

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 41

January 22, 2020

John 4:30-38

³⁰ **They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.** (These were the people of Sychar)
³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” ³² But He said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” ³³ So the disciples were saying to one another, “No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?” ³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. ³⁵ Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the **harvest**’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. ³⁶ Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁷ For in this case the saying is true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ ³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor.”

We’ll start today in verse 30. I was looking at this whole idea of Jesus being sent to accomplish the work that God had for Him. When I think of that, I think in terms of a job description or a specific mission to be accomplished by someone. You know there is a beginning point of a work, and there is an ending point, and you know when you have accomplished it ... you have finished the job. Some jobs lend themselves to that. For instance, if you’re painting a room, you know when you get to the end of the job. If you’re making a dress, you know when you got to the end of the job. Other jobs, like the work I do, kind of bleed into each other and you’re never quite finished.

?: Like housecleaning ...

Rod: Housecleaning may be like that, knowing that task will have to be done again.

But to think about Jesus’ task, certain aspects of that task you can think in terms of being accomplished or finished. Like He said on the cross, “It is finished”. I mean, He only died once for all. He didn’t have to continue to die on and on and on. He died once. He was resurrected once; it was finished. He poured out the Holy Spirit once, and it was finished. But there were other aspects of that are never finished. He continues to save; He continues to make us holy; He is always doing His work. So He was sent to accomplish the work, I’m assuming, the work that He was given to do while He was on the Earth. And He said that this was the work of the One who sent Him.

The word accomplished is from “teleioo” (τελειωω) meaning to accomplish, consummate, to consecrate, finish, fulfill, to make or perfect. It is to “make perfect” by reaching the intended goal. It brings to completion or to fulfillment.

In **John 5:36**, Jesus speaks of the works “For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish” or “finish”. These bear witness to Jesus.

In **John 17:4**, Jesus speaks of having accomplished God’s work. “I have brought you glory on earth by “accomplishing” (or finishing) the work you gave me to do.”

In **John 17:23** He speaks of His disciples being perfected in unity. “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; ²³ I in them and You in Me, that **they may be perfected** in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.” (NASB) He had accomplished the goal of unifying them.

I read a book (back in 2010), called “**Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress Free Productivity**” by David Allen. This was a great book on efficiency; on how to organize. It’s was a unique book. But we must realize that Jesus lived in a day without a day-planner, and without E-mail. He didn’t have calendars, phones, computers, and I don’t think he even had a pencil or a pen that wrote in three different colors. And He didn’t have one of those fancy pads that you have back there either. He didn’t have any of those things. I don’t think He had a secretary. He did have a treasurer ... Judas was the treasurer. Yet He was given an eternal-sized job to accomplish by the Creator of the universe. How did He do it?

How do we compare our mandate to be productive and to accomplish His work during our lifetime in such a complex world? How do we separate our work from His work? If “His” work and will is food, what is our work and will? Oh, that I was clear always, as to exactly what I **should** be doing to accomplish His work! I know, for me, it turns into 100 small tasks during the day in order to accomplish something else. It’s like “piecework” almost. You have to do this, this and this in order to do “this”; and when you get to “this”, you have to do ten other things to get to the next step over there.

Today, I finally made a call that I’ve been *intending* to make for the past six months when I came back from Kenya. It was always in the back of my mind, but I never got around to it. It wasn’t one of those critical things, but I finally made the call and connected with a really good brother down in Texas from The Golf Course Road Church of Christ. His name is Tim Neale, and he makes about four trips to Kenya every year. He sometimes spends three or four weeks on those trips, so that’s a lot of time in Kenya.

That congregation has about 21 different works going on in Kenya; 15 orphanages that they support, and the amount of money that they send to Kenya is about \$60,000.00 a month. So this is a pretty big work that they are involved in, and I felt like I had found the expert here. I could ask him all kinds of things about the work in Kenya. I felt that he would know a lot of answers, and **he did**. It was a fruitful conversation and I have his permission to call him any time I have a question, and I was thankful for that. He said that the next time I’m going to Kenya, maybe we can coordinate our schedules together. He’d like to show me a job-training program they have very near to Joshua Village, in that same county. I’d like to see that, because that’s where the secondary students go once they ‘age out’ of the orphanages. The job-training programs teach welding, electrical work, and more. My feeling was ‘wow, I would love to partner with this man’. I say all that to say that there are so many tasks to get done in order to accomplish even pieces of the work God has given us to do.

