

Place: Lurgan Baptist 6:11:2005

Reading: Psalm 126:1-6

" THE SONG OF THE SOUL-WINNER, "

A friend of William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army was speaking with him before he left on an evangelistic tour. He said this, "*I dropped on my knees with General Booth at my side and prayed a stammering and stuttering prayer. Then the General talked with God about the outcasts of London, the poor of New York, the lost of China, and the great world lying in wickedness. Then he opened his eyes as if he were looking into the very face of Jesus and with sobs he prayed God's blessing upon every pastor, evangelist, and with his eyes still overflowing with tears he bade me goodbye, and started away over eighty years of age to preach on the continent the good news of the gospel.*" My do we have **a similar concern** for the souls of men ? Do we know anything about "*sowing in tears ?*" Do we know what it is to "*go forth weeping bearing precious seed ?*" Now many believe that this psalm was penned with reference to some great deliverance of the people of God out of bondage and distress. Some say that it celebrates their return out of Babylonian captivity in the time of Ezra. (Ezra 1:1) Others tell us that this psalm seems to fit the time of Hezekiah and the Assyrian invasion. (2 Kings 18-19) Will you notice again the sub-title, "*A Song of Degrees or Ascents.*" We noted that there were fifteen of these psalms (120-134) and these psalms were sung by Jewish

pilgrims en route to Jerusalem for one of the feast days. It seems that there were certain places along the way where the pilgrims stopped and would sing one of these psalms. Psalm 126 is the seventh of these songs. Now there are three distinct movements in this Psalm. There is,

1. Praise for Spiritual Returning:

They rejoice in the fact that God has brought them back from captivity. Laughter and singing fill the air.

2. Prayer for Spiritual Reviving:

For the psalmist says (126:4) The word "*streams,*" is literally "*torrents.*" The Psalmist wanted God to restore the ravished country to its former beauty and prosperity. But the prayer is much deeper than a prayer for physical prosperity, my this is a prayer for spiritual revival. This needs to be our prayer, "*Turn again south,*" a spiritual awakening that will revive the church, reach the lost, and cleanse the land of its sins.

3. A Promise for Spiritual Reaping:

For in the closing verses we have in essence what God says to us about the important matter of winning people to faith in Jesus Christ. I want you to notice here,

(1) A PLAN WE NEED TO INITIATE

Its enshrined in these words, "*He that goeth forth bearing precious seed.*" (126:6) Now notice that this

plan involves two things,

(a) IT INVOLVES GOING:

“ *He that goeth forth*, ” (126:6) The picture which the psalmist gives here is a very familiar one in the Bible lands. It’s the picture of a farmer with a leather seed bag over his shoulder. He is walking to and fro in the fields reaching into the basket for the seed, and he’s scattering the seed through the fields. Christ employed the same picture in one of His parables. The Lord Jesus said,

“ *Behold, there went out a sower to sow.* ” (Mk 4:3) There is drama, exhilaration, and hope in this picture. Here is our graphic picture of our New Testament mandate to tell folk about Christ. My here is our priority assignment, this is our mandate from heaven. Christ commissioned us, “ *Go ye therefore*, ” (Matt 28:19) or “ *As you go, make disciples.* ” My this is the kind of lifestyle evangelism that God wants every believer to adopt. The Lord wants every one of us, as we go, wherever we go, to witness and win people to faith in Christ. He wants us to take the good seed, the Word of God, go our where people are, plant the seed of the Word in human hearts and bring forth a golden harvest for the granaries of heaven. You see, it is assumed that a man who has the saving seed will go out and sow it somewhere. Haggai raised the question, “ *Is the seed yet in the barn ?* ” (2:19) Charles Spurgeon said, “ *the church must not keep the seed in the granary for such as would inquire of it, but must go forth and scatter it among those who are too ignorant to inquire of it or too indifferent to seek for the seed.* ”

My the seed is intended to be shared, not stored, to be planted not pocketed. We are not living in a day when lost people are coming to church in large masses, but we have a mandate from heaven to go to where lost people are. I heard about a young man who became a shoe salesman for a shoe company. They sent him to Africa to sell shoes. After he’d been there for about a month he resigned and came back.

He said, “ *those folks don’t wear shoes over there.* ” They assigned another young salesman to go to Africa to sell shoes. He’d been there about two weeks and he shot a telegram to the home office that said, “ *Send more shoes. There are prospects everywhere.* ” My there are prospects everywhere here in our community ! They are at the shopping centre, in the stores, on the streets. And you and I have the saving seed to go and reach them. My have we ever really “ *gone forth.* ” Or are we still “ *armchair Christians.* ”? Do we prefer our own ease, comfort, pleasure while the world at large can go to hell ? Barry Goldwater once said, “ *The political battles of this generation will be won on the doorstep.* ” That is where the harvest is. The Mormons realise that, the J.W. realise that. They are harvesting on the doorsteps of USA, Britain, Japan, India, the world ! But what about the church ? But what about the believers ? What about us ? Do you not know what we’re doing ? We’re criticising other soul-winners in the field, we’re glorying in what we did in the past, we’re speaking about what we’re going to do in the future ! “ *He that goeth forth.* ” That involves personality, activity, sincerity ! Do you know what David Brainerd the missionary to North American Indians said ? “ *I wanted*

to wear myself out in His service, for His glory. I cared not how or where I lived, or what hardships I went through so that I could but gain souls for Christ.” (a)

