

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: GOD IS NOT MOCKED

Scripture: Galatians 6:3-9

If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

In the very beginning of Creation God wisely decreed that every tree and herb, and every animal, bird, and fish, should bring forth "after its kind." Without such a law it would have been foolish and futile to command man to dress and tend the garden, or to exercise a stewardship over the good earth. Suppose that there were no such law or principle -- that no one could ever know when he planted a seed whether it would be wheat or tares or corn or beans or radishes. Then life would have been one perpetual gamble, without any man ever being able to choose the results he wanted from life, or to exercise any control over his environment in a world governed by whim and chance alone. Because every seed, every plant, every living organism, always brings forth "after its kind," men may choose the kind of results they want, the kind of crops they want, and choose their seed accordingly. Only in this way is it possible for man to dress and tend the garden of the earth, as a wise and careful and good steward.

This law of life is not a law of agriculture alone. It applies to the mental, emotional, and spiritual life of man as well. The test of any personality, of any life, of any character, is its fruit. Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," and asked, "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" He pointed out that a good tree brings forth good fruit. The corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit; it must follow the law of reproduction after its kind, and it

therefore brings forth corrupt or evil fruit. The fruit certifies and proves the nature of the tree.

James develops this same idea briefly in the third chapter of his letter, saying that both sweet and bitter water cannot flow from the same fountain, any more than a fig tree can bear olives, or a vine can bear figs. Every plant, every seed, every organism brings forth after its own kind. It does not bear some fruit of one kind and some of another, but all of the same species, after its kind. Men do not gather grapes from thorn trees, or figs from thistles.

In the preceding chapter of the Galatian letter Paul has been speaking of the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Each brings forth after its kind. Man may have whatever he wants. Some day every one of us will have to lay aside the body, the mortal, corruptible flesh in which the spirit has lived here on earth. When that day comes, what will remain? What will you take with you? If you have chosen to cultivate the corruptible things of the flesh-- and them only-- there will be nothing which you can take with you. If you have chosen to sow and to cultivate the incorruptible things of the spirit, the fruitage will be incorruptible, and you can take it with you.

Perhaps it would help our understanding of one of these verses if a different English preposition were used. The King James version says, "He that soweth to

his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting! This does not mean that we actually sow seeds in or to the body. The real meaning is probably better expressed by the preposition for. "He that soweth for his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption!" If all that a man does is for the pleasure, the gratification, the preservation, or the satisfaction of his own physical body, certain results will inevitably follow. His life will be warped and one sided. The body and its wants will take first place. He will be selfish, ruthless, cruel -- with no love or sympathy or compassion for other people, and no regard for their needs. When the moment of death comes, and the body has to be discarded, what will such a person have? Nothing! All of his sowing will have been for the body, and all the fruit will be for the body. When the body is gone, there will be nothing worth while left to show for a lifetime of endeavor.

This is not to say that the body is evil, or that its wants should be ignored. The body needs food, clothing, shelter, warmth in winter. It needs to be protected from disease and peril. All these and many others, should be supplied, not as ends in themselves, but as means to the end that the body may be enabled to support and express and implement the spirit in its endeavors to build a life and a character that will survive the temporary life of the body. He that soweth for the spirit, who chooses every action because it will contribute something to the spiritual life, who chooses every good -- even for the physical body -- because it will nourish the spiritual life, will of the spirit reap life everlasting.

All the works of the flesh -- adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, all bear within them the seeds of their own destruction and decay. Their fruit is death. All the fruits of the Spirit-- love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance -- bear within themselves the seeds of their own life. Their fruit is life. The one who plants and cultivates them is building a spiritual life and

character which will survive the death of the body, and continue for all eternity.

Many of us deceive ourselves into thinking that we are clever enough to evade the law that like always produces like. We deceive ourselves into thinking that God can be hoodwinked, deceived, fooled, or outwitted, if we just don't let him discover what kind of seeds we have planted. Paul says, as if to answer such thoughts, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." Notice the construction of that sentence. Fools, scoffers, and rebellious men do mock at God. They say that he doesn't exist, or that if he does, he can be manipulated, his laws can be evaded. Fools make a mock at sin. They are sure they can get away with it. But do not be deceived, Paul says. Though fools and scoffers and sinners may mock God, God is not mocked. There is no hiding your sin from his eyes. There is no way of evading his law which says that whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

This suggests another incidental thought. We reap in proportion to the amount of seed we sow. If we sow sparingly, we reap sparingly. If we sow generously, we reap as we sow. We can't be stingy with God, and expect his generosity -- not because God is not generous, but because his law is that men sow as they reap. This is true in both the positive and negative sense, in the good sense and in the bad sense. Whatever we sow, the harvest is vastly more than the seed sown. If we sow the fruits of the Spirit, we shall have them multiplied a hundred fold. If we sow the wind, we reap the whirlwind.

Here is both a warning and a promise. "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." That is the warning. "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting!" "In due season, we shall reap, if we faint not." That is the promise. Planting the seed that brings the fruits of the Spirit is not a gamble subject to the whims of a fickle chance; it is an investment. The fruitage is sure. It will begin as soon as we plant, but the reaping will continue and its fruits will endure, through all eternity.