Jesus describes the work in terms of ‘harvest’ and that’s a good way to describe it because a harvest usually has a beginning, it has a process, and it has a completion date. Again, there is a point in time when you are finished harvesting; you reaped your crop, and you’re pretty well done until the next season. You lay the land by to sit. You turn the land under, let it rot, and it just prepares itself for the next season when you begin to plant again.

Jesus often uses these farming metaphors. Literally, 'harvest' is seasonal and comes at the same time yearly. It's predictable. We know when we have four months to go. Like Jesus said in verse 35, '**four months, and then comes the harvest**'. He says we do what must be done during those four months to have a crop. And so, four months is about the time it takes to produce a crop. From the time you put the seed in the ground until the time you harvest it, it's about four months. So, if you are planting corn, you try to get it in the ground in early summer and by the fall you are going to be harvesting that corn. And Jesus is well acquainted with the seasons of this. Knowing the season is important or we might be planting when we should be reaping. IF we don't know the seasons, we may get our process upside down; we may be planting the seeds in the fall. That won't work very well for us. They probably won't come up in January if I plant them in the fall. They need the summer, they need the sun, they need the warmth, and they need the rains. They need all of that in the summer in order to reap a crop.

If we can get into this mindset about the work that we do, we have to understand the seasons of the work. What did Jesus see when He lifted His eyes? He said in **verse 35**, "**I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.**" The harvest is ready *now*. "**Don't say, 'four months more, and then the harvest'**."

They were looking at this experience in Samaria as being the beginning of the planting season. They saw some planting of some seeds. **Jesus** saw a harvest! Well, then, who planted the seed? When did they get planted – that was producing this fruit?

Well, He never explains that explicitly but it's a good question to ask because if they're experiencing 'harvest' at that particular point in time, then four months before that ... or a period of time before that ... someone had to be planting seeds so when He got there He could reap a harvest.

So, what did Jesus see when He lifted up His eyes that make Him *know* that it was harvest time? Most likely, it was **verse 30**, "**They went out of the city, and they were coming to Him.**" That's what Jesus saw. He saw a crowd of people coming to Him. That's a good "sign" unless they're coming in the middle of the night with swords and knives to crucify you. So when people are coming to us after we have gone to them, we know it's 'harvest time'. It's when they start **coming to us**, and I see that playing out in my life ... that there are times when there are people who I will *go* to, I will take the initiative, I will try to invite them and try to engage with them; and I **know** things have switched when *they* start calling **me** and ask 'when we can get together?' or 'when can we talk?' I had the opposite happen the other day. I was going to someone and I got a strong impression when they said that they didn't want me coming to them anymore. They were nice about it but they made it clear that they were kind of "done". I said, "O. K., alright." I don't like that, but that was their choice.

Jesus lived in the awareness of the movement of people. He watched people to see what they were doing; which way are they moving? Are they moving *away* or are they moving *toward*? And if we are going to engage in the harvest, in the sowing and reaping, we have to be aware of the different people in our lives. Are they coming toward us or toward Jesus; or are they moving away from Him? Maybe they're static, maybe they're somewhere in the

middle. But what is the movement of people and how do we perceive that? How do we **know** that?

I had an experience today, actually, with a Jewish rabbi; a lady who was a Jewish rabbi. Some seeds had been planted with her several months ago, regarding a particular project that I thought we needed to partner on to do with regard to the Pregnancy Center and the whole abortion issue. Today, I thought, I need to see whether or not she is going to move toward me and this project or move away from me, so I approached her. It was evident, *immediately*, that she was interested. She was like, ‘Yes, we need to do this’. I was like, ‘Yes, Okay’. I didn’t sense any reluctance whatsoever. She was totally on board; she was supportive; she acknowledged that she thought I was someone she could work with even though we have a lot of differences in our beliefs; and that we have common ground on this particular matter and that she is very willing to pursue it. Well, I had to ‘test’ to see if she was moving away from me or toward me on this. Sometimes we have to ‘jump in’ like that to see what happens.

The phrase, “lift up your eyes” ... what does that mean? **Isaiah 60:4** uses, “Lift up your eyes round-about and see; they all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, and your daughters will be carried in the arms”. NASB

“Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. NIV

He uses this phrase describing the nations coming to Israel’s light. Lift up your eyes. This is Messianic, of the nations coming towards Jesus. Notice in **verses 1-3**, the earth is enveloped in deep darkness. “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. The glory of God will come upon His people, and the nations will be drawn to that light. It’s almost like God saying, “I’m going to put My people in the spotlight and then the people around, outside in the darkness are going to be drawn to that light and they are going to come to you.

