

## Gather and Scatter

2 of 2 | We Scatter to Sow

### SLIDE 1 Introduction

Last Sunday I opened this brief series with the idea that *We Gather to Grow*. Without conveying all I said again, let me just add, it's all about your attitude—why you come to church. You can come to be built up and strengthened for service in the field or you can just come to express your own needs and concerns.

Many times we are just too self-focused. We need to have in mind the future of God's kingdom and the part we play in it. Like my Pastor in Texas, Wayne Biggs said, "In the church you are either the sent or the sender." You are here to equip others for service or you are here to be equipped to serve.

### SLIDE 2 There Are Other Needs

Yes, the church has needs and you also have personal needs, but if those needs begin to outweigh the purpose for which we come together, then we lose our place in the Kingdom of God. We "*muddy the waters*" (Ezekiel 34:18,19) and "*bring no fruit to perfection*." (Luke 8:14) Something is wrong with a plant that doesn't bear fruit or cast seed. (lifestyle and ministry or witness and words)

However, if you do look at your church as an equipping center, then what is it equipping you with? It is filling you with seed to sow—things that so stir your heart that you have to share them with everyone you meet.

We need to be more concerned with the spiritual lives of others than with our own needs and blessings. We need to grow into spiritual moms and dads for this generation that is upon us.

The Apostle Paul said it this way to the people churches served:

### SLIDE 3 2nd Corinthians 12:15 (KJV) "*I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.*"

We spend time here at church to prepare us to spend time with others in the field. Time is the most valuable asset we will ever possess, and how you spend it determines what you reap in life.

### SLIDE 4 Psalm 126:5, 6 (NIV) "*<sup>5</sup> Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. <sup>6</sup> Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.*"

We need to shed a few tears for the lost state of our families, friends, and co-workers. We need to be carrying something with us when we scatter.

Sheaves here are the un-shucked ears of corn. They are the wheat encased in the chaff. It takes the wind of God to separate the two. However, they won't sit under the word nor benefit from its teaching until they are saved by God's Spirit.

Psalm 112 talks about the righteous. It lists a lot of things about them, but here's the ones I want to focus on:

**SLIDE 5 Psalm 112:6-9 (NIV)** *"<sup>6</sup> Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever. <sup>7</sup> They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord."*

**SLIDE 6** *"<sup>8</sup> Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear; in the end they will look in triumph on their foes. <sup>9</sup> **They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor**, their righteousness endures forever; their horn will be lifted high in honor."*

Whatever you receive from God is designed to be shared with others. We need to "freely scatter" what God has imparted to us. His blessings are "more than enough." Therefore we should always be involved in giving what we have been given from the Lord. Share the Word. It is life and peace to us and it is life and peace to those we share it with.

The Apostle Peter encourages us to share our gifts with others. There's no reason to be stingy with what God gives you. There is so much more available. Peter says:

**SLIDE 7 1st Peter 4:10, 11 (NIV)** *"<sup>10</sup> **Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others**, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."*

**SLIDE 8** *"<sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks **the very words of God**. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides,..."*

**SLIDE 9** *"...so that **in all things God may be praised** through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."*

Too often we consider doing this only in church, when the people around us each day need it just as much or even more. We are gifted not just to bless ourselves, but to be a gift to others of God's grace.

Jesus himself explained to us what the Kingdom of God is like:

**SLIDE 10 Mark 4:30-32 (NIV)** *"<sup>30</sup> Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God*

*is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth."*

**SLIDE 11** *"<sup>32</sup> **Yet when planted, it grows** and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."*

Everyone ought to know that if you don't put something in the ground you won't get anything out of the ground.

It's like someone who plants weeds, expecting corn. You get what you plant. Acceptance? Plant acceptance. Forgiveness? Plant forgiveness. Love? Plant love.

The devil is very active about planting seeds of fear, worry, doubt, and false expectations into people's hearts and minds.

It's God's principle of seedtime and harvest instituted all the way back in Genesis. You can't *cultivate* what you did not *instigate*. You can't *tend it* until you *send it*. You can't reap what you did not sow. What you keep, you will not reap. You must quit holding on to it and start sowing it.

This same principle applies to your finances. You have to invest seed money before it will pay you any dividends.

### **SLIDE 12 Grace Under Pressure**

There was a great persecution that arose in Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen. Many of the believers had to flee for their lives to escape imprisonment or even death. We would say it was not a good time for the church.

However, the believers looked at it differently. In the book of Acts when Paul approved of the stoning of Stephen, he then initiated a great persecution against the church. Let's read about that and see what resulted from this scattering of the saints:

**SLIDE 13 Acts 8:1-4 (NIV)** *"<sup>1</sup> On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup> Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him."*

**SLIDE 14** *"<sup>3</sup> But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. <sup>4</sup> **Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.**"*

The very next thing we read is about Philip leading a great revival in Samaria. Like Philip, we need to quit hanging around the church and start a revival wherever we

go.

God is looking for labors in his field, reaping the harvest. You are not alone. Many times when you witness to someone, you will find that others have been there before you sowing their seed.

### **SLIDE 15** How's the Field Looking?

If we want to speed the return of our Lord, then we need to get busy completing the task that he has given us. We need to scatter from here each week with precious seed to sow. Then we need to come into the church each week and report on how it went in the field.

How much seed was sown? How are we tending it? Is any of it ready for harvest? Remember, if it has been sown, it must be watered. Maybe you aren't sowing a seed but you are watering it by confirming what someone else has told others about Jesus.

Just remember how Jesus looks at the church and its work. He told his disciples this:

**SLIDE 16** **Matthew 24:14 (KJV)** *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."*

We need to cease looking for quitting time and focus on the work at hand. Quit being clock watchers and get busy working in the field.

The final trumpet will sound at the proper time when all we have been called to do is complete.

### **SLIDE 17** Altar Time

So we need to change our view of our gatherings. From just fellowshiping and worshipping to becoming disciples of God's Word and equipping ourselves for service.

It's amazing how much better a day will go when you are properly equipped with the tools you need for the task at hand.