

WHATEVER YOU SOW, YOU SHALL REAP (1)

(Pastor. Chuan)

Opening Prayer:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, we can call you Father because You are so kind to us. Even before the very foundations of the earth, even before You have created us, You had in mind to give us all things that we will inherit Your kingdom as sons. And Lord, indeed, even before we were created, You had in mind so many plans for us, just like a good father. You longed and wished that we would one day, perhaps one day, we will sit by Your side to enjoy what You have given to us, what You have planned for us from all eternity. Lord, we pray today You may open our eyes that we may see what the privilege it is to be called Your sons and Your daughters, we may know why we are living upon this earth and why we do exist at all. Lord, may You speak to us today. May You hear our prayers as we continue to look to You in our future. We pray that in the coming time may indeed be something special, something meaningful to us. So, hear our prayer as we give thanks, and may Your name be highly glorified in our midst. Amen.”

Sow And Reap Vs Investment And Return

Today, the theme is, ‘Whatever You Sow, You Shall Reap’. I think this is a very vital for us to know what to do with these words. It's basically an agricultural term. Unfortunately, almost none of us are farmers here. We only have people doing virtual farming here. So we might not appreciate the theme today. But if I rephrase the theme to investment for good return. Then our eyes start to open. So it's this kind of theme that makes sense to us. This language is more like if you put in 1000, you get 100,000.

If you can understand this theme, you would know that whatever you sow, you will reap. And not only you, but many others will reap. We're not talking about one-to-one, because when you sow one seed, you don't just get one seed back, but instead you might get 34, 64, 104, as the Lord Jesus said. It's not just a one-

to-one correspondence. Whatever you sow, it will be returned to you with dividends, with interest. It will return to you many fours.

Butterfly Effect In Our Spiritual Life

In physics, there is a theory called the butterfly effect. The crux of this theory is that, essentially what happens in a very small change initially, over the long term, it has a significant, large effect elsewhere. This butterfly effect is one of the branch studies under chaos theory which study on random events, disorganized events. This theory was found out by a scientist accidentally in his study on weather. When he tried to organize all his data, he simplified his data from six decimal places to three decimal places and keyed into computer. Somehow, it was not very significant difference. After he'd done so, lo and behold, he found out the result was so different from the original data with the six decimal places. Just the last three insignificant number resulted in a large change in the weather pattern. Therefore, the phrase that came out of it was that when the butterfly flaps its wings here, for example, you might end up having a disaster in the United States. In simple words, butterfly theory states that very minute changes in the physical world, and you can get a totally unpredictable, unforeseen result.

We can apply the same theory for our spiritual life. What you do today affects in the long term what is going to happen in the future. You might think what you do today is very small or insignificant, however, this thing can affect in a large way, in a very unforeseen way after many years. The scripture in James 3: 5-6 said that:

“Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.”

Imagine how can a small insignificant part in our body can lead to a forest fire.

I think most of us had experienced before, at least I myself experienced before the power of this little tongue to cause a devastating effect. Says, I talked about somebody else to another person, may be just an innocuous or innocent statement. This conversation will go around, and it might come back to your ear eventually. The worse thing is, the content might be twisted become a statement that is totally different from what you said and most of the time, this statement will incline to the negative side. This statement can sow a seed of doubt in the other person's mind, and gradually everybody might look at this person different or might have stigma on this person despite the statement wasn't true. In other situation, when you weren't sure of a situation, and you start to give own assumption or opinion by saying may be this or may be that. Unfortunately, this 'may be' can be passing around to become an alleged fact. In a similar way and effect, it can destroy that person altogether. Spiritually, you can see it applies as well, that one small statement can have such a devastating effect.

In the scripture Hosea 8:7, it said that:

"They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind."

Wind is very nice, very pleasant to play with. When you sow or generate a wind, you didn't expect you will get the whirlwind, or I would rather say a tornado. This is precisely what happens. You try to do something small, something pleasant, something fun, but what comes out of it is something devastating. And this is the story of our lives.

