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Farmers For God

ISAIAH 28:23-26

Introduction

1. I believe that God truly loves farmers.
2. I say this because they are as close to His creation as any human can be,
 - a. Whether it be tilling the soil to plant a crop, continuing to tend to it to make sure it has everything necessary for growth, then harvesting the produce at seasons end.
 - b. Or raising the various animals we typically find on a farm: cows, goats, pigs, chickens, and a host of other animals.
3. Forty-six years ago, the radio broadcaster many of us know as Paul Harvey, addressed the Future Farmers of America Convention in Kansas City, Missouri.
4. The title of his speech was "*So God Made A Farmer.*"
5. While I encourage each of you to read it in its entirety, I would like to share the last portion of it with you this morning as we begin our lesson:

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds, and yet stop in mid-field and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor's place

— so God made a Farmer.

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bails, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadow lark."

It had to be somebody who'd plow deep and straight and not cut corners; somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed and rake and disc and plow and plant and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeder and finish a hard week's work with a five-mile drive to church; somebody who would bale a family together with the soft strong bonds of

sharing, who would laugh, and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says that he wants to spend his life "doing what dad does"

— so God made a Farmer.

6. Have you ever stopped to consider how many farmers God utilized in His service throughout Scripture.

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- a. Adam & Eve

“The **LORD** God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.” (Genesis 2:8, NASB95)

“Then the **LORD** God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.” (Genesis 2:15, NASB95)

- b. Noah — Genesis 9:20 tells us that after leaving the ark, “Noah began farming and planted a vineyard.”
- c. Abram [Abraham] — Genesis 13:2 tells us that Abram was “very rich in livestock, in silver and gold.”
- d. Moses was tending sheep when God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 3:1).
- e. Gideon was beating out wheat when God called him to deliver Israel from the Midianites (Judges 6:11-14).
- f. David was shepherding his father’s sheep when God selected him to be Israel’s next king (1 Samuel 16:11-13).
- g. Elisha was plowing his field when Elijah sought him out to be God’s next prophet (1 Kings 19:19).

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7. In 1 Corinthians 3:6, the apostle Paul compared himself and a man named, Apollos, who also was a preacher of the Gospel to farmers.
8. He said, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

9. This morning, I would like for each of us to consider ourselves as "Farmers for God," and to think about the role God has given to each of us in sharing the good news of God's saving grace with those we encounter.

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A. THERE IS ALWAYS WORK TO DO ON A FARM

1. Anyone who has ever been around a farm knows this to be true.
2. A farmer does not work eight hours and then call it a day.
3. His or her day begins before the sun comes up.
4. There are cows to be milked, animals to be fed, eggs to be gotten in, equipment to be repaired, fences to be mended.
5. Someone is busy cooking the meals, washing the clothes, running the errands.
6. Many a farmer works from before sunup until long after sundown, and sometimes, is up until wee morning hours with an animal giving birth.
7. The same is true for all of us who labor in God's kingdom.
8. As the apostle Paul wrote, "I planted, Apollos watered . . ." (1 Corinthians 3:6a).
9. You and I are constantly working to prepare the soil for the seed of God's Word.
10. We do this by building relationships with our relatives, friends, neighbors, coworkers and even our enemies.
11. We are forever praying for open hearts and doors.

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12. Paul asked the Christians in Colosse to pray for him, Timothy and others with him, "that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ" (Colossians 4:3).

