

Bread Corn Is Bruised (Isaiah 28:28)

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon explores the transformative process God uses to prepare believers to become vessels of nourishment for others through suffering and humility.

Scripture: Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 55:10, Matthew 5:3, John 12:24, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Philippians 2:8, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Brokenness"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. preaches about God's ultimate intention in preparing us to be broken bread, emphasizing the process of growth and maturity in our spiritual journey. He compares the stages of planting and harvesting wheat to the phases believers go through in their walk with Christ, highlighting the importance of being fully submitted to God's transformative work. The sermon underscores the need for humility, brokenness, and readiness to be used by God to feed the hungry, even if it means undergoing painful and challenging processes to become the bread in the Master's hands.

Transcript

Broken Bread, God's Ultimate Intention We have all heard of the work that must be done on the soil to prepare it as a suitable place to plant the seeds of wheat, and have so often heard how our blessed Lord must similarly prepare our hearts to receive His Word. All this is very true, and in fact is a necessary work of the Lord. However, the breaking up of our hearts and the uprooting of all the rocks and weeds in our lives in preparation for the planting of His Word, His life, and His Christ, is only the beginning, and if we endure this stage of God's child training, we are being prepared for an even greater one to come.

So often our focus is upon the Lord's intention to get in us the life of His Son, and to cause this blessed life to grow in us into full adulthood, and yet His purpose is more than this. If we follow on with the analogy of the planting of wheat, we can gain some great insights into our Father's further intention for us, and understand why He is doing the things He is doing in us, and why He is about to move in most remarkable ways. Only by fully submitting to His dealings will we ever be bread in the Master's hands to feed the hungry.

There is no other way that this can occur. Lessons from the Wheat Once the soil has been worked over quite severely and the stones, weeds, and other foreign objects are removed, the crop is planted. Following is a season of watering and quiet growth of the seed. Now the only desire of the harvester is to see the crop come to maturity, so the next stage can begin. Next stage? Yes beloved, the end of planting

wheat is not the growth, nor the beauty of the golden wheat shining in the dawning and setting of the sun, nor the bowing of the mature wheat down to the ground, making it distinguishable from the weeds, which stand tall and erect.

Yet, how often do we suppose that God's end is being realized when the beauty of a matured Christian life is being expressed. This is a serious misconception! We see the loveliness of the golden wheat typifying the character and nature of the original One Seed from which we came, our blessed Savior. We see the bending of the crop as it bows lower and lower, signifying a life of increasing Christ-like humility, being shown in all we say and do and in the ways we act and conduct ourselves, both in private and in the assembly.

We also see in this stage of the ripening of the wheat the amazing resilience demonstrated as the wheat bends and sways in strong winds, never being uprooted, but just riding out the storms and remaining rooted deeply in the soil. This can be seen to typify the deep inner union the matured believer shares with the ascended Christ, and that the winds of earth, no matter how severe, do not disrupt this union and, despite their fury, do not affect the matured crop. However wonderful this picture may seem, beloved, the Lord's end is not simply the matured crop of wheat.

Rather, His ultimate purpose for the wheat is that the hungry might be fed. Believe it or not, the matured wheat, though beautiful and majestic, is of no value at all as far as usefulness to feed the hungry unless the next stage occurs. Yet too often we are not expecting the next stage of our Father's plan, and are caught off guard, at times even resisting and fighting against the very instruments, means and methods our Father uses to move us to this all important next stage in His plan.

What is next on our Father's schedule? The next step in the Lord's dealings with us as wheat can be seen in several phases. First the harvest, next the bundling of the wheat, and then a visit to the threshing floor to be beaten and smashed to pieces. Finally, the grains are ground almost to dust--producing fine flour suitable for the baking of bread. Harvest Time Firstly comes the harvest. Matured wheat was usually cut with sharp sickles. Now this is the beginning of the process that is essential if the wheat will serve the purpose for which it was planted.

It would be so nice to just leave the crop deeply planted in the soil, to be admired by all, but that would be falling short of its created purpose. Secondly, the cut bundles of wheat were gathered together into tied bunches, called sheaves--a pile of cut down stalks in which the beauty of the individual stalks of wheat is entirely lost. No more individual acclaim, or identity, no personal "shining," but simply tied together into a bunch of similar pieces! Lastly, these bundles were gathered into the arms of hired slaves, and brought to the threshing floor.

It is here on the threshing floor that the wheat underwent the most extreme processing yet. Threshing floors were level plots of ground, often on a rock surface, in which sheaves of wheat were placed for the purpose of being threshed. What does it mean for the wheat to be threshed? During the threshing process the grains are separated from the stalks and other parts of the wheat. This was done either by oxen driven over the grain treading out the kernels with their hooves, by machines made either of planks with stones or bits of iron fastened to the lower surface to make it rough, and rendered heavy by some weight upon it, or by small wagons with wheels like saws!

Then the winnowing process began, in which a broad shovel or wooden fork with bent prongs would throw against the wind a shovelful of the mass of chaff, straw and grain that was left from the threshing, so that

the chaff would be blown away, leaving only the precious kernels. This was usually done at night since at that time there was a cool breeze. The chaff and straw were burned and the wheat then sifted. But before it could become bread it must undergo still a deeper crushing and bruising as it was ground between stones into flour.