From Sincere Person To Monster

Today, many of us are very sincere people. In fact, when you look at the history of man, you see that many people are very sincere. Let's take the monster, the worst person we can think of today. Who is that? Not your schoolmate. Not your colleague. Not your boss. He's not the evilest person in this world. So who is the most evil? Osama? Of course, in the history of man, everyone thinks of Hitler. I read the biography of Hitler. When he was a little boy, he idolized the priest and

pastor in his school. In fact, he wanted or desired to become a pastor or priest. Can you imagine Hitler is standing here preaching? It's unimaginable, right? Later in his life, he wanted to be an artist. He was an Austrian, so he applied to the school of fine arts in Vienna but was rejected. He submitted his artwork, but was rejected with the reason that the quality of his artwork was not good enough and suggested him maybe to pursue in architecture. Although he was rejected, he was quite insistent with his ambition to be an artist. He kept on finding a way to develop this career, so he stuck around in Austria.

At that time, there was the political wind and war everywhere. As an ordinary person like us, Hitler didn't want to fight a war, he didn't want to be a soldier and he even ran out of it. But how can a simple person like Hitler become a monster? He used to be a very free and idle person, he slept in bug park benches and stuck around in Austria to find opportunity to become an artist. Unfortunately, his thinking started to change gradually. And from there on, it became a cascading effect, just like the butterfly effect. From one small thing, it went on to another small thing, and another small thing, opportunity presented itself, another thing, and on and on and on until 55 million people died under his hands. At last, he became a monster.

Sowing The Seed Of Sin And You Will Reap An Irreversible Devastation

Thus, never despise and never underestimate the small things. This is because these small things can determine your future and your destiny. The scripture is telling us is an eternal, unchangeable, invaluable truth, i.e., whatever you sow, you shall reap. Unfortunately, we always tend to sweep aside the sowing. Oftentimes we overlooked those small things for we never thought of the consequences. After all, I'm not hurting anyone, and it does so, it only affects me. I'm not doing harm to anyone. Besides, my way of thinking about that person is just in the mind, it never comes out.

Meanwhile, the common psychology of the sinner is never thought about the consequences when he or she commits sin. We never think about the forest fire that results from it. We must understand a fact that, the damage caused ensuing the words we said out of anger or hatred is irreversible. In most of the

time, we only realized after the fire was burst out. Then, we would feel sorry, feel regret, and say: "Oh, dear, I didn't know one statement like that can cause so much trouble. If I knew I shouldn't have done it ..." Sometimes or often, we all learn, but we all learn through the consequences. But it is useless to cry over the split milk. This situation is even worse when especially come into relationship matter. Your sincere apologize will never restore the relationship to its former level. The wound you made on someone would leave a scar, a mark there. This relationship will never be the same again. Too often we learn from our mistakes, we learn from our consequences.

Like For Like, Evil Begets Evil, Good Begets Good

As a wise man, you got to know what you are sowing. You got to know what the consequences of what you sow. If I sow wheat, I'm going to get a bushel of wheat. If I sow corn, I'm going to get a bushel of corn. You don't say, I sow corn, and then I get wheat. No, right? Like for like, evil begets evil, good begets good. There's no two ways about it. Every farmer knows this. You sow the correct things; you will get precisely.

Every one of us here has the capacity, either for tremendous evil or for growing evil. The former is very obvious, it means you are very evil in the beginning and your threshold for evil is very high. But the latter one means, your evilness is growing from nil. Once you start the evil ball rolling, it tends to grow bigger and bigger. It never gets smaller. It takes a very large change to make a U-turn. It is just like the butterfly effect, it tends to cascade. You throw a stone in the water, the ripple goes out, right? It may cause a sea of change when the ripple goes out. It tends to be like that. Everyone starts out the same. You and I start out the same. Over time, over years, not just tomorrow, not just the next day, not even just the next month. Over time, the rippling effect of your life begins to show more and more clearly.

I have friends who I know more than 30 years here. When we were students in Canada, we were all very enthusiastic and zealous Christian, we were very hot spiritually. Over 30 years, we have been through many indescribable things,

including ups and downs. This including the people we'd been fellowship together or we aided with, they ended up became our enemies. Nevertheless, these had painted our life. I'm not saying they're entirely wrong or we are entirely right. We have our mistakes. Everyone has their mistakes. Everyone has their weaknesses. But over time, how is it that a buddy whom we used to be very close in school or at work became our enemies? How could this intimate relationship have opened a rift. And then it gets further and further and further. What happened? May be the words came out from our tongue that broke this relationship?

