

The Seeds of Your Success

by Jerry Savelle

Some time ago I was scheduled to fly to Tulsa, Oklahoma to speak in a meeting. Before I left home, I tried to talk to the Lord about some critical needs in my life and ministry. Instead of answering the way I had expected, He told me, "When you get to Tulsa, I want you to give away your van." I dropped the subject.

On the plane, I again approached the Lord about my pressing situation. "Father, I really need to talk to You about *my* needs," I told Him. "It just seems they have become overwhelming." Again, the Lord spoke to me and said, "When you get to Tulsa, I want you to give away your van." So again, I dropped the subject.

A while later, I once more took up my "case" with the Lord: "Father, during this meeting in Tulsa, I am going to have a little time between services, and I really need to talk to You about my needs." Once more there came His response, "When you get to Tulsa, I want you to give away your van." But, this time He went on: "Also, there are five preachers in Tulsa who have become discouraged and are about to give up the ministry. I want you to give each of them a suit of clothes." So once more I decided not to continue the discussion.

Finally, I just couldn't hold back any longer. I said to the Lord, "Father, I've just got to talk to You! You know we've been building our International Headquarters in Fort Worth this year. We have moved into them, but there are still lots of things we need. More land, for instance, and more buildings. But we just don't have the money to get what we need." He said, "When you get to Tulsa, I want you to give away your van and five suits of clothes."

It was then that it finally hit me what was happening. Every time I tried to talk to God about my need, He talked to me about seed. Now, that's not deep. As children of God, all of us should understand it. We are seed-planting people. But, if you are like me, you have noticed that over the past couple of years your needs have grown larger and larger. You must be wondering, as I was on that plane, where the money is going to come from to meet those steadily increasing

obligations.

I believe the Lord showed me the answer to that important question while I was in that airplane on my way to Tulsa. He told me, "In the days to come, the needs of the Body of Christ are going to become so great that, in the natural, they will appear to be impossible to meet. But I am telling you now, don't wait until then to get busy sowing seed into the kingdom. Don't wait until you get an answer to your present needs before you begin to prepare for the future needs." Then He made a statement that suddenly put the whole subject into perspective for me: "You must become seed-conscious, not need-conscious."

That's how God Himself is. He is seed-conscious. When He had "needs" of His own, He fulfilled those needs by giving. He "needed" the redemption of mankind. He "needed" a family. So what did He do? He planted a seed. He gave Jesus. Our Lord told us plainly: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

God sowed His "Seed," His only Son Jesus, into the earth and reaped in return a harvest of sons and daughters. He planted the best seed heaven had to offer, not worthless seed. He didn't look for some old decrepit, worn-out angel to use as seed, someone who was no longer needed. No, He chose and planted the very best He had. And He reaped the best of all harvests, human souls.

God explains that principle of seed planting and harvest clearly in Ecclesiastes 11:1-6. There He says:

Give generously, for your gifts will return to you later. Divide your gifts among many, for in the days ahead you yourself may need much help. When the clouds are heavy, the rains come down; when a tree falls, whether south or north, the die is cast, for there it lies. If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done. God's ways are as mysterious as the pathway of the wind and as the manner in which a human spirit is infused into the little body of a baby while it is yet in its mother's womb. Keep on sowing your seed, for you never know which will grow, perhaps it all will (The Living Bible).

Now, in this passage we see a vital principle of godly giving: "Give generously, for your gifts will return to you later." You might say to me, "I just don't understand that. I don't understand how I can give away something and expect God to give it back to me." I know you don't understand it. Neither do I. It is not necessary that we understand God's principles to benefit from them. We must simply learn them, believe them, and act upon them.

For example, we don't know how seeds bring forth plants for fruit. We just know they do, so we sow seeds into the ground, patiently tend and nurture them, and then reap an abundant harvest from them. That's what God expects us to do with the good seed of His Word. It is our job to sow seeds, God's job to meet needs.

But notice that the Bible says only that our godly gifts will come back to us. It doesn't say how or when.

I wish I could tell you how and when your gift will be returned to you in multiplied form. I don't know. But I do know one thing: the time between sowing and reaping is the most important and exciting in our lives. It becomes a great adventure in faith. The secret is to sow faithfully, generously, and regularly so that we can expect a continual flow of godly gifts in return.

When my staff and I first began our ministry in Africa, we had to go through a battle royal in that land. At every step we had to battle corruption and opposition. But God had told us to go into that area and pull down the strongholds of Satan, and that was exactly what we intended to do, troubles or no troubles. Our loyal workers lived under constant threat, in turmoil and stress 24 hours a day, with never a moment to relax. They were never able to let down their guard for an instant. The warfare they were engaged in was not only spiritual, but also natural. Some people were so opposed to the ministry; they had actually hired assassins to kill the members of our staff.

But despite the dangers, obstacles, and opposition from both man and Satan, we just kept on planting seeds into that outreach, week after week, month after month. After nine long months of

seeming failure, we finally began to see a return on our investment in those precious African lives. Now my staff there can hardly contain their joy because every day brings a new victory over the forces of evil and darkness. All the seed we had been faithfully and consistently planting suddenly began to grow and produce fruit for the kingdom of God.

So don't become discouraged and quit sowing. Don't stop planting seed just because you don't see any immediate results. Keep sowing.