And this is interesting because Jesus uses that about the cities up on a hill in **Matt. 5:14-16** when He said, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” You don’t put a light under a bushel or a bowl. You put the light on a hill so people can see it, and they are attracted to that light. He says to let their light so shine among men that they may *see your* good works and glorify the **Father** who is in heaven. There is the idea that both God and “us” need to turning the “light” on so that people can be attracted to it. (Maybe not quite like bugs to a light because that’s sometimes fatal. (Laughter) But never-the-less, being drawn to the light may be like a metaphor of, “People who are in the cold darkness and there is the light of the campfire and they are drawn to the light or the fire so that they can warm themselves.

Carole: The Jews were supposed to be; a light to the Gentile nations.

Rod: Exactly.

Carole: So nothing has changed. We're still to be a light to the world.

Rod: Exactly. It was **always** God's intention for His people to be the light in a dark world that attracted people. ***But ... light became darkness.*** And it can often become darkness in our lives when **we** are ***not attractive.***

Our way of drawing people to us is to **lift up the light, or Jesus.** And people will lift their heads to see that. But we, as Christians, must lift up ***our*** eyes to see those who have lifted up ***their*** eyes. We must be able to notice who is lifting up their eyes and seeing Jesus so that we can see them.

Jesus is kind of working off of this metaphor of the lifting up of your eyes. On one hand, it's the nations are lifting up their eyes to see the light of God's people; and it's God's people lifting up ***their*** eyes to see the nations, to see the people who are in the darkness who are coming toward the light. So, it's the Prodigal Son story. It's the father on the porch who is lifting up his eyes to see his son coming down the road, and it's the son down the road lifting up his eyes to see the father running toward him. It is ***when the eyes meet;*** it's when ***the two come together,*** that the magic happens. That is where the good stuff happens. This is kind of 'all-inclusive' in what Jesus is talking about here.

Jesus knows that the time of the harvest was ready, and He was ready to make the most of the opportunity. Surely, the **white** is the appearance of the wheat tops in the sunlight. **Verse 35** says, "**It is white unto harvest.**" It's when you have the sun shining on the tops of the wheat, it appears to be white. To Jesus, the group of Samaritans approaching must have reminded Him of the grain harvest (the act of gathering or reaping).

Matthew 9:37-38 ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." In these two places, where Jesus mentions harvest, His thinking was 1) the harvest is plentiful, it's a good year, we have a good yield, and 2) it's time to harvest, don't let the opportunity pass, and 3) we need workers, we need laborers to go into the field and to reap it.

So Jesus had three perspectives about the Harvest. 1) It's plentiful; it's a great harvest, 2) It's ready, and 3) where are the workers that are going to go out and reap the harvest? That is the way Jesus thought about harvest. So, what does that tell us about the mind of Christ?

Well, it tells me, He is evangelistic, He is an observer of people, He is urgent in His ministry to bring the harvest in, He knows human workers are needed to get the job done, and he knows that the harvest is just one stage of a longer process that involves planting and watering. This is why He came to seek and to save the lost to bring in the sheaves to fill God's house. This example of Jesus in Samaria gives us great insight into the way Jesus looks at things evangelistically.

Jesus also knew that there is a divine commission “to go”. He says to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth reapers. The Father sends the laborers; He hires them by the day, the half day, the hour to go; and it is His field; we are mere hired hands, and He will tell many parables to reinforce this principle.

Sue: I was thinking that in the past I have prayed for the work that needs to be done. I’d pray, “Lord, send some workers.” But I’d sit back and wait. Now I think that is so wrong because He told each of us to ‘go and make disciples’. None of us are excused from that.

Rod: And if you look in the last two verses of **Matthew 9:37-38** “above”, when you look at **Matthew 10:1** He calls his disciples and sends them out to heal. “[Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.](#)” In other words, He tells them to pray for laborers, and then see what He does; He picks *them*. I don’t know if they raised their hands and volunteered, or maybe they prayed for God to *send* laborers; but Jesus chose them and said, “I will send you out!”

Macy: I like that idea of just lifting your eyes and having that awareness while you’re going through your day. It’s becoming aware of *who* is around you and what kind of the greater flow of people around you that could lead to interactions and things of that nature. It really has to do with lifting our eyes and getting out of our bubble and being aware.

