

A Mind of Dirt

When we were very young, a question often asked: *"What are you going to be when you grow up?"*
 In time, the question gets replaced. *"What are you going to be when (and IF) you grow old?"*

It's a big and important question. To answer it, it can be helpful to determine: "What am I hoping NOT to be if I grow old?"

There is some help (this morning) from another place in his letters where Paul writes of sowing and reaping.

Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

NOTES:

1. **It's very possible to be deceived about God.** Understanding God matters. For many reasons. But a person can live for years with a faulty view of God. For years and years. For his whole life!

Here's one such deception: **Galatians 6:7** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked... On the one hand, we can deceive ourselves about God's willingness and ability to hold us accountable for our actions.

Romans 14:10,12 ... we will all stand before the judgment seat of God... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Life in this world is meaningful. But it's not just about something. It's about someone! The fact is, we live in a **highly personal world** and **God is that person**. And we are responsible to him.

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. The idea that God holds us responsible for our actions is something that a young man might mock. But God is not mocked. (So **everyone** needs a Savior!) (And even with a Savior, we will give account.)

2. **Whether or not it looks like it, God sees to it that people do experience the consequences of their actions.**

It's easy to be deceived on this because appearances can be quite to the contrary. It seems that the wicked prosper. The righteous do suffer. Appearances are deceptive. There are 2 psalms written specifically about this: **Psalms 37 & 73** (Timing is the issue.)

3. **Life constantly presents us with different sorts of opportunities to sow and reap.**

Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Having just concluded the **2 Corinthians 9** series, it should be clear to us, I think, what it means to "sow to one's own flesh" and to "sow to the Spirit."

It means using the gifts that God has given us to produce a result ["Sowing seed" in order to "reap a harvest."]

Here in this letter to the Galatian churches, Paul the apostle is thinking about **personal sowing** and about **personal harvests**: He is thinking about "two very different sets of opportunities"! He is saying that **the idea of the opportunity to sow the seed**, the money or ability or time or energy, **either comes from the flesh**: our own appetites and desires and itches and cravings and passions and pleasures... **or it comes from the Spirit of God**. From God Himself. The infinitely holy God who loves righteousness and hates lawlessness!

We reap what we sow. Now returning to the question: *"What am I hoping NOT to be if I grow old?"*

➔ NOT "a dirty old man" OR a mean old man OR a foolish old man.

Before choosing rebellion, don't be deceived by a look at a young rebel. Look at an old rebel. Don't look at a young party girl to assess what it matters what you do at a party. Look at an old party girl.

Look at an immoral person after decades of living in that direction. And look at a wise person decades later.

ACTIONS:

- a) **Let us choose our thoughts wisely.** Not everyone has a dirty mind.

But, in a sense, every human mind is made of dirt. ("Dust to dust," etc.)

When a thought shows up in our minds, when an idea "comes to mind," whether it comes to us from our own physicality, our own flesh, or whether it comes to us from God the Holy Spirit, we can refuse to think about it or we can choose to think about it. If we let that thought stay there in our minds, it will sink down into the soil of our minds, into the rich fertile dirt of our minds, and take root and grow and bear fruit: corruption or eternal life.

We ourselves choose what we allow ourselves to think about.

Which movies we watch, which TV shows we watch, which music we listen to

Which people we think about, which relationships we mull over

Which feelings we cling to, which experiences we go over and over → these are choices we make.

We should be careful not to be deceived about this. We will reap according to what we choose to sow: in the world, in our relationships, but first in our minds! What thoughts we allow to take root will affect what we become.

An insult or a disappointment can reap a large harvest of bitterness.

A curiosity about how sexually explicit some websites have become can reap a destructive "addiction."

Etc.

This is a call to be careful and cautious and clear-headed about the upcoming "*lazy hazy crazy days of summer.*"

This September and October, we will be reaping what we have sown in June, July and August.

Or at least we will be a month or two closer to the harvest (of righteousness or unrighteousness) that we spent some time and energy and money and abilities and opportunities sowing.

Let's not be deceived about this! **Galatians 6:7-8** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Colossians 3:1-4 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Make summer plans: Sow to the Spirit. Don't be deceived about this.

- b) **Let us not grow tired of sowing good seed.**

Galatians 6:7-9 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked... Mockers who mock God do so in two directions! Mockers who mock God and the things of God can be wrong in two directions! So can we!

On the one hand, we can deceive ourselves about God's willingness and ability to chastise and discipline us.

On the other hand, we can deceive ourselves about God's willingness and ability to reward us for our behavior.

Galatians 6:7-9 ... the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

But **Proverbs 15:3** The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil **and the good.**

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. Let's not miss the positive possibilities for the summer ahead: to sow to the Spirit and to reap "life": real life; abundant life; eternal life! We can arrive at September more alive than ever! Experiencing more life than ever! And more fruit. More experience of helping other people come to life.