(b) IT INVOLVES SOWING:

Now there are many figures of speech for the Bible, in the Bible itself. It is compared to many things. A sword, (Eph 6:17) a song, (Ps 119:54) a statute, (Ps 119:8) and here it is compared to a seed. “ *He that goeth forth bearing precious seed.*” Now there is power in a seed. There is life in a seed. There is life in a seed that can crack concrete. Do you know what Christ said ? “ *The seed is the Word of God.*” (Lk 8:11) Peter said, “ *being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.*” (1 Pet 1:23) You see, you cannot expect to have a spiritual harvest unless you sow the seed of the good Word of God. Today we have all kinds of substitutes for the Word of God. We substitute drama. We’ve gotten the idea that entertainment will get the job done. My God's Word is pre-eminent and must be preached in our churches. Why ? Because people get saved around the Word of God. The Bible says, “ *Faith cometh by hearing*,” (Rom 10:17) The psalmist says, “ *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.*” (19:7) Have you ever thought about the Bible being compared to a seed ? A seed is a very small thing, rather insignificant, but there’s power on the inside. For instance, just take one copy of the Bible and put it alongside a Worldbook or an Encyclopaedia Britannica and it seems to be rather insignificant but the power of the Bible is not in the

number of its pages.

The power of the Bible is in the fact that it is the Word of God, conveying spiritual truth to the hearts of men. Take a seed. There is an apple in an orchid, but there is also an orchid in an apple. Is the same not true about the Word of God ? My *the Word of God is not subject to decay. Let others dissect the seed and let you and I sow the seed. Let other people doubt the seed and let you and I sow the seed. Let other people deny the seed and let you and I sow the seed.* Just keep sowing the seed in children’s hearts, with the youth and elderly, and the seed will do its work. My do you believe this book has life-giving power ? Do you believe that this seed which is the Word of God, is precious, (2 Pet 1:4) powerful, (Rom 1:16) and productive in the hearts of those who receive it ? Then tell me, are you sowing this seed ? Are you spreading this Word ? I heard about a lady who was not married and she was getting a little anxious about it. She shared her concern with her pastor.

The pastor said, “ *The Lord’s got a plan one man for one woman and one woman for one man. That’s God’s plan and you can’t improve on it.*” She said, “ *Pastor, I’m not trying to improve on it. I just want to get in on it.*” My will you do that today ? Get in on God’s plan for here is the greatest business in all of the earth. “ *He that goeth forth bearing precious seed.*” (1)

(2) A PASSION WE NEED TO STIMULATE

“ *He that goeth forth and weepeth*,” “ *They that sow in tears*,” Would you look at the picture again very

closely ? Did you see that as the farmer drops the seed from his bag he is also dropping a tear from his eye ? A seed and a tear. *He married solid seed to liquid tear.* Often in the east the sowers of old would often have sown with little prospect of rain to make the growth of the seed possible, and they would bemoan that. Can you see the sower treading over the parched ground and weeping over the hopelessness of it all ? But still he goes on bearing the seed for sowing. Now why does the soul-winner weep ? Because he feels a responsibility, because of the discouragement's in the way, because of his inability to reach the masses. Why does the soul-winner weep ? Because he knows the value of a soul. (Mk 8:38) General Booth once received a letter from one of his officers telling him that he saw very little fruit for his labours and asking the General's advice. The reply came in two words, "***Try tears.***" Is that a price we are prepared to pay ? Are we prepared to weep over lost souls, lost sons, lost neighbours and friends ? My we are not going to move the hardened sinners of our society today until, first of all our heart is moved with genuine compassion and concern for them. I'm not advocating rolling in the hay and foaming at the mouth or some hyper-emotionalism. But someone needs to care if people are to be saved. Christ shed His blood, surely we can shed some tears. There is (2) Now how can we stimulate a passion for souls ?

(a) BY LOOKING AT THE SCRIPTURES:

You see, when you read the Bible, you will discover that some of the greatest people shed tears. The strongest people in the Bible wept. Listen to Jeremiah

as he cries, "*Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.*" (Jer 9:1) Paul, the intellectual, the profound theologian who hammered out the great doctrines of the faith, the man to whom God gave the revelation of the church, wept on several occasions. Paul said, "*I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*" (Acts 20:31) Concerning those in his own nation he said, "*I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.*" (Rom 9:2) Then there was young Timothy. What was impressive to Paul about Timothy ? Paul said, "*Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears.*" (2 Tim 1:4) Surely when the church again learns to weep for the lost, we will see lost people won to faith in Christ, as they ought to be won.

(b) BY LOOKING AT THE SAVIOUR:

"*Jesus wept,*" Three times in the Gospels we are told that He wept. "*Strong crying and tears,*" is the Holy Spirit's description. (Heb 5:7)

(1) Christ wept over this world's SORROW:

(Jn 11:35) Standing before Lazarus's tomb sensing the heartbreak around him, Jesus wept. He wept at the sorrow and anguish that sin and death brought in its train.