When we talk about 30 years of friendship, just like me and other co-workers here. We've been friends for so long and I think this bond of friendship is unbreakable. The longer it is, the tighter the bond, the harder to break.

Wise And Righteous Man Will Shine Like A Star For Ever And Ever

You reap what you sow. Never underestimate the power of changing capacity of a person. It can be very incredible over time. It's like in the beginning everybody starts out the same, and as you travel along the road, you can see more and more the differences emerge. Some will go out this way, some will go that way. The difference might be only one degree deviation each time you travel. In the end, you can be at the totally different direction. It can even go to the 90 degrees away from your targeted direction.

Have you ever watched the stars in the sky? I love to watch stars, especially when the sky is clear, it is simply lovely. Many people use the stars to guide their life, isn't it? Especially in those days in navigation. When I was in Canada, I always looked for the North Star because it is a way to know the direction of North. And many people use it as a guide.

In the book of Job in Bible, it speaks about the Orion. Today we know that Orion is a constellation. It's true that the stars remain in the fixed path for a very long time. They never change that much. That is why today we can have software that can predict the movement of the stars very accurately. With the software, we can either move forward or backward to see the pathway or location of the stars.

We can see where the stars were thousands of years ago and how they move along the path all these years to be in the location now.

Recently, a lawyer charted the stars using this software and then he brought it all the way back 2000 years ago. What is so significant of this 2000 years ago? Of course, it's the event of Christ's birth. He plotted the chart, the movement of the stars, and he came to astronomical empirical evidence of the star of Bethlehem. This is astounding! We have evidence that the star of Bethlehem existed. He showed through the movement that the star stopped. It's a wonderful thing to see what the Bible says is correct. In fact, he used the Bible as a guide, as a map to follow the stars, and he found that it was absolutely correct on the dot that the star of Bethlehem came, and it stopped over Bethlehem. In fact, he even saw the place.

Maybe we can look at the verse in Daniel 12:3,

“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”

Those who have insight will shine brightly, and they will lead many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

The scripture here says that those who have insight are like the stars. Maybe this star represents a person. There are myriads of stars, and together these stars will guide us spiritually in our lives. This verse made me think of those who have insight. In fact, in my life, in terms of insight, life and spiritual things, I learn a lot from many other people, especially the authors of the books I'd read, though many of them are dead. These people give me insight when I was struggling. You know that when you're in darkness sometimes, you might question, where is God? You're in the blackness of the sky, and there's no light ahead. Hence, you need stars to shine your way.

From One Seed To 500 Coworkers

I've experienced times where I say, where is God? God is nowhere to be found. I lived in the darkness day after day. I tried to look for a light, but there was no light as the scripture says. Till one time I read a book by Saint John of the Cross. You know this man has insight. He has been there, and he knows what is about. And the other living person with insight is of course our teacher, Pastor Eric. Imagine, a person shine on others like a star, what kind of effect that person has on generations and generations of people? It must be remarkable.

A brother told me that our church is remarkable. Upon reflection, I think he is right. Our church has been in existence over 30 years, we've made at least 500 co-workers around the world. We're not just talking about disciples. We're talking about people who are committed to serve the Lord. 500, that's an achievement. If you look at the parable of the sower, the Lord says from one seed, you could've produced 34, you produce 64, you produce 100 full. Now in one generation, we can produce 500. This is astounding! This 500 is not only due to one man. As you know, you sow one seed, you get perhaps 12 in the beginning, and then 20. And that 20 goes on to sow and then you get another 20. It's a cascading effect. And that is why we have coworkers now everywhere.

In fact, the Malaysians and Singaporeans are outstanding in this regard. As you know, most of the churches that are found overseas like Nepal, India, Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar and even China are all started by Malaysians and Singaporeans. So, it is cascading effect again and it goes on a rippling.

