

Series: Psalms

Title: Sow in Tears, Reap in Joy

Text: Ps 126: 1-6

Date: June 13, 2024

Place: SGBC, NJ

Psalm 126: 1: «A Song of degrees.» When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. 2: Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. 3: The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad.

Psalm 126: 4: Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south. 5: They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. 6: He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

The second part of this Psalm is the lesson the Lord teaches his child when the Lord brings to pass the first part of this Psalm. The first part could speak to Israel being delivered out of Babylonian captivity. But we know for certain the Lord delivering them by Cyrus typifies the Lord Jesus delivering his elect.

Psalm 126: 1: When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. 2: Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. 3: The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad.

THE LORD TURNED OUR CAPTIVITY

When the LORD first reveals to his child that the LORD has delivered us, it is like a dream.

It is the Lord alone who turns again the captivity of his elect, *When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion*. It is the LORD God who sent Christ to deliver his elect like he sent Cyrus to them. Christ alone redeemed his people from the curse and condemnation of the law. Christ alone justified us from our sins by his precious blood.

Hebrews 9: 12...by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

1 Thessalonians 1: 10...[Christ] delivered us from the wrath to come.

When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion. It is our Lord and Savior alone who delivered us from the bondage of our sin nature. He sends the gospel to each of his people. He sends the Holy Spirit who gives us life. He brings us out of the bondage of our flesh

Romans 1: 4: And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 BY WHOM we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: 6 Among whom are ye also THE CALLED OF JESUS CHRIST.

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion. So, too, when the Lord chastens us. He sends providence that brings us into captivity and sorrow. Or sometimes God's saints come into the captivity of our old nature. But in every case, only the Lord turns again the captivity of his child.

Romans 7: 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion. In each case, it is like a dream. The joy of our LORD feels almost too good to be true, *When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream*.

When Cyrus delivered them from captivity, he delivered the whole nation. So when Christ delivered his people on the cross, a nation was born at once. He delivered all his elect from the condemnation of the law at one time.

Isaiah 66: 7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8: Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? *or* shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

Ephesians 2 :6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

When the LORD sends the Spirit and reveals himself in our hearts, reveals that he delivered each of his elect at once, it was like a dream! We think, "You mean I am robed in Christ's righteousness through simply believing on him! You mean I am free from the curse and condemnation of the law because Christ redeemed me! You mean I am his and he is mine! He will not lose me or anyone who he justified!"

So it is each time the Lord delivers us from the captivity of the trial. The good the LORD works through the affliction far outweighs the sorrow--"*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" He reminds us it is the unseen eternal things of God that are preeminent.

Then the sinner saved by God's grace gives our triune God in Christ all the glory, *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.* Have you ever woke yourself from a dream by laughing! Sometimes you hear me or other preaches speaking of what Christ has accomplished and we just laugh. He *fills our mouth with laughter and our tongue with singing!*

Sometimes, even the heathen acknowledges God's free favor to his people, *then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.* Think of how mighty Babylon was and how weak and helpless the children of Judah were. Even the heathen knew the LORD did these great things for them.

There are times when the Lord works so mightily in the lives of his saints, that even unbelieving friends recognize the goodness of God toward us. But in that last day, this whole heathen world who departs this life in unbelief, shall know fully what great things God has done for us and they shall confess it!

But God's grace and power is personal to God's saints, *The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.* God's child gives God all the glory in salvation. Child of God, do you want to

Matthew 5: 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Then be constantly glorifying your Father alone for everything he enables you to do in this life.

We did not deliver ourselves, *The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.* Our Father chose us. Our Savior redeemed us. God the Holy Spirit regenerated us. Our great three in one keeps delivering us. We are not able to do any work but by him, *The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.*

TURN AGAIN OUR CAPTIVITY

Psalm 126: 4: Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south. 5: They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. 6: He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Due to God's purpose, due to our own sin, due to this sinful world, we can be sure it won't be long and we will cry again, *turn again our captivity, O, LORD.* Notice, they are in another captivity.