Rod: Yes, absolutely. And as I was driving home today after my interaction with the Jewish Rabbi, I was thinking about it. I’ve known her for a couple of years now and my first impression of her was that she would probably be just about the last person I could get close to. I just didn’t feel like we had much of anything in common and I never thought that would happen. Things have changed in “my” view. I don’t think she’s probably changed any, but now I could see sitting down with her and having a real conversation about other things aside from this project I want to work on. I mean, she made a statement today. We were talking about something, and we mentioned the Scripture **Galatians 6:2** and someone said, “Well, what does that say?” because the name of the organization is “**Galatians 6:2**” – it’s about carrying one another’s burdens. So I said, “It says, you know, ‘[Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ](#)’ which is what this organization is about.

She was looking it up before I told them what it said, and she said read it. She said, “I like the first part – carry one another’s burdens. But I’m not so sure I like that second part about the Law of Christ.” I said, “Well, Jennifer, why don’t you interpret it this way. Why don’t you read it, ‘Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of the Messiah’, because that is what Christ means? And she looked at me and she said, “We don’t talk about the Messiah much.” And I’m thinking, “Good night. You’re a Jew. That ought to be the most important thing in the world that you talk about. Aren’t you still looking for Him? I didn’t say all this, but I’m thinking, “What do you mean you don’t talk about the Messiah? I’m trying to help you here!”

Brenda: There was a Messianic Jew that came to my parents’ congregation in Melbourne, and when He visited the first time, he actually looked around and said, “You people are so serious. Why are you not playing music? Why aren’t the tambourines out? Get the horns. The Messiah has come!” He was amazed.

Rod: But this was not a Messianic Rabbi.

But I would love to sit down with her and ask, and I think I could, and just say, “You know, this is what you said the other day and I don’t get it. Why don’t you talk about the Messiah? I understand you don’t believe Jesus is Him, but ... There is something missing here and I don’t get this.” But, I think we could have that conversation and it would go well. So, I don’t know. She may become a good friend ... I don’t know. She’s an interesting lady.

In **verse 36** Jesus speaks of the two stages of the “process”. There is the sower and the reaper. The reaper is already receiving wages. The word “wages” is *misthios* (μισθιος) and means wages, hire, or reward. It can even mean retribution, punishment *or* reward. In this case, it’s positive ... not retribution but reward.

In **Matthew 20:1-16**, the several groups hired at various times ... remember, one was hired at the beginning of the day (6:00 * A. M.) and the other one was hired at the last hour.

* “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who **went out early** in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ And he went out about the [c] - (9 A. M.) **third hour** and saw others standing idle in the market place;... So, one of them worked 12 hours and one worked only 1 hour and they all got the same reward or the same pay.

In **Luke 10:7** when the disciples were sent out, they were told to enter a “worthy house.” Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. Eat and drink what they give you and for a laborer is worthy of his wages. Eat what is before you. He repeats it in **Matthew 10:8** “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you.” So part of their wages was to be able to eat the fruit of the harvest.

In **Acts 1:18** we learn that Judas bought a field with his reward; with his wage. “With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.” It was the field he ended up being buried in.

In **Matthew 5:11-12** Jesus speaks of the reward or the wage in heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Jesus is clearly saying that there is a wage, but in the text, the wage is *already being* received. The harvest hasn’t come yet, but the wages are being received ... before the work is finished. We reap the benefit of the harvest before the harvest is completed. **This is the Gospel!** We receive *grace* and *mercy* which *motivates our work*. In other words, we get an “advance” on the work that we do. We get *paid before* we do the work ... because **if** it’s the other way around, and we work to get paid, then **that’s works’ salvation**. But we get paid, and **then** we work; so we receive before we work.

Carole – I always took it that those who were paid were the Old Testament *prophets* from the work they did. They sowed, and the Apostles are doing the reaping.

Rod: Well, it could be. It could be.

Macy: In that case, they would be reaping their reward because they have already passed on to their reward.

Rod: Right. And they reaped their reward **before** the harvest actually came!

So, either way, whoever is reaping, they're reaping before the harvest comes. They're gaining from the harvest before the harvest is actually brought in to the storehouse.

Carole: Yet we're still harvesting.

Rod: Yes. It is two levels that we're talking about here because the harvest is cyclical...it continues to happen.

He says the fruit **to** eternal life. Not **for**, but **to** eternal life. It is literally "life eternal", instead of eternal life. It switches it around in this particular text. The word 'to' is the word eis (εις) and it's a preposition that means, 'looking forward to'.