When I was in India church, they always boast about this thing, i.e. apostle Thomas, the one who doubted the Lord Jesus, was the first apostle ministering to India and introducing Christianity there. That is why when the Portuguese conquered India by force in the 1600s, they landed much to their disappointment, much to their dismay as they found that there were already Christians there, especially in the state of Kerala. Not only that, but they were also quite upset with it, because it's not their kind of Christianity.

If you'd studied the history, you would know that the early apostles bringing gospel to India not only in 12th but 17th as well. They went far and wide, even up to today, it's 20 centuries, the Lord's work still existing in the country of India. I'd rather

say this is an eternal principle, whatever you sow, you will reap, whether good or bad.

The Choice Of Your Seed Is The Fruit Of Your Destiny

Now the choice is yours. You determine your own destiny. Will you be the ones who will produce good, or will you be the ones who will produce evil?

The Christian life is very practical. What do you do each day? How do you think each day? What occupies your mind? Are you the worry personality type? You worry about this, worry about that, worry about loans, worry about job, worry what to do next day of work. If you are, it means you are an anxious person, and you are in rail with a lot of anxious people. You can't sleep at night because you have anxiety every day. Gradually, you'll become a nervous wreck and in more severe condition, you might end up in psychiatric hospital. In fact, there are many people in KL admitted into psychiatric ward due to mental disorder.

Similarly, if you have feelings of dislike or hatred towards a person today, what will you become in the years time? You can become a very cynical, critical, hateful person. This seed will grow to the point where you become the very thing you think about, to a whatsoever a man thinks so he is.

Nowadays, our world has no boundaries if compared to our olden days, which was very conservative. There is no restriction, and we can access anything we want with the current media and technology. With the freedom of using this media and technology, I think we must be extremely careful when browsing the internet.

Lately, there was a medical report or research, saying that watching porn is good for you. This is because it stimulates the heart to exercise, so it is good for your heart. This is serious research; would you believe it? In that case, I can make you angry, you can also stimulate your heart and see whether it's good for you.

You can see that the way we justify what we do is terrible. Once you indulge in it, you can never stop yourself in this. Today we have many kinds of addicts, like drug addict, alcoholics, sex addict, and today is a big problem, computer addicts. People now cannot live without their computers. Their life become lifeless,

disorientated, and they found themselves dysfunction if disconnect from the computers or internet. It's like end of the world when they cannot go to Twitter, Facebook Instagram, TikTok and so on. You can see people coming to church with long face or moody just because the computer broke down. They are addicted already!

Once you indulge in it, for example, lust, you end up being a deviant person. that's why we have all these homosexuals, we have all these queers. It doesn't end up overnight like this. It takes time for sin to come out in full bloom. Thus, you must remember, whatever you do, say and think today, it'll have a profound effect on your future. In other words, what you do today determines your destiny. It's a mirror of what you will become.

Sow It For Granted, You Might End Up In Hell

Hence, be careful of what you sow and how you sow. You must think very thoroughly before you put the seed, it's irreversible. Once I put the seed, it will grow up into a fruit and you're going to eat that fruit. Never think it is fun to simply sow whatever seed. It may be fun in the beginning, but you will get to pay it. I mean to hell with the literally, you know, to hell with the consequences. It's true in the ministry, and sometimes you watch with sadness.

I've had a very close friend, he was a drug addict, and he came to our church. I was the pastor, so I helped him along and, he really grew spiritually. However, he contracted HIV because of his drug addict habits and he was full bloom, AIDS. Out of his whole generation, only he survived. His friends died one by one, like bowling pins. He survived for a long time. As you know my lifestyle, I won't stay static, I always move around; I went away and then I came back. So, after 10 years, I met up with him. I asked him, "How are you spiritually?" And then, I found out he was involved in some other sin. I asked him why. The answer he gave me was, "There's one thing I don't want to go back is drugs. The consequences of drug taking is fearful, but for the other sins, I can manage it, I can control it." That's a typical language of a drug addict, "I can control it, I'm in control. I can stop wherever I want..." He was going down the path of destruction. I told

him that this probably the last time I'm going to meet him as I'm leaving again soon. Besides, I warned him that his time is not long, he will face the consequences of his action soon. He replied to me that he knew it and he will face it when he get there. My heart dropped when I heard it.

