

THE PSALMS OF ASCENT

JOURNEYING WITH JESUS
TO JERUSALEM

Part 7

“Psalm 126 & the Parable of the Sower”

23 February 2025

Introduction: Pilgrimage and Harvest

There were three feasts that the people of Israel were to celebrate yearly with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem:

- (1) The Feast of Unleavened Bread/Passover—(Spring) Celebrated the beginning of the new agricultural year.
- (2) The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)—(Summer) Gave thanks for the first fruits of the harvest.
- (3) The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles—(Fall) A season of feasts that included the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and culminated with the seven days of celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

“[This feast] was the greatest of all Israel’s feasts...Its sacrifices exceeded those of every other feast, both in quantity and in symbolism...The feast gave thanks for the harvest, the gathering of corn and grapes, the first new wine, and the general autumnal abundance. It looked back to the past, when Israel first left Egypt and camped in the desert in booths at the place they called Sukkot. Yet, from early times, it was also understood to look to the future, to the time of the end, when earth’s golden age would come.”
—David C. Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents*

Key Point: God intends for His people to be _____ to His Word so that it might produce _____ in our lives for His glory and our joy.

Psalm 126

The Israelite and his companions recall God’s partial restoration of the nation and compare it to the harvest which involves sowing with difficulty but eventual reaping with joy.

- **Praise is offered to the Lord for the redemption He has accomplished for His people and displayed before all of the nations. (v. 1-3)**

Psa. 126:1-3—¹When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. ²Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.” ³The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.

⇒ The restoration that is likely in view in the psalm was the initial return of some of the people from _____.
“restored the fortunes” “we were like those who dream”

⇒ This deliverance produced great _____ in God’s people.
“our mouth...filled with laughter” “our tongue...shouts of joy”

⇒ This work brought acknowledgement of the Lord’s power from both His people and their _____.
“The Lord has done great things...”

- **They pray for the restoration of others and continue to labor on, encouraged by the principle of sowing and reaping (v. 4-6).**

Psa. 126:4-6—⁴Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb! ⁵Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!
⁶He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

⇒ The prayer anticipates a _____ work of restoration that involves others.
“restore our fortunes” “streams in the Negeb”

⇒ The agricultural imagery is used to encourage the people to _____ in spite of difficulty.
“sow in tears” → “reap with shouts of joy”

⇒ The psalm anticipates the joyous celebrations of God's people as He brings His work to _____.
"weeping...shouts of joy" "bearing seed...bringing his sheaves"

"...the point is clear: perseverance will pay off, the seed will produce a harvest, and the struggle will be replaced by celebration. This principle is true of agriculture; but it is also true of labor in God's kingdom." — Alan Ross

Key Point: The believer's response the redemptive work of God is to _____ for and _____ in the furtherance of that work in the lives of others.

Gospel Parallel: "The Parable of the Sower (Soils)" — Luke 8:4-15

Background: Jesus' teaching in parables was intended to simultaneously serve as judgment and blessing. For those who rejected Him, the parables hid the truth from them. For those with ears to hear, however, they were given insight into what it meant to live as His followers.

1. The parable makes use of agricultural imagery that would have been familiar to those who heard it.

(A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

2. The Lord's preface to His explanation of the parable linked His ministry with that of the prophet _____.

3. The Lord then interpreted the parable:

The Seed: The _____ of _____

The Soils: (1) The ground along the path:

(2) The rocky ground:

(3) The thorn-covered ground:

(4) The good soil:

⇒ The imagery highlights the farmer's liberal _____ of the seed and the seed's _____ when it takes root in good soil.

⇒ The Word should be openly and widely _____ and because those who hear it can be _____ and receptive to it in order that its fruit might be produced in their lives.

Key Point: As we rejoice in the fruit that the Lord _____ in our lives, we can join with Him in the work of proclaiming the _____ so that an even greater harvest may come in for His glory!

Concluding Thought

• It is a privilege for us to know that the Lord _____ us out into the world as His servants.

Luke 10:2-3—² And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

• We can participate in this work with hope and confidence because of the _____ of His Word!

Isa. 55:10-11—¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

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Key Point: God intends for His people to be receptive to His Word so that it might produce fruit in our lives for His glory and our joy.

Psalm 126

The Israelite and his companions recall God’s partial restoration of the nation and compare it to the harvest which involves sowing with difficulty but eventual reaping with joy.

- **Praise is offered to the Lord for the redemption He has accomplished for His people and displayed before all of the nations. (v. 1-3)**

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⇒ The restoration that is likely in view in the psalm was the initial return of some of the people from **Babylon**.

“restored the fortunes”

“we were like those who dream”

⇒ This deliverance produced great **joy** in God’s people.

“our mouth...filled with laughter”

“our tongue...shouts of joy”

⇒ This work brought acknowledgement of the Lord’s power from both His people and their **enemies**.

“The Lord has done great things...”

- **They pray for the restoration of others and continue to labor on, encouraged by the principle of sowing and reaping (v. 4-6).**

Psa. 126:4-6—⁴Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb! ⁵Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! ⁶He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

⇒ The prayer anticipates a **future** work of restoration that involves others.

“restore our fortunes”

“streams in the Negeb”

⇒ The agricultural imagery is used to encourage the people to **persevere** in spite of difficulty.

“sow in tears” → “reap with shouts of joy”

⇒ The psalm anticipates the joyous celebrations of God's people as He brings His work to **completion**.

"weeping...shouts of joy"

"bearing seed...bringing his sheaves"

"...the point is clear: perseverance will pay off, the seed will produce a harvest, and the struggle will be replaced by celebration. This principle is true of agriculture; but it is also true of labor in God's kingdom." — Alan Ross

Key Point: The believer's response the redemptive work of God is to pray for and participate in the furtherance of that work in the lives of others.

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Background: Jesus' teaching in parables was intended to simultaneously serve as judgment and blessing. For those who rejected Him, the parables hid the truth from them. For those with ears to hear, however, they were given insight into what it meant to live as His followers.

1. The parable makes use of agricultural imagery that would have been familiar to those who heard it.

(A) Sower

(B) Seed

(C) Soils

2. The Lord's preface to His explanation of the parable linked His ministry with that of the prophet Isaiah.

3. The Lord then interpreted the parable:

The Seed: The Word of God

The Soils: (1) The ground along the path:

(2) The rocky ground:

(3) The thorn-covered ground:

(4) The good soil:

⇒ The imagery highlights the farmer's liberal spreading of the seed and the seed's potency when it takes root in good soil.

⇒ The Word should be openly and widely proclaimed because those who hear it can be softened and receptive to it in order that its fruit might be produced in their lives.

Key Point: As we rejoice in the fruit that the Lord produces in our lives, we can join with Him in the work of proclaiming the Gospel so that an even greater harvest may come in for His glory!

Concluding Thought

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