

HARRINGAY UNITED CHURCH-BAPTIST
Sunday, September 25, 2011.
Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday

Text: 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

What is harvest?

HARVEST is the period at the end of the growing season, when crops were gathered. Harvest was one of the happiest times of the year in Palestine and all over the world (Ps 126:5-6; Isa 9:3), marked with celebrations and religious festivals (Ex 23:16). There were actually two harvests. Barley was gathered from mid-April onwards, and the wheat from mid-May.

The harvesting process began with the cutting of grain with a sickle (Deut 16:9; Mark 4:29). Then it was gathered into sheaves (Deut 24:5). Next the grain was taken to the threshing floor, an important local site with a hard surface and often situated on higher ground. Various tools, such as metal toothed sledges drawn by oxen, were used for threshing (Isa 28:28; 41:15). Then the grain was winnowed, or tossed into the air, with a pitchfork. The wind carried off the chaff, but the heavier kernels and straw fell to the ground (Matthew 3:12)

Finally, the kernels were shaken in a sieve, made of a wooden hoop with leather thongs (Isa 30:28; Amos 9:9). Then the grain was stored.

Harvest became a picture of God's judgment (Jer 51:33; Joel 3:13), and Jesus compared the Last Judgment with the harvest (Matthew 13:30, 39; Rev 14:14-20). However, Jesus used the same metaphor for the gathering together of those who believed in Him (Matthew 9:37-38; Luke 10:2), indicating that the final harvest has already begun with His first coming (John 4:35).

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Principles governing harvest -

1. Preparing the ground

The ground must be good soil where the crop will yield multiples. It must not be stony, rocky or too much water even as in rice water which you have seen on the video.

2. Sowing the seed

The seed must be of quality, mature and strong seed otherwise it may not grow and when it grows the seed produced will be of poor quality.

3. Tending the seed

You do not allow weeds to contend food with the seed you have planted. You get rids of them because they will choke the seeds as thorns choke the seed in Christ's parables of the sower.

4. Harvesting the crop

When the seed is ripe depending on the seed you plant, you harvest them, eat part, share part, sell part and keep others for re-planting.

5. You reap what you sow

As we have seen in the principles of sowing and reaping, you can only reap corn only when you plant corn. You do not expect to harvest corn when you sow rice or vice versa.

You reap what you sow.

6. You reap in multiples.

Not only you reap what you sow, but you reap them in multiples, i.e. in many folds. A grain of corn yield a cob (about 400 grains) same applies to rice and other plants.

As long there are seasons and times, there will always be harvest. This is God's command and nothing can revoke it.

7. There is the final harvest at the end of time.

Jesus likens the end of age to harvest. When He comes back He will send His angels to harvest the world, some to eternal life and some to eternal condemnation.

Those who believe in Him have eternal life while those who reject Him to eternal condemnation because they did not believe in Him.

John 3:17-18 "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Four lessons I want us to learn from harvest:

1. It is hard work from soil preparation to harvest and there is no short cut to it. So also in our daily lives, before we harvest bountifully, we must prepare the soil, sow the seed, tend the seed and pray to the Lord of harvest to bring increase. In our lives, we must be prepared to work hard as if the success solely depends on us but pray hard because the success solely depends of God.

2. What we sow is what we reap and we reap in excess of what we sow. the way we take our studies, work, relationship attitudes and character, what we exhibit is what we'll get. Do to others as you would have them do to you. It is like a computer, if you put in rubbish you get rubbish.

3. there is going to be the final harvest of souls when Jesus comes back because this world is like farm, seeds of salvation are being sown daily by the Christians, and those who accepts this message as the seed that will be gathered into the barns of eternal life.

What do you want to do about this?

I have a suggestion. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour, I encourage you do so now, get baptised as soon as possible and you start learning about Him in the Bible and you will reign with him in his kingdom.

If you have accepted him and have not been baptised, make a decision to get a splash now because there is no need to disobey Christ. Baptism is Christ command, if we love Him we will obey him but if we do not obey him what are we saying?

4. In our walk and work here on earth, what we do we will reap in eternity and in excess of what we have done.

Mark 10:29-30

29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel

30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields — and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.

Luke 6:38

38 Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever."

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Conclusion:

As we celebrate this year's harvest, I encourage you to be generous with your offering as you will reap in many folds what you are sowing today. Remember that what you are giving now is a seed that supplies the needs of others and when their needs are met they will give thanks to God on your behalf. The God who supplies the seed to you the sower and bread for them whom you sow to will supply and increase your store and will enlarge your harvest of right standing with God and He will make you rich in every way so that you may be more generous on every occasion. God bless you.