Israel, and the people rebuilding their beloved temple.

The principle that we learn from this is important. We must possess a burden, a vision, and pray hard, shed some tears, and then the blessing will come. We must get excited, get praying, get involved, and then the Lord will bless. Then we will move into a time of dreaming and reaping like we never experienced before. We will “reap in joy” (vs. 5) and bring the “sheaves” into the barn (vs. 6) which is the promise of God’s blessing. Of course, this can be applied to our lives in many ways – the blessing of new families coming into our local, fundamental churches, the blessing of souls being saved, and the personal blessings that God brings upon us.

God wants to bring a harvest of blessing into our lives! Do we believe it, and do we want to pay the price so we can receive the harvest?

God brought the blessing of returning exiles back to the land of promise as a result of the tears, blood, and sweat of others praying, working, and encouraging them to return. In a similar way, we have the promise that God will bless our personal lives and church ministries in wonderful ways with a harvest of new people and the salvation of souls. The reaping and sheaves will come if we are willing to plant the seed while shedding some tears.

“Bringing in the sheaves,  
Bringing in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing  
Brining in the sheaves!”

Galatians 6:9

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

There is a time for reaping, but we must remember that the sheaves are in God’s hands!

1 Corinthians 3:6

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”

We must simply do the sowing. What kind of sowing have we been doing? How many prayers, how much effort, how many tears have we shed?

Now let me ask you a question if you are not saved and going to Heaven. Do you want to be part of the harvest? If you are not saved, then you are going straight to Hell when you die! The good news is that you can be part of the sheaves or the harvest if you choose to place your faith in Christ. Do you want to be saved from Hell (God’s wrath) and know that you are going to Heaven when you die?

Jeremiah 8:20 says:

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”

Don't ignore and reject God's offer of salvation to you today. If you want to be part of the spiritual harvest of saved souls, you must repent of your sins and place your faith in Christ to save you.

A man once gave his testimony. He said he was a bitter, beer-drinking, foul-mouthed sinner. He couldn't understand what people saw in church. One day he went to church with his wife and something the minister said stuck in his heart and brought conviction upon him. The next morning, he had his breakfast and was prepared to go out. While his foot was on the threshold of his house he could hear that pastor's voice once again saying to him, "If you go out in your sins and have an accident, you'll be in hell." He moved his foot back, went into the living room, lit a cigarette, and thought it over.

He decided he was imagining things. He finished his smoke and headed to the door. As soon as he reached the threshold the same voice came to his attention: "If you go out in your sins and have an accident, you'll be in hell." The man went back into the house, went upstairs, knelt by his bed, and said, "God, I don't want to go to hell. Please save me for Jesus' sake." Amen."

This man became part of the harvest of saved souls. Are you going to be part of the harvest? If not, don't delay! "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Many years ago, I heard an old Plymouth Brethren friend of mine pray at the end of our church service. As he prayed he mentioned Jeremiah 8:20: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." His voice became broken, and tears came to his eyes while praying it. This man taught me the importance of tears, possessing a deep burden for the unsaved. He was sowing in tears as he prayed! May God give us a burden for the harvest so that we might bring in the sheaves!

There is a harvest near you! Right where you live. Look on the fields for they are white already to harvest!

"Somebody's down to their last start,  
Somebody's running out of time,  
Not too far from here.

Somebody's got nowhere else to go,  
Somebody needs a little hope,  
Not too far from here.

Somebody's never heard of You (the Lord),  
Somebody's searching for the truth,  
Not too far from here.

Somebody wants to hear you speak,  
And somebody's ready to believe,  
Not too far from here."