

## FROM SEED TO HARVEST 01: FROM HURT TO SEED TO HARVEST

Whatever life deals you, if you can make it something you die to, you can turn that hand into a season of harvest. You can actually have harvest in your life all day every day if you just learn to recognize the seeds that God has given you. Later in the month we will look at financial fruitfulness, but there is so much more to fruitfulness than financial fruitfulness.

Today, we need to discuss something we have all been through – all of us have been at some point in our life hurt by other people. I have just been listening to more than a few people telling me how raw they are because of how other people have treated them, and I appreciate that it hurts. Other people can really hurt us – but the good news is that you can turn a hurt into a seed, and if you can turn something into a seed, you can turn it into a harvest!

So, what do you do when someone mistreats you and hurts you? I know what you want to do, I know what you feel like doing, because I am a human too! I know what it is like to think “I really want to even the score here”, “I will get you back”, “I am going to punch you in the mouth” – or the religious revenge – “I will ask everyone to pray for you, and then tell them what you did over and over”.

But the truth is that we are the children of the Most High God – and we have no business acting like mere human beings. Today, I want to teach you how to behave like the champion that you are. To take that hurt, to turn it into seed through walking in love and peace and joy, and then turn that hurt into a harvest.

Acting like that is a power that will change the world. If you can transform hurts into harvests then anything the devil means for bad, you and God can turn into a good! That’s powerful. When you obey God and walk in love when people are persecuting you, you can turn that into harvest, and literally get rich – financially, emotionally, socially, spiritually rich – on our attackers! You see the devil hates you – attacks you to steal the WORD from you because that is the source of life.

The devil knows you are anointed, the devil knows you are powerful, he knows how glorious you are, he knows how much damage you could do to his kingdom – so he finds someone – the closer the better, the more mindless the bigotry the better – and he sends them to attack you, to be insensitive to you, to be unappreciative of you – because then you don’t flow supernaturally, you step down to that level and get back in the natural.

Read Matthew 11.4-6. Jesus tells us the blessing is for the person who is not offended. Offenses are really serious because they take you out of the life of the supernatural and hold you back in the natural realm – they stop miracles happening in your life – they make you normal. That reason alone should be enough for you to decide that you will never get offended again.

That’s a decision we all need to make – no matter how much you insult our intelligence, our faith, no matter how much you falsely accuse me, you betray me - I will not give up my supernatural life to come down to that level and fight you on the flesh level.

Now people sometimes tell me it is easy for me to say that – I am white, I am male, I don't understand what it is like to be marginalized. And I hear what is being said, but the truth is that all of you are welcome in more churches in this country than I am, and I have been lied about, and people have spread those lies without ever checking. I am not saying that to gain pity, I am saying that because I want you to know that I have seen some things, I have faced some mean, nasty, spiteful people, I have been hurt, and if I can choose to walk in love, trust me – you can too!

The devil sent temptations to get offended our way. And we need to turn those into a harvest of blessing. And I think most of you are smart enough to know what not to do – you shouldn't punch people in the face, you shouldn't sit down, quit on life and have a big pity party. But what should we do?

Read 1 Peter 4.12-14. God does not want you to sit there and cry and whine, He wants you to rejoice. I know that the response to that message is often “are you kidding me? How can I rejoice when they did that? What do I have to rejoice about here?”. The truth is you have loads to rejoice about – according to Jesus, this persecution is setting you up for a greater blessing. Luke 6.22-23 tells us that great persecution brings great rewards – in fact you are blessed when persecuted! Blessed is not a weak religious cliché, it is a powerful word – it means the power of God on your life to be a success. Whenever you are persecuted, you have the power of God in your life to succeed. You have the power to not just win in life when persecuted but win with a smile on your face.

When people mistreat you, they are simply giving you the chance to be more successful, more empowered by God, more glory, more fruitfulness – and just for reference, religion tells us that our reward in heaven is the same thing as our reward when we are dead, but that's not true. It is stored in heaven, but you can use it whenever you want if you just believe. Paul talks about this to the Philippians, he says he wants them to give to him not because he needs the money, but so they can have fruit in their account. He then tells them God will supply their needs according to His riches in glory – why will God supply to them? Because they have given to the ministry and they have a full account.