In **Matthew 3:8**, it's fruit worthy of repentance

In **Acts 11:23** when Paul and Barnabas came from Jerusalem to Antioch, they saw the grace of God ... there was outside evidence ... there was fruit. This fruit was "to" eternal life and they are looking forward for some evidence or fruit that indicates eternal life. This is why (and I don't have this in my notes) but ... remember when Jesus came to this fig tree in **Mark 11:12-25**, and from afar He was thinking it had fruit on it; it had figs on it. And when He gets up close to it, and He finds that it doesn't have any figs on it, He curses the tree and it withers. The apostles are surprised because when they come back by it again, it has withered and they remembered He had cursed the tree.

There is something about God not liking it when something looks like it should have fruit on you but you don't have fruit. It's like you **give every appearance** that you should have fruit, and then God inspects your tree finds out that 'there's no fruit on this tree. And God's like ... 'Well, what **good** is it? It's taking up the ground. Dig it up.' So there are indicators. In other words, our lives should have fruit that indicates that we are recipients of eternal life. And the essence of eternal life, of course is, **to know** the Father and the Son. We should be manifesting evidence that we know God and we know His Son.

There was fruit – fruit of the womb, the offspring or fruit of the loins, posterity, and fruit of the lips. All these are ways it is used. It's conduct, it's action, it's benefit, it's profit and it's reward.

Matthew 3:10 Unless we bear good fruit... **The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**

Matthew 21:18 is again the story of the barren fig tree; He curses it and it withers at once.

In the parable of **Matthew 21:33** the landowner looked for his produce; he looked for the fruit. When he came back and he called his caretakers in and said, ‘Where is the fruit? I put you in charge of this field. Where is the fruit? I want to see some evidence of your work.’ So the fruit is the *evidence* of the *labor*. But it is also the evidence of the *soil*, and the *tree*. It’s not **just** the labor but it has something to do with the soil in which it is planted, and the tree itself.

In **Matthew 13:3-8**, the sower worked equally hard; as hard as he could, on all four types of soil. Only one of the four was productive, and that one was productive in various degrees. Paul speaks of this in **1 Corinthians 3:12-15** under the metaphor of building a house that is tested by fire. “If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. ¹⁴ If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.” The fruit is in view of eternal life.

It is **extremely important** to understand the **thinking** of Jesus. *His work, though having implication for this life, the improvement of human condition, by demonstrating the love of God, is not the end game!* It’s not just, “Well, God has changed my life ... that I’m better off now that I know Jesus”. **It’s about life eternal. That’s the end game of this.** Is it making an eternal difference, not just a temporary difference? All the good work of improving the physical condition of man is insignificant compared to life eternal. The water Jesus offered the woman was to *spring up in her to eternal life*.

That’s why you can have a church that is big on good works for justice, and nobody gets saved, and it’s like, ‘where’s the eternal life part?’ The improvement of this world is **great**; you make people’s *lives better*. And it’s not that you should neglect one or the other. One has significance for today and the other has significance forever.

Macy: I read a book one time based on the book of Philippians. It asked a question. It said something like, ‘if we tell people and they believe; they will die. The question is we want maturity and all that, but ... They wanted to have maturity and all, but was everything they were doing ‘worth it’? And they answered the question with a “Yes”, because they are reaping eternal life ... a better life.

Rod: Yes, it is. So having balanced ministries is important. *Jesus, again, cared for people physically, of course; but His main purpose was the life eternal.*

All the workers, the ones who sow and the ones who reap rejoice together when they see the harvest. In **Luke 15** to find what is lost produces great joy. What causes Jesus to want to party is when people receive eternal life. There is **no competition** between sower and reaper. Both play their part. Both contribute to the outcome.

Who specifically sowed seeds in Sychar? To your point, perhaps the Old Testament prophets, or the writers of Scripture who were perhaps among those people who kept alive

the anticipation of the coming of the Messiah. Whoever they were; now was the time of harvest to bring people to faith in Jesus and to give life eternal.

John 4:37 The “saying” is true, ‘one sows and another reaps’. The word for *saying* is the word Logos (λογος). It’s the word for “word”. A saying is an oft spoken phrase usually containing some wisdom from experience and pulled out and applied to various situations. I could find no indication of the origin of this saying: ‘one sows and another reaps’, but certainly, that *was* a saying. We don’t know where Jesus quoted that from; but maybe it was just a common phrase of His day. And certainly, life teaches us this.

