The Passion Of Missions

- The Commission to Sow
- The Promise to Receive
- The Winds to Ignore

“If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.” (Ecclesiastes 11:4)

Bill Kirk
The Passion of Missions

Text: Ecclesiastes 11:1-6
Subject: How God Admonishes and Encourages Us to Seize the Moment At Hand!

Introduction

Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 is an incredible word from God to every Christian worker!

Question: What is it that God talks about to all who labor in His vineyard? (Four Truths)

1. He gives us the non-negotiable command to live with obedience and sow good seed,
2. He overcomes discouragement by promising we will be rewarded for our labors.
3. He warns us against waiting for the “perfect situations” before we become intentional.
4. He teaches us clearly that the atmosphere of expectancy is the breeding ground for miracles.

Question: How does God destroy selfishness in our text?
Question: How does God guarantee us a return for our labor?
Question: How does God prepare us to “get moving” and “keep moving”?
Question: How does God pour faith in the heart of every effective laborer?
Answer: The Lord gives us four absolutes to live by:

I. The Bread Encourages You (To Live Selfless)

Notice: “Cast your bread upon the waters.” (v. 1a)

Question: What is the bread that God refers to here?
Answer: This is an agricultural reference to a farmer on the banks of the Nile River.

- Every year when the waters subsided, the farmer went forth upon the mud and wetlands.
- He would (without any plowing) cast grain over the mud.
- The goats would trample the grain in the ground (and the farmer knew that fruit would be coming).

Question: But why does God say “Cast your bread (and not seed) upon the waters”?
Answer: Because God knows our human tendency is to yield to “instant gratification” and not look “long term” (as we view our life on earth).

In other words, we have two choices before us everyday:

#1. We can spend our lives on ourselves alone (and use all of our temporary seed for the moment) or

#2. We can look long term and sow into the Vineyard (and prepare for eternal bread down the road).
In Plain Vanilla

- We can spend all of our resources (seed) on ourselves today (or)
- Forego instant gratification for the sake of the days to come (bread for tomorrow)

In Other Words

- I can keep all of my seeds to myself (or) I can turn them into bread for the future!
  
  (It’s either/or)

  I can keep my life (and lose it) or I can loose my life (and keep it!)

  (Only two choices)

1. I can be absorbed in myself and live only for temporary (selfish) gratification (or)
2. I can deny myself and turn my seed into bread for the future.

II. The Reward Encourages You (to Live with Patience)

“...for you will find it after many days.” (v. 1b)

**Question:** What has God promised to those who choose to live an unselfish life?

**Question:** What does God have in store for those who deny themselves for the sake of His Kingdom?

**Question:** What awaits the laborer who sows and sows with a patient spirit?

“**You will find it after many days.**” (v. 1b) (Which means):

1. We have a moral duty to discharge! (and)
2. We have a guarantee from God that the seeds we sow will germinate and multiply!

“**You will find it after many days**” means:

- Vegetation may be slow, but it is **sure** to come!
- God never loses **sight** of your “work of faith”
- No work done in “His Name” is ever in **vain**!

  (Remember this)

- The seed that was sown in past generations is bearing fruit today, and it will be so once more with the seed we sow! (I repeat)

**Question:** What is the danger for every seed sower in the local church?

**Answer:** The danger is to become **impatient** between the time we sow and the time we reap!

  (In Other Words)

- It’s possible to loose heart prematurely (and be detoured)!
- It’s possible to yield to enemy lies (fiery darts) that come to your mind!
(It’s possible to forget Mark 4:28)

“For the earth yields crops; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full grain in the ear.”

(It’s possible to forget that)

- At times God’s work is invisible, but God is working even when you cannot see Him!

“Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.” (James 5:7)

III. The Warning Encourages You (to Live with Urgency)

“He that observes the wind will not sow; and he that regards the clouds will not reap.” (v. 4)

Question: What’s the danger that faces every laborer in the vineyard?

(The danger is)

Answer: To look for the “perfect circumstances” or wait for the “ideal situation” before we jump in full speed (with passion)!