(2) Christ wept over this world's SHAME:

For He stood on the heights outside the city and wept

because Jerusalem and the nation had rejected Him.

(Lk 19:41)

(3) Christ wept over this world's SIN:

For a “ *world of sinners lost and ruined by the fall.*” In Gethsemane the tears rolled down, mingled with blood, as He thought of a lost world. The Saviour stood before a cross and the Bible says, “ *when He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death.*” (Heb 5:7) My are you like your Saviour ? Do you have a heart of concern for the lost ? When was the last time that we had such a concern for lost friends that we actually shed some tears of concern that they might be saved ? (a) (b)

(c) BY LOOKING AT THE SAINTS:

Think of William Burns as a young lad of 17 years of age, visiting Glasgow for the first time, overwhelmed by so many sad faces. He got separated from his mother but eventually she found him weeping bitterly, “ *What ails you lad ? Are you ill ?*” she asked. “ *Oh, mother, mother,*” he sobbed, “ *the thud of those many Christless feet on their way to hell breaks my heart.*” Does Christless feet on the way to hell, break your heart ? Do you know something ? There is power in tears. There is something about tears that gives power to spiritual concern. Horticulturists say that if you soak seed in water it makes it more productive. And if you cover your concern for lost people with compassion it has tremendous power, for what your logic and brilliance is not able to do, genuine concern can. “ *He*

that goeth forth weeping,” The trouble is, our ministry is not watered by tears. That is why so little fruit is seen, even when we get professions of faith. My we're weeping about the wrong things today. People today are weeping over sexy soap operas, and silly movies, and sentimental magazines. ***Who weeps today for souls that are dying and going to an eternal hell ?*** My what is it going to take to cause us to weep again ? Does the cross of Christ move your heart anymore ? The cross ought to move us to tears. Does the condition of lost souls move you to tears ? Listen to the words of Christ again “ *he that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him.*” (Jn 3:36) Will you think about that for a moment ? Will you put your boy over against it, your daughter, your wife, your husband ! The Lord Jesus spoke about a place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched ! My do we really believe that souls who die in their sins are lost and going to hell ?

Do you believe that if your loved one dies as they live they will lift up their eyes in torment ? If you do, how can you stay away from the prayer meeting ? If you do, how can you not cry out to God to have mercy ? If you do, how can you stay dry-eyed ? Why can't we learn to weep again over the souls of men ? (1) (2)

(3) A PROMISE WE NEED TO APPROPRIATE
“ *Shall doubtless with him,*” Its,

(a) THE PROMISE OF REJOICING:

" Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing," (126:6)
The word "*doubtless,*" means "*no doubt about it.*"
Now God does not promise that everyone will be saved,
God does not promise that everyone we speak to will be
saved. But He does promise that sooner or later we'll
get a harvest. We sow the seed. God takes care of the
results.

" Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing." (126:6)
The tears of anxious labour give way to the gladness of
success. My ... its a thrill to have experiences in life,
but nothing compares to winning someone to Jesus
Christ.

C .H. Spurgeon said, "*Never did I know overflowing,
unutterable happiness of the most ennobling order till I
first heard of one who had sought and found the
Saviour through my means. No young mother ever so
rejoiced over her firstborn child, no warrior was so
exultant over a hard fought victory.*" My ... have you
had the experience ? The joy that comes through
reaping.

(b) THE PROMISE OF REWARD:

" Bringing his sheaves with him," (126:6) Is it not
striking to find this promise of fruitfulness in close
contact with the nations return from captivity ? You see,
its when our own souls are revived, that the souls of
others are blessed by our labours ! There was a man
named John Broddus who was the President a
Theological Seminary many years ago. He was a great
scholar and preacher. He was a great witness. John
Broddus led a retarded boy to the Saviour in his church.
After he led him to the Lord, that retarded boy could

never seem to get over it. John said that every time in
the succeeding years when he would see that retarded
lad he had a big smile on his face, and with his hand
extended he would say, "*Howdy John ! Thank you,
John ! I'll never forget you, John.*" John Broddus said
he sometimes wondered if when he got to heaven, the
first person he'd see would be that young boy, with a
clear mind. He often wondered if perhaps that boy on
the streets of glory would walk up to him and say, "*Howdy,
John ! Thank you John ! I'll never forget you,
John.*"

Samuel Rutherford as he lay in prison in Aberdeen
thinking of his congregation in Anwoth he expressed
his thoughts.

***" Fair Anwoth on the Solway to me thou art still dear
Even from the verge of heaven I drop for thee a tear
Oh, if one soul from Anwoth meet me at Gods right
Hand, my heaven shall be two heavens in
Immanuel's
land."***

My ... when that glad day comes when you will have
souls to present to Christ ? Will you say, "*Lord here I
am and the souls you've given me ?*" Or will you lose
out ? Will you go empty-handed ?

***" Must I go an empty handed
Must I meet my Saviour so ?
Not one soul with which to greet Him,
Must I empty handed go ?"***