At times we get to thinking we can stand. Other times we try to take to ourselves part of the glory that belongs to him alone. Sometimes we come into captivity due to our sins and unbelief. Other times the Lord does not reveal why. The Lord sends chastening to us to teach us more of his holy name and power and grace!

But the child of God can be sure, that having been delivered, we shall need to be delivered again and again. He brings us to cry, *Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.* Salvation is not a one-time occurrence. God saves from beginning to end. We are converted when Christ first calls us, "Peter, follow me!" But we are converted again and again from ourselves--"Peter, when you are converted"--from this pride--"teach my children what I taught you!" We not only need to be delivered again and again, God does it so we thank him and praise him again and again.

2 Corinthians 1: 8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: 9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*; 11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

THE LESSON

Psalm 126: 5: They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. 6: He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

Here is God's purpose for sending his child into captivity again and again. Here is the lesson the Lord teaches us over and over. This is not some of God's saints. This describes ALL God' saints. We pass through this veil of tears sowing in tears. We weep over our sins and unfaithfulness. We weep over brethren. We weep over unconverted loved ones. We mourn our losses. "In this world ye shall have tribulation."

But God's purpose is to teach us this one sure result of God's grace, *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

The joy and sheaves are what we saw in the first half of the Psalm. It is beholding Christ and what great things he has done for us. It is joy and praise in the Lord who delivers us, *When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: ...The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.*

Let's hear God's word about sowing. In Galatians 6, Paul is speaking about giving to support the preacher God sent to teach you. But it applies to all kinds of sowing. This is a general rule of God.

Galatians 6: 6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8: 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. 9: And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10: As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

All God's saints--to some degree sow to our flesh--but none of God's saints shall reap eternal corruption. Christ will keep us and deliver us. But when we are in captivity of any kind--a sorrowful trial of any kind--so long as we keep talking about the trouble, focusing on the trouble, trying by our own hand to save ourselves from the trouble then we are sowing to the flesh, it gets worse and worse. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

But the Lord never fails to brings his child to a place where we stop focusing on the trouble and we focus on the Lord. He makes us sow to the Spirit. In the present captivity, the Lord brings his child to remember times before when the Lord turned our captivity and the joy we had. That is what they are doing in the first half of this Psalm. They are sowing to the Spirit remembering how the Lord delivered them from their former captivity, "The Lord hath been good to us!"

But they are doing this while in present captivity. So while you are yet in captivity, remembering how only the Lord delivered you before, he brings you to call upon him, *Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.* And this is the sure result of God's grace and power to each of the redeemed, *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

We face many prisons but Christ has delivered us from them all and continues to deliver us and the last prison shall be this flesh and death and the grave!

Our first conversion he brought us to sorrow over our sin, to sorrow over our inability but he made us sow to the Spirit; he made us call upon the Lord and he turned again our captivity! What joy! What sheaves!

Many troubles we have had since then. We have been cast down in spirit. Other times we experienced many falls into sin. There have been troubles with brethren. On and on it goes. These are all prisons that we have no ability to deliver ourselves from. Yet Christ brings us to call on him to deliver us. Then he brings us out of each one and continues to do so. What great joy follows! We glory in the LORD alone for the LORD alone delivers us.

The last captivity shall be when this weak flesh fights to hold us in this earth, we will not be able to deliver ourselves. But Christ has already given us the victory. In one instant he shall open our eyes and we shall behold him. Oh what perfect joy shall follow when we see him as he is.

In all our captivity this is the rule of grace. This is so due to our successful Savior, *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* Christ sowed in tears. He shall bring again his sheaves--all his saints--to glory.

Sow to the Spirit not the flesh. How do I do that preacher? Remember all the former times the Lord turned again our captivity. Think on the great things the Lord has done for his people and for you, child of God. Remember how you were so sad, so helpless, but when he made you call on him, your dear Savior delivered you. Remember how he did more than bring you out of the trouble, he filled our hearts with rejoicing in him; he filled us with gladness that far outweighed the sorrow. Sow to the Spirit: call upon him alone! *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*

Amen!