God exposes our temptation here:

- We can “observe the wind” and “regard the clouds” which means:
  1. It’s possible to be deterred and distracted in our labors.
  2. It’s possible to be overwhelmed by present difficulties.
  3. It’s possible to be timid in the face of contrary winds and stormy clouds.
  4. It’s possible to be idle because of unfavorable surroundings.
  5. It’s possible to be a fair weather sower who looks for the “perfect conditions”

Question: What does God have to say about those who wait for a more “favorable day”?

Answer: He forbids us to procrastinate - because lack of complete knowledge is no excuse for inactivity.

(In Other Words)

- There will always be the opportunity to make excuses for the neglect of our duty.
- There will always be the risk of abuse, rejection or failure.
- There will always be the possibility of seeds falling on unproductive soil.

(So remember)

- Wind, rain and clouds refer to adverse conditions surrounding you!
- Satan wants your eye on the wind and clouds.
- God wants your eyes on Him (and His ability to anoint what you are doing).

I love Psalm 121

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.” (v. 1,2)
IV. The Unknown Encourages You (to Live by Faith)

“For thou knowest not what evil shall be on the earth”. (v. 2)
“For thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit”. (v. 5)
“Thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.” (v. 5b)
“For thou knowest not what shall prosper.” (v. 6)

Question: Why cast your bread, give your life away and live with urgency and passion?
Question: Why keep sowing in the face of criticism, rejection and no appreciation?
Question: Why step up your efforts when visible results and fruit are slow in coming?
Question: Why plan long term and become intentional about taking incremental steps to reach more people?
Question: Why invest your life in something greater than yourself?

(Why?)

1. Because by constant sowing through all kinds of weather - you demonstrate that you have faith and confidence in God (regardless of the winds and clouds).
2. Because doing what you can do - is better than lamenting and murmuring that others have it better.
3. Because God is not limited in power - He can give a spiritual breakthrough in response to your praying and sowing.

Question: Why does God say (in v. 6) “In the morning sow your seed and in the evening withhold not your hand”?
Answer: “Morning” and “Evening” are two extremes mentioned to include the whole.

In Other Words

• Throughout every day and every season (joyful or painful) being faithful in sowing reveals that you are not observing the winds nor regarding the clouds.

Constant perseverance from morning till evening…

1. Gives God the opportunity to reward your faith!
2. Gives God the opportunity to prove Himself faithful!
3. Gives God the opportunity to honor His word which says:

“In due season we will reap if we faint not.” (Galatians 6:9)

“Be not slothingful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherited the promises.” (Hebrews 6:12)

Question: How does God destroy all procrastination in His work force?
Answer: He tells us to look at two things in (v. 5)

“Look at the wind” (and) “Look at the womb of a pregnant mother.”

In Other Words

• Since you can’t explain the invisible course of wind and how it flows (and )
• Since you can’t explain the formation of bones in the fetus of a pregnant woman,

Realize how much you do not know!
Here’s what God is saying:

- Just because we don’t know everything and have all the answers beforehand, that shouldn’t keep us from doing what we can do (with passion).

In Other Words

- Don’t let what you can’t do (and do not know) paralyze what you can do!

Because

- We all have opportunity in front of us to see God work the miraculous on our behalf.

What God says to me in Ecc. 11:1-6

(That strengthens my heart)

1. There is no reason to expect a harvest until I have first “cast my bread upon the waters”
2. I have a promise from God that He will honor my sowing “after many days”
3. I can forget finding the “perfect season” to get busy for God (and be intentional now in strategic planning to reach lost people).
4. Since we “knoweth not how” God is going to honor His Word, let’s labor from “morning till evening” in faith and confidence.

And...

- Sow seeds though conditions may seem unfavorable (for what good is it to pray for rain from heaven if we have not first sowed seed into the ground?)
- Sow seeds with urgency and passion in the local church.
- Sow seeds (for future bread) so that our lives won’t be wasted.
- Sow seeds regardless of how you feel and what others do!
- Sow seeds in secret (and in public) knowing that we will reap if we faint not.

Question: Why live in constant prayer and be motivated with passion by the Holy Spirit!
Answer: Because daily encounters with God will enable you to press on regardless of the wind and the clouds around you!

Altar Call

♦ The Lord wants to give you His Passion!
♦ The Lord wants to give you His Urgency!
♦ The Lord wants to give you His Faith!
♦ The Lord wants to set your heart aflame and send you out full of the Holy Spirit.

Amen!

Bill Kirk