

SERMON NOTES:

August 20th, 2023 - Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

Pastor John

1 Ship your grain across the sea; after many days you may receive a return.

2 Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight; you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.

3 If clouds are full of water, they pour rain on the earth.

Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie.

4 Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.

5 As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed[a] in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.

6 Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.

Verse by Verse:

v.1 Ship your grain across the sea; after many days you may receive a return.

Ancient merchants would send their goods far away to be sold. It took time.

SUMMARY: Your investments might take time before you see a reward.

v.2 Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight; you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.

SUMMARY: Don't limit yourself in what you sow. You don't know what tomorrow may hold.

v.3a If clouds are full of water, they pour rain on the earth.

SUMMARY: We need the rain from above.

v.3b Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie.

SUMMARY: When obstacles come, you need to deal with them.

v.4 Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.

SUMMARY: If you're waiting for the perfect condition, you will be waiting until eternity.

v.5 As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.

God knitted us together in our mother's womb (Psalm 139).

We are fearfully and wonderfully made.

SUMMARY: God works in ways you will never understand or know.

v.6 Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle,

for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.

SUMMARY: Have an attitude of investing/sowing because the time is short.

Galatians 6:7 "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

Galatians 6:8 "Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."

Two Fields: Spirit vs. flesh

"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19–21).

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires," Galatians 5:24.

Galatians 6: 9-10 "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Love God, love neighbor. Sacrificially do good to others.

Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster:

"Of all the classical spiritual disciplines, service is the most conducive to the growth of humility."

"True service is free from the need to calculate results."

SPIRITUAL INVESTMENTS:

1 Your investments might take time before you see a reward.

2 Don't limit yourself in what you sow. You don't know what tomorrow may hold.

3a We need the rain from above.

3b When obstacles come, you need to deal with them.

4 If you're waiting for the perfect condition, you will be waiting until eternity.

5 God works in ways you will never understand or know.

6 Have an attitude of investing/sowing. Don't just serve God, but become a servant of God.

SO WHAT?

What perfect conditions have you put in the way of being obedient to God?

What ways can you grow in sowing seeds of service this year?

Hosea 10:12 (NIV): "Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; **for it is time to seek the LORD**, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you."