A few years ago, he passed away. In fact, he went back into drugs in the end and was put in prison and he passed away. He actually knew that he'd face it when he gets there. You all must think about the consequences, think about the fruit. You sow, you would reap, and that was the end. Therefore, be careful what you sow.

Are You Spending Your Whole Life Being A Frog In The Well?

Today, we say that we're good, we're not an addict, we're okay. Well, maybe days are still early. So, in our remaining time, I think it's very, very important to address this question, "How do we sow?" May be in our following Bible study, we can concentrate on this question. We must address on 'What do we sow? How do we sow?'

From the angle of the agriculture, every farmer sows in order to reap. I'm sure every farmer has a specific purpose in mind when they sow, they know they will reap what they want in due time. They wish to get bountiful of harvest as a return of their labor and hard work. Owing to this, they willing to sacrifice, they know they're going to reap, and they are looking forward to that day.

How about you? Do you have a purpose in your life? Identifying the long-term goal is very crucial because it will determine what kind of seeds you sow. Just like the farmer, you must know in the beginning what you want to grow, is it rice, corn or whatever crop. Then you can decide the species of the seed and the correct method to grow them. Same as you, once you've decided your long-term goal or plan, you will plan and then you will put it into action, you execute it.

In our life, I mean our present life, what is it that we often sow in this life to make that fruit in 10- or 20-years' time? It's the foundation of our life, right? What is the foundation? Yes, it's education for sure. In average, everyone of us spent almost 20 years of lifetime to study, including me. Imagine, if your lifespan is 60,

70 or may be longer 80 years old. You spend at least a quarter to a third of your life studying. For me, I wanted to go more, I wanted to study more, almost half of my life is spent studying.

Why we spent so much time of studying? Because education is the ticket to success in life. That's why your mother always tell you to study hard; otherwise, you'll end up like those beggars on the street. Thus, since young, you already knew that study hard lays the foundation for your life. It's the seed that you sow, that in due time you will reap. Because once you study, you have a qualification, and that is your ticket. You'll get a good job and good career overtime. After that, your pay rises many folds, and that's what we're hoping for. And once you have that money, your whole future and your prospect open to you, isn't it?

We're very smart when it comes to the world. We know how to sow and how to reap. But if I ask you today, what are you doing in life? Some might say they do not go for the world, some might be very ambitious especially those stay in big cities while others have no ambition at all. They have the same routine life everyday, morning go to work and then evening back home, they do not pursue anything, as long as they get their pay every month. It is like what the Chinese saying, frog in the well. This frog enjoys swimming in the well and only look up the stars under the well. It likes its comfort zone and never think of coming out as it never knows there are pond, lake, river and ocean out there where it can have more freedom. For this frog under the well, its view of life is very limited. It never knows the frogs out there are leaping over one another on the lily pad, enjoy viewing the whole skies. Even you ask that frog to come out, it will refuse to come out. Doesn't it just describe our existence? Our existence is like this frog. We go to work and we get our pay. We repeat this cycle every month. Though we always complaint about the job or dislike our job, but once we get the pay, we are happy. Are we just like the frog in the well, aren't we? This is not a human being. Humans just don't live like that. Is that your life?

You know Lord wants to give you a real life but you rejected. You tell God, no thanks, I can settle for my kind of life and I prefer my kind of life. If you have the eyes to see, the Lord has planned for each one of us wonderful things, a life that

you cannot even imagine today. Try and stretch your imagination. You can never, never imagine what God has planned. In the scripture, the Lord says, "For I know the plans I have for you, not for calamity, the plans and welfare to give you a future and a hope." Wow, the Lord is like a father. He plans way in advance to give you a future, a hope. Isn't that wonderful? And who do we have like a father like this? Hence, open your eyes, don't be stuck in the well. Is that your life? That you find a job you can have enough to eat, enough to buy a pigeonhole in this world. Are you happy with that?