My dad’s oft-repeated statement was, “*If it is hard, you’re doing something wrong*”. And I often have, at least every month, had an opportunity in counseling, to tell people that. So my dad is in the counseling room almost all the time. There are about 5 people thrashing around with some problem when I’m trying to get them to stand still for a little bit, and think it through, and I tell them, “*If it’s really hard, you’re probably doing something wrong, and you just haven’t seen the right way to do it.*” And that’s a revelation for them, and thank you Johnny Myers for that.

One sows, another reaps ... we all have our times in life to be part of a process. This is evident in farming. The land I helped clear as a child is now used as a garden. When I was a child, I helped clear certain parts of our land. I remember going out there with Uncle Alvin, and he needed someone to back the tractor up when he would hook the chain up to the saplings, so he had me pull them out because he didn’t want to be climbing up and down from the tractor doing that. So he had a boy who *loved* to drive the tractor backing the tractor up, and he could hook the chain out. And so when I do go back home, which I don’t do very often now, and I go by that place, I look in that field and I say, “You know what? I helped clear that field. And whatever is being planted in there; they are able to plant that field today because me and my Uncle Alvin cleared it.”

Macy: (I had trouble hearing) ... Something about a town I knew of. They had a harvesting group, and through being a part of that process, I learned of a couple of people, but one particular couple that I’m thinking of, for years invested in just praying for that area. They continued and continued to pray and continued to pray. And I can see the harvest that was reaped. There is a school there and I can see “full circle” that their labor wasn’t in vain because so often the sower doesn’t get to see the fruit, to see what the reaper reaps.

Rod: Absolutely. In fact, we received a gift from the 43rd Street Church of Christ who closed their doors at the end of last year. So they distributed resources that they had to various works and part of that came to our ministry at Central for our mission’s effort. So, today I had an opportunity to write to them to thank them for their gift. I noted that it was sad that the occasion by which these funds were made available, however, they needed to know that their labor in the Lord was not in vain; that God is still going to be using their labor to bless others in Haiti, and in Kenya and that the work is going to go on and on because of their faithfulness to God. I didn’t want them to think that what had happened was a “failure”, but that their work would live on in those ministries. And I quoted **1 Corinthians 15:58**, “*You know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*”

Sowing requires seed prep, ground prep at the right time, but it also involves, sometimes a randomness, as seen in **Matthew 13**, the Parable of the Sower. The seeds fall on different kinds of soil because sowing is not predictable ... at least totally. When sowing seeds, you don't always get to know where they are all going to fall. There is merely the need to seize the opportunity, and Jesus does this.

To reap, one has to be observant, to check the crop. Often as a boy, I would go into the field, and I would break open an ear of corn, or shell a pea pod, or dig a potato to see if they were ready to pick or pull or pluck or peel or whatever we were doing to them. Sometimes you have to dig down there and feel the potatoes as see how they're growing. You don't want to dig them up yet. You don't want to shell all the peas. But you grab one to see if they are maturing. You break open an ear of corn to see kind of where it is, if it's ready, or soft, or is it getting too hard. You want to see what is going on.

Solomon noted in **Ecclesiastes 11** noted that others will reap the benefit of what we sow; good and bad. It was true of the Israelites coming into Canaan. It is also in Deuteronomy 8 and Deuteronomy 11, but in **Deuteronomy 6:10-12** we read, “Then it will come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹ houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹² (but then watch yourselves) be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.”

God prepared all those things in advance before the Israelites ever set foot into the land, and so they didn't work for what they enjoyed. And many of us are enjoying the fruits of other people's labors. We are all enjoying fruits of other people's labors and we need to be appreciative of that.

One of the most evident illustrations of this principle Jesus was teaching was about this well from which they were drinking. It was Jacob's well. They were enjoying water, and they did not have to work to dig the well. They were drinking water out of a well they didn't dig. It had been dug 2,000 years before that time. Jesus is making the same point with the harvest that they were going to reap. You are reaping a harvest, now Apostles. You are going to reap a harvest, and you did not do *anything* to prepare for his harvest; but you get to *enjoy* the fruit of it. The same is true of sowing and reaping.

Perhaps some generations are destined to sow more than they reap, and others are meant to reap more than they sow. Jesus' thinking was about seeing a big picture and how the current opportunity fits in with this. The Samaritan people made their way to them, as harvest was coming, but all the planting had to have come first.

God, help us to plant our own seed, to pay it forward, so that the people who come after us may reap a harvest one day. We need to become more observant, to lift up our eyes and see the opportunities around us.