God's Purpose in Planting Well, quite a process to say the least, but what does all this have to do with us? The beginning stages of the planting and growth of the wheat can be seen to correspond with the beginnings of our life in Jesus. There is that stage in which the soil of our hearts is prepared, and the Lord uproots and removes the stones, thorns and other residue of the old life. Then there may be a time when we seem to be quite receptive to His Word planted in us and are growing quite nicely, the Lord graciously keeping us irrigated, opening up channels for His water to flow to the newly planted seeds.

We will also experience seasons of "weeding" when the working of the cross severs us from the soul life and all its vices, along with the fatal tendency for the "I" to become exalted. As well, there are seasons where we are subjected to the fire that eliminates the "wood, hay and stubble," and causes the beauty of Christ, the "gold, silver, and precious stones," to be seen. All this is wonderful, but is not the end. And beloved, through all of this the Lord would speak to us lovingly and warn us not to settle down and become unguarded after we have gone through the first stages of our life in Jesus.

Remember beloved, that despite its beauty, the crop is very strangely of no use to the Master or others until it loses that beauty and is ground to pieces! Are we prepared for the Lord to take us further? Are we ready when we are ripened, and golden, and tall, and yes, even bowed down in Christ's humility, to be cut down, bound and carried by hired slaves to the threshing floor, there to be tread upon by oxen's hooves? We might ask ourselves, what is the purpose of this heavenly life, and the coming to sonship and maturity?

Is it that we can be admired by others, an unharvested piece of wheat "doing our thing for Jesus," and showing what we think to be His life and character to others? Oh, beloved, this mentality falls far short of the Lord's intention. There is no "showing off the beauty of Jesus" in the Lord's plan, beloved. Just when we get enough of His life to correspond to the harvest stage, He will cut us down, and cause even that beauty we had of Him to be lost in a pile of sheaves and then to be subject to incredible force, and pain, in order to break us to nothing!

There will be no more beauty that we can boast in--no more beauty for others to see. Ironically, it is only at this time that we meet the need of the Master's heart. For it is only then that we become the raw material from which He makes bread to feed the hungry. Some Words of Caution to Consider We must be careful that we do not find ourselves fighting against the very thing the Lord wants to use in our lives in order to bring us to the harvest! Beloved, what appears to us as unkind, painful and devastating could very well be the precious way in which our blessed Lord is making us "bread," and I assure you that it is deeply within us to resist anything that threatens our "beauty in Jesus" or at least what we perceive this beauty to be.

All of us get fixed in our minds certain things in our lives, in our "work for Jesus," as well as what we perceive our gifts and callings to be, and we hold very tightly to them, because we are sure that they are avenues through which the life and nature of Jesus can be seen and expressed. The problem? All too often, these things represent the crop before the harvest and before the threshing floor. Thus much of what is in the Lord's house today--ministries, gifts, works etc.--is yet the unharvested crop, trying to express something of what the Lord is after.

And much, much limitation and weakness have resulted because of an unwillingness to pay the extreme cost involved in going on into believing the Lord for the full harvest. Yet there are indeed those who will hear His call to go on unto the full harvest, those who will go all the way in this bruising and crushing process. When the Lord does bring to an end those things we were hoping He would use as channels of His life there is often a season of great despair, darkness, and even anger.

It is in this arena where we see some deep areas where self is yet very much alive, fighting fiercely to keep the crop in one piece, standing tall in the sun so that all may see its beauty. Let us ask the Lord to forgive us for so often resisting the things He has brought into our lives which He intended to use as means to bring us to the harvest, and pray for deep humility and brokenness so we may bow low enough so the harvesters may cut away. Another struggle that may occur when one hears the voice of the Lord, and allows Him to bring the beautiful crop to the painful, and not-so-beautiful scene of harvesting, is when others will cry out in sharp rebuke and warning because they do not understand why one is submitting to that which seems to be destroying the crop in its maturity.

Some folks will simply not be able to see the Lord's hand in leading one along the path to the harvest and will resist out of sincerity; the rebukes of others will be springing out of their own unwillingness to allow the same radical dealings in their own lives and works. Though cloaked in their counsel to others to "resist the sickle," these individuals are really saying "No way" to the Lord's desire to deal similarly with them. We will have to learn to follow the Lord even when others discourage us, and take patiently the misunderstandings of our beloved brothers, setting our faces as a flint towards our "Jerusems" in spite of the rebukes of friends and even those we hold most dear.

The reapers are at hand, beloved. Be prepared and rejoice when the Master counts you worthy to be cut down and brought to the threshing floor. For then you will truly experience the joy of coming to nothing, but only in order that you may come to a fuller participation in His Life. For surely He Himself was cut off, but became the Bread of God, the pattern for all who will die that they might be as He is. May the Lord give us grace to endure all His chastening even unto the fullness of the harvest.

May we be very broken in our hearts, not holding onto anything but Christ, and a pure, unfeigned desire to come into submission to all His dealings so we may lack in nothing, but in all things grow up into Him!

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