

CONSIDER THE FARMER

Part II

Text: Isaiah 28:23-29

Key Word: Planting

Key Thought: Farmers Plant Their Fields for the Purpose of Harvesting

I. THERE IS A TIME FOR PREPARING (Isaiah 28:23,24)

II. THERE IS A TIME FOR PLANTING (Isaiah 28:25,26)

III. THERE IS A TIME FOR PRODUCING (Isaiah 28:27-29)

I love talking about farming even though I never was more than a hired hand. As a teenager, I was looking for a role model even though I never recognized it. I thought I was looking for a job so I could make money. There were so many other things to gain in life skills. It goes much beyond the knowledge of agriculture.

I began to realize when I chose this topic that there were a number of things I could share from my limited years working on a few local farms.

II. THERE IS A TIME FOR PLANTING (Isaiah 28:25,26)

Once the soil is prepared, it's very important to get the seed planted quickly. Once the rain begins to fall, it's very difficult to plant. Every farmer knows that he must be on the field as quickly as possible to plant.

A. Selecting the Correct Seed

Each type of seed is planted according to the way the plant grows. Corn must be planted in rows wide enough to allow the stalk to spread out and grow. Wheat and grains are planted close together as a way of protecting the smaller stems from wind damage and exposure to the sun. Farmers who grow potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes etc. do so in hills. Grape vines are planted with a growing post or frame as well as a trellis or wires so the vines can climb upon them.

It's important that we carefully consider the seed we plan to sow and how we plan to sow it. We cannot wait until the last minute to make those decisions. Many farmers order their next years seed once the harvest is completed. Waiting until the spring could mean the exact type needed won't be available. Hybrid seeds are only available for a certain time period which is often between five and ten years. If we have ears to hear from God, He will guide us in selecting the **best seed** for our climate. What may be successful in Cornwall, Ontario, may be a disaster in Fort McMurray, Alberta and vice versa.

II. THERE IS A TIME FOR PLANTING (Isaiah 28:25,26)

A. Selecting the Correct Seed (Contd.)

Isaiah mentions several seeds in these few verses. The first is “*caraway, fitches, fennel or dill*” which is a herb. This word is not used anywhere else in Scripture. It was used to sweeten the taste of bread. There is also a mention of the word “*cummin*” which is a perennial plant that has a bitterly warm taste with an aromatic flavour. These seeds are used as a condiment in sauces.

“*Wheat*” was a quality crop or the chief grain that was sown. These seeds required a skilled hand to plant them. Over seeding the land would cause the wheat to suffocate itself as the spires crowd out each other.

“*Barley*” was a type of wheat that harvested first so many farmers sowed it to lessen the possibility of a crop failure due to weather conditions as well as surrounding nations that would save their attacks for during the harvest of quality crops. Many versions refer to it as “appointed barley” which meant “to designate, to mark or to seal.” Therefore, it was a selected, set apart and identified as a seed-barley because of its excellent quality. It would be used as the seed to sow the next year. In this way they improved the quality of their barley and eventually eliminated the lesser quality barley in the first harvest.

Finally Isaiah mentions the “*spelt.*” Today this type of grain only grows in Flanders and Italy is also referred to German wheat. Scholars also believe that it was a type of “*rye.*” The literal interpretation indicated that it was used as a border plant on the wheat was sown in the middle of the field to add another level of protection.

Today we must consider the way we choose the messages we share with others. The seed often refers to God’s Word. Even though God’s Word does not change, we must be careful what portions we select to share with others. We must consider the average age level, their education levels, their type of employment. What has been successful in the past may not be for the present. It may even be vital to look closely at what may be more promising for the future. There are times (just like hybrid seeds) which become less bountiful. We must, as a church, call out to God for His direction in this matter.

Churches are called for different purposes. We have different mixes of people and their giftings. What we taught and preached in 1992 would not be as effective today without revisions. New generations bring in new ways of accomplishing things. Growth means changes are required. Nothing but God’s word is written in stone. Churches must change ministry styles to adapt to growth. I can’t serve as a pastor with the style I use now for a church of under 100 if and when we grow to more than 200.

I teach and preach differently in Long Term Care facilities than I do here on Sunday.

II. THERE IS A TIME FOR PLANTING (Isaiah 28:25,26) (Contd.)

B. Selecting the Correct Implement

According to the Oxford dictionary, an implement is a tool or piece of equipment used for a particular purpose. Isaiah made it clear that caraway (fiches) cumin and corn all must be sown differently. The caraway and cumin were a very small seed sown in small plots while the corn was rather large in comparison and planted in larger fields. Farmers have to carefully chose the way they plant their seed.

*** Corn planters are a very common type of farm machinery in South Eastern Ontario. Four rows or more can be planted at one time with this equipment. It saves a tremendous amount of time.

Allis Chalmers became famous for their no-till corn planters. I worked on assembling a four-row planter. It was quite common to see two row planters as well for the small farmers. You can find 90 row corn planters today being sold. John Deer now makes a 160-foot corn planter.

Corn must also be carefully selected by the farmer. There are often experimental plots where 8-10 different seeds are planted in rows side by side to see which one produces best as the local climate changes year by year.

Because the seeds are so different, a variety of **corn plates** are available to install in the corn planter. If the wrong plate is used, the sowing will be fruitless.

Since corn needs about 70-90 days to mature, it must be planted in our area no later than early May. ***

Planting grain is also a skill that is not given to an amateur. You can't use a corn planter to plant grain. The same thing applies when being a "planter" of God's Word.

"His God instructs him and teaches him the right way."

Isaiah 28:26

II. THERE IS A TIME FOR PLANTING (Isaiah 28:25,26) (Contd.)

C. Selecting the Correct Time - When it comes to buying a home, we are told to remember three things - Location - Location - Location. I have found that in God's work we need to remember - Timing - Timing - Timing. That timing has nothing to do with our wisdom. It is all about God's timing.

“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son . . .”

Galatians 4:4

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

Romans 5:6

Farmers do one last thing that must be done correctly to gain a rich reward for all they have done. They must select the correct time to plant their seed or all will be fruitless. We never see a tractor and planter on the field in the late fall or once the snow arrives. It's either too late or too early depending upon your perspective.

There are also “*seasons to plant God's Word*” as well as everything else we do. We can work until we're totally exhausted with little or no results if we don't understand this vital truth.

*“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven . . .
11. He has made everything beautiful in his time . . .*

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 11

The church also goes through times of planting. There are seasons of spiritual growth in every church as well as every area of the world. If we fail to plant at the correct time we'll have to wait until the next season comes again. It seems so simple in the agricultural perspective yet often so difficult in the spiritual realm. Why is that?

Perhaps we have “ears that hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the Church!” We need to be careful **celebrating the completion** when we are still **ONLY in the process**. We are not done yet. There is still a harvest of souls to harvest for God. Every day counts. Opportunities are still taking place. We are not hearing God saying “Well done, my good and faithful servant YET.” It's coming! Ask God for His wisdom in everything you do. It is always time to seek the Lord.

There is not only a time for preparing and planting but also a time producing for which I preach about next week.

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Date: Oct 20/19

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Draw Me Near - Bb

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C. Selecting the Correct Time - Galatians 4:4; Romans 5:6; Ecclesiastes 3:1, 11

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