



SOWING & GROWING

PREPARING FOR THE BRIGHT DAYS AHEAD

SERIES: Sowing & Growing TEACHER: Jim Firth DATE: 2/25/2024

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Question #1

What did you resonate with?

Question #2

Was there anything you wrestled with?

Question #3

The man Jesus healed at the pool of Bethesda was paralyzed. Why do you think before Jesus healed him he asked “Do you want to be well?” Do you think this man ever longed for his past self? Or was he grateful, and living life to the fullest?

Question #4

If there is a God, you have a moral obligation to do remarkable things with your life. What do you think of this idea? Is it new to you? Does it make you think of ways to engage with your life and with others when you think of it with this perspective?

Question #5

God uses hardship to perfect us, and He does the heavy lifting. Why do you think it's important to know that life isn't easy? How can you remind yourself to expect and accept hard things in life while also leaning on God?

Question #6

Read Psalm 126:6 below. Even if it takes an emotional toll, planting reaps a harvest. Why does this act show faith? Can you think of an example of "planting" in your life?

Psalm 126:6, ISV

The one who goes out weeping, carrying a bag of seeds, will surely return with a joyful song, bearing sheaves from his harvest.

Question #7

As we orient our lives towards God, He gives us courage to live a remarkable life. What areas of life do you need God's encouragement in?

Question #8

There's the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. What are some examples of each? How can we remember to choose the right "hard?"

TEACHING SCRIPTURE CITATIONS

John 5:1-17, ESV — The Healing At The Pool On Sabbath

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

² Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. ³ In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. ⁵ One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” ⁷ The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” ⁸ Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” ⁹ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.” ¹¹ But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” ¹² They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” ¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. ¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. ¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

Luke 5:17-26, NIV — Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. ¹⁸ Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. ¹⁹ When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. ²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? ²⁴ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. ²⁶ Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “**We have seen remarkable things today.**”

TEACHING SCRIPTURE CITATIONS - CONTINUED

John 14:1-14, NIV

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.”

⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Acts 14:22b, NIV

“We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.

Philippians 2:13, ISV

For it is God who is producing in you both the desire and the ability to do what pleases him.

Matthew 13:31-32, NLT — Parable of the Mustard Seed

Here is another illustration Jesus used: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.”

1 Timothy 4:8-9, NET

For “physical exercise has some value, but godliness is valuable in every way. It holds promise for the present life and for the life to come.” ⁹This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance.

Psalms 126:6, ISV

The one who goes out weeping, carrying a bag of seeds, will surely return with a joyful song, bearing sheaves from his harvest.

TEACHING SCRIPTURE CITATIONS - CONTINUED

Psalm 92:12-14, NLT

But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon.

¹³For they are transplanted to the Lord's own house. They flourish in the courts of our God. Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green.