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B. CROPS WILL NEVER GROW IF THE SEED IS NOT SOWN

1. Any farmer will tell you that seed will not grow if the soil has not been prepared.

2. Though many farmers are utilizing what is being called no-till farming, “an agricultural technique for growing crops or pasture without disturbing the soil through tillage,” many of us are still familiar with the plowing, discing and planting we experienced for years.
 3. I remember as a child a neighbor bringing his tractor and turning plow to our house and turning our garden spot, then coming back with his disc and working it until it was smooth.
 4. I always knew what was coming next, the planting.
 5. Dad would take two wooden stakes and a string which he would use to lay off the row.
 6. He would then take his hoe and make a furrow in the soil, directly under that string.
 7. My brother or I would be given a bucket with fertilizer and we would take a handful and work our way down the furrow scattering the fertilizer as we went.
 8. Dad would then come back with his hoe and work the fertilizer into the soil.
 9. However, the process was not finished, until the seed was sown and covered up.
 10. If no seed is sown, no crop has the opportunity to grow.
 11. The same is true when it comes to the seed of God’s Word (Luke 8:11).
 12. In Jesus’ Parable of the Soils (Matthew 12:3-9, 18-23; Mark 4:3-8, 14-20; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15), the sower is not particular about where he sows his seed.
 13. He sows it in every available space.
 14. The soil determines whether or not it grows and produces a crop.
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15. According to the apostle Peter, you and I are sowing seed which is “imperishable” because it is “the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23).
 16. James said that if it is received in humility, it is about save souls (James 1:21).

17. However, it can never accomplish its potential if you and I do not take the time to sow the seed.
18. There is a hymn we sing which asks, "are you sowing the seed of the kingdom?"
19. The kingdom can't grow if the seed isn't being sown.

Slide 6**C. WEEDING IS A MUST**

1. I have no doubt that many of you here this morning have done your share of weeding over the years.
2. Whether it was a flower garden, a vegetable garden or a large field containing a specific crop, weeds had to be either pulled or removed with a hoe if the plant was to reach its full potential.
3. If we go back to the Parable of the Sower, Jesus told about the seed which "fell among the thorns" with the result being "the thorns grew up with it and choked it out" preventing it from producing a crop.
4. Jesus compared this to people who have heard the Word of God, who "as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life" (Luke 8:14).
5. Ultimately, they "bring no fruit to maturity" (Luke 8:14), they do not mature in their faith.
6. Satan will constantly work to discourage and distract Christians in their faith.
7. We, on the other hand, must consistently work to encourage one another in the faith.
8. As Paul and Barnabas were going back through the cities where they had established churches on their first missionary journey, Luke tells us they were "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22).

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9. Paul told the Christians in Thessalonica to "encourage one another and build

up one another” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

10. The writer of Hebrews said we should , “encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13).

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D. ULTIMATELY, THE CROP WILL NEED TO BE HARVESTED

1. Anyone who has planted a crop or spent any time around a farm will tell you that produce left in the field after it has ripened will begin to rot.
2. Hay must be cut when the field is ready.
3. No farmer wants his hay to be rained on before it has been baled and put in the barn.
4. I can remember as a teenager racing to get many a square bale into the barn before the rain came.
5. Souls, ripe for harvest must not be left outside.
6. We must do everything we can to make sure that a person who has heard the gospel and is ready to obey the gospel is encouraged to do so as soon as possible.
7. In the fourth chapter of John’s gospel, we find Jesus in a conversation with a Samaritan woman who has come to the well where He is resting to draw water.
8. The disciples had gone into the city of Sychar to purchase food for themselves and Jesus to eat.
9. When they returned, they found Jesus speaking with the woman.
10. She immediately left to go into the city to tell others about Him.
11. The disciples tried to get Him to eat, but He said, “I have food to eat that you do not know about” (John 4:32).
12. They questioned if someone had brought Him food while they were gone.
13. He said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work” (John 4:34).
14. He was speaking of the urgency of His mission.

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15. He then said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are four months, and then comes the harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest” (John 4:34-35, NASB95).

Conclusion

1. We must never forget, like farmers, we are dependent upon God for success.

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2. At Mount Sinai, God told the Israelites, “If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I shall give you rains in their seasons, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit” (Leviticus 26:3-4).

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3. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, said, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).
4. You and I can keep sowing the seed of God’s kingdom, we can water it and give it the nutrients necessary for growth, but it is God who causes the growth.
5. Is there someone you want to see obey the gospel?
 - a. Pray that God will open their heart to be receptive to His Word.
 - b. Ask Him to cause that seed to grow in within them so that they might seek to respond to it.
 - c. Ask Him to utilize you when the harvest is ripe.
6. Maybe you are a person in whom God’s Word has been growing.
7. You know that you need to come home and let God wash away your sins through the blood of His Son.