Jesus spoke about it too – in Matthew 6.19-21 – when He tells us not to store treasure on earth, but rather store it in heaven. Whenever you give to a ministry, you increase your bank account in heaven. That is part of seedtime and harvest, and most people in Tree of Life understand this financially – but listen: it also works with persecution, those people that hate you and say mean things about you, and are cruel to you, you can plant that as a seed too!

How do I plant it as a seed? By rejoicing and leaping and dancing with joy. By not taking the offense, not getting bitter, not getting obsessed with what they did to you, but by staying obsessed with Jesus.

When you are persecuted, attacked by others, you can bring about a great fruitfulness into your life – in fact a more precious harvest than any financial seed because this is an assault on your soul, and your soul is far more precious than money – so the value of the harvest when you choose to rejoice when suffering hurt is far more precious too. You take

persecution and hurts and abuse and rejection and all the evil – and you die to it – and you sow it, and you choose to rejoice and get excited and praise God, and you start to enter into a new level of fruitfulness. I am not saying this is easy to do, but I will always tell you the increase of fruitfulness is worth the pain.

I know that from my experience, and the experience of many others – I’ve seen it in Dave Duell’s life, in Robert’s, in so many peoples – attacked over and over and over and over – but respond in life and joy and the grace of God! I would say this is one of the great keys to great fruitfulness – the ability to rejoice in times of persecution.

So how do we do this. Read Luke 6.27-30, and 35-38. Now we often fail to realize what is happening here. Jesus is not saying: “I love you all so much I want you to be a carpet for people to wipe their feet on!” No – He was trying to teach us about the power of the seed. If you can make it a seed, you can make it a harvest!

Jesus was trying to show you how to live the most fruitful life on the planet! Don’t sue someone who took your shirt, that’s the world way of living, it’s rubbish. It’s war, it’s pain, and you lose more than you win. No, give that person your shirt, then give them your coat, because your shirt is worth far more as a seed than as something to get into strife about!

If your shirt is stolen from you, and you are bitter about it and hurt and offended, that is not worth a lot to your future, and nursing that bitterness brings you down to the level of a natural man. But rather release that shirt in your heart, sow it in your heart as seed, then you are living at a higher level!

If someone steals from you, bless that person and sow it as seed. Your attitude determines your altitude. If you give according to the leading of the Spirit, that’s one thing. If you give in faith expecting a return that is another thing. But if you give in response to persecution and hatred, and you decide if someone stole something from you that it is a gift from you to them in your heart, you have turned that into a seed.

Maybe someone has stolen money from you – didn’t do what you wanted, paid for work, not done – I don’t know. BUT THAT MONEY IS ONLY LOST IF YOUR ATTITUDE DESCENDS TO BITTERNESS AND OFFENSE! If you rather sow it as seed – yes, involuntarily sown seed by circumstances, but voluntarily sown in your heart, then it is seed – and harvest time is coming!

Some of you will have seen Les Miserables, where Valjean steals the candlesticks from the Bishop, but the Bishop forgives him so that when the police catch him, he actually says “THIS IS A GIFT, I gave them to him” and the police do not arrest him. All the giving happened in his heart, and that then meant it was not a loss, it is a seed. It is a seed if you call it a seed. It is not a seed if you nurse your heart. The choice is what level do you want to live at? The level of sitting down there offended by the theft, or the level of expecting a great return!

The question of how you get from here to there – the answer is by rejoicing and shouting and praising God! You want to see some miracles, you want to see a return on the hurts

you have suffered – turn those hurts into seeds, take everything mean and horrible anyone has ever said to you or did to you and turn it into a seed, then expect a harvest!

#### QUESTIONS

1. What can you do if you turn something into a seed?
2. Why does the devil attack believers and try and get them offended?
3. In Matthew 11.4-6, what does Jesus tell us we are if we do not get offended?
4. What happens to us when we get bitter and offended?
5. What does 1 Peter 4.12-14 tell us our response to persecution and hurts from other people should be?
6. How can you plant an attack from other people as seed?
7. Why do we want to plant persecution as a seed?
8. Why should I give someone my shirt if they steal my coat? What are the spiritual dynamics of that situation?
9. What about this message inspired, encouraged or challenged you the most?