Foresighted Farmer Can Have Better Harvest

You know, my father is very good. He's very wise in terms of the world. He has a lot of foresight and he's very fast-sighted. In the days of 60s, he already knew there's going to be a racial trouble. So, he planned way in advanced, he planned to migrate. I remember when I was young boy, I had to learn French. I said, what's this rubbish? I would like to play football and you asked me to learn French? Because he already had in mind that we're going to migrate to a country where you can use French. At the same time, he already set up a company in Singapore. Because he thought if there's trouble in Malaysia, we could go straight to Singapore first as a launching pad to elsewhere. He applied for immigrant status to Canada too and nobody thought about this. All my relatives applied for England, but my dad was the only one who thought of Canada. In 1969, there was a racial riot in Kuala Lumpur. My dad already paved the way and three days after that, May 13, we left to Singapore under a special arrangement with the government and army. We stayed there for five years then migrated to Canada. Thanks to my father because he had this wisdom in this world. He knew how to plant the seeds way in advanced of everyone else. Otherwise, I don't know what I would become.

Do You Know Who Is The God You Are Believing?

Now for you, what is your goal? Look around you now. If you don't know God, I suggest you look at the stars. Try one day to look at the stars. I'm amazed

how many stars there are in the universe. We're talking about trillions of stars, not just billions.

It's just like when God told Abraham to look at the stars, don't just look down. We live in a world of eternity, and yet all day we are looking down. We always looking at this problem for we're very short-sighted. The Lord told Abraham to look at the stars because his descendants will be like this. Imagine if God talks to you like this, "Look at the stars. This is my promise to you." That will change your life totally, right? That will give you a purpose in your life that you can never ever hope for. When I look at the stars, I would amaze and said, "Wow, Lord, the universe is so immense!" It really boggles the mind as it's so huge and it's growing every day.

I often wonder why God made the universe so big. Are we the only ones in this universe? It is like you build a thousand rooms mansion, and there's only one room that is occupied. You must be wondering what's with the maker of this house and what is the builder of this house? It's the same here. Have you ever wondering the God who made this immensely huge universe? What will he be like? Have you ever thought of that? If this God can make the universe like this, then it's really something. Then it's really someone. It really means something to me. Thus, in my life, this is my mission and my aim to know who this God is. The rest of the matters won't bother me anymore, whether I get a job, what I eat, what I do, it's not really that important anymore. My primary mission in life is to know this God, is to know who He is. This is not only applies to those who do not know God, but also for Christians who are busy in the hustle and bustle of life. You may even be serving the Lord, but God is nowhere to be found. Where is God? And that's the question I leave to you then.

When You Miss The Time To Sow, You Will Miss Your Eternal Life

What is the eternal life that is mentioned in the scripture? We all know that it is something in contrast to earthly life. But what is eternal life? I will talk about it in the next session. The question I leave to you then is, what are we going to do in this life?

The scripture says there's a time for everything, i.e., a time to sow, a time to reap. Don't get mixed up. God has given to us this life on the earth. He didn't give us this life for nothing but instead, He wants us to sow in order we can reap later. Remember that there is a time to sow and there is a time to reap. If you don't sow, you're not going to reap, you will end up with empty hands. You cannot enjoy the benefits of reaping without putting any efforts in sowing or you want to skip sowing for there is nothing you can enjoy throughout the sowing process.

The book of Ecclesiastes tells us the Lord has given to us this life to sow. So, you must sow in this life. As in farming, there is a season for sowing. Once you miss it, you cannot sow anymore, and you will get nothing throughout the year. Similarly, God has given to us this life to sow, thus, this is our sowing season. If we are wise, we will grasp the chance with all we can to sow. This is because once we will miss the chance to sow, there is nothing you can reap in your life. Hence, think about it. This is the season for sowing. If you sow, you will lay up a good foundation for the future life.

Let's close in prayer then: "Thank you, Lord for your words. Indeed, Your words are so wise in telling us how to live our lives. Lord, we thank you for this picture. Although we are not farmers, we pray that Your word may be sown in our hearts. Lord, teach us how to live wisely in this world. So that we may make permanent work of our hands. And help us Lord, to those who are still searching for what is the meaning in life. We pray that you may show to each of us, whether we profess to know you or whether we don't really know you. We pray that Lord Your word will speak to us. Your word will be sown deeply into our hearts. And that you may show us exactly each one of us how to live, what to do as we live in this life. So here our prayer as we give you thanks. Amen. Thank you.