

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

— Galatians 6:9 & Mark 4:26–29

There is something interesting about a harvest. When we look at a field full of crops, we see the end of a process. We see the result. We see the colour, the food, the fruit, the evidence that something has grown. But we don't see everything that came before it. We don't see the seed being planted, we don't see the rain, we don't see the roots developing underneath the ground, and we don't see all the days when nothing appeared to be happening.

And I think that is one of the best pictures of life. Because when you're young, it can feel like everyone expects you to know what you're doing. What are you going to do with your life? Where are you going? What are you studying? What are you working towards? What are you going to achieve? And sometimes, underneath all those questions, there is another one: "Am I doing enough?"

We live in a world where we are constantly shown other people's harvests. We see someone's success, someone's career, someone's achievements, someone's confidence, and we can forget that we are only seeing the finished product. We don't see their planting season, their mistakes, their failures, their waiting, or the moments when they wondered whether anything was growing at all. But harvest reminds us that life isn't only about the finished product. It's also about what you're planting right now.

Every day, we plant something. Not literally, of course, but every decision we make is a kind of seed. The people we choose to surround ourselves with, the habits we develop, the way we speak to ourselves, the way we treat people when nobody is watching, the time we give, the things we choose to care about, and the risks we are willing to take. All of those things are seeds, and the difficult thing about seeds is that you don't immediately know what they're going to become.

You might plant something today that doesn't show its impact for years. Think about one of the people who has had the biggest influence on your life. Maybe they encouraged you at exactly the right moment. Maybe a teacher believed in you when you didn't believe in yourself. Maybe a friend stayed when things were difficult. Maybe someone gave you an opportunity. For them, it might have been a five-minute conversation, but for you, it might have become something much bigger.

That's the strange thing about planting: you rarely know the size of the harvest you're starting. So don't underestimate the small things. A kind word can be a seed, an apology can be a seed, showing up can be a seed, giving someone a second chance can be a seed, and taking responsibility can be a seed. Leadership is often nothing more complicated than deciding to plant good things wherever you go.

Now, I want to bring in something that probably isn't what you expected to hear in a harvest sermon: Green Lantern.

For anyone who knows the character, Green Lantern gets his power through a ring. But the interesting thing about Green Lantern is that his greatest strength isn't simply physical strength. It's willpower. It's the ability to keep going, the ability to face fear, and the ability to imagine something and believe strongly enough to bring it into reality. And I think there is something really useful about that idea when we think about harvest.

Because planting a seed is an act of hope. You put something into the ground even though you can't see what it will eventually become. You have to trust the process enough to wait. That's where Green Lantern connects to harvest. The green light represents the will to keep going, and Galatians tells us, "Let us not become weary in doing good." Those ideas are saying something very similar: don't stop planting just because you haven't seen the harvest yet.

There will be times when you put effort into something and nothing seems to happen. You will work hard and not get recognised. You will encourage someone and never know whether it made a difference. You will try to improve yourself and still feel like you're standing in the same place. That's the difficult part of growth. You plant the seed, but you don't get to control how quickly it grows. You water it, you care for it, you protect it, you give it the conditions it needs, and then you wait. That's where willpower comes in. Sometimes leadership isn't about being the strongest person in the room. Sometimes it isn't about being the most talented or the most confident. Sometimes leadership is simply having the willpower to keep planting when you haven't seen the harvest yet. It's being able to say, "I don't see the result yet, but I still believe this is worth doing."

In Mark 4, Jesus describes a farmer who plants his seed and then goes about his life. He sleeps, he wakes up, and he carries on. While he's doing all of that, the seed is growing. The farmer doesn't stand over the soil every second demanding that it grows faster. He trusts the process. And eventually, something appears.

That's important because so much of our growth happens when nobody is watching. Think about a seed underneath the soil. From the outside, it looks like nothing, but underneath, roots are developing. Sometimes our lives are the same. You might not feel like you're progressing. You might not feel confident. You might not know what you're doing next. You might look at someone else and think they've already figured everything out. But maybe you're comparing your roots to somebody else's harvest. You don't know what happened underneath the surface to get them where they are, and they don't know what is happening underneath yours. So don't be discouraged by a season where you can't see much happening. You could develop patience, develop confidence, learn how to deal with failure, become more compassionate, or discover what kind of leader you want to be. None of those things make a big entrance. They grow quietly, but eventually, people notice the difference.

One of the interesting things about Green Lantern is that the ring can create what the wearer can imagine. Power isn't just about having something handed to you. It's about taking what you have and imagining what it could become. And isn't that what planting a seed is? You're looking at something incredibly small and believing that it can become something much bigger. When you're young, you might look at your life and think, "What can I possibly do with what I have right now?" You might not have the experience, the money, the connections, or all the confidence you want. But you have a seed. You have time. You have energy. You have ideas. You have experience. You can learn, and you could plant something. You don't need to see the whole tree. You just need to be willing to plant the seed.

When you're young, there is also a temptation to think you need a complete plan. You need to know your career, your purpose, where you'll be in five years, and who you're going to become. But look at the seed. Nobody looks at a seed and says, "That's a disappointing tree," because everyone understands that it's still becoming. Maybe we need to give ourselves the same permission. You're still becoming. You are

allowed to change your mind. You're allowed to make mistakes. You're allowed to discover that something isn't right for you. You're allowed to try something and fail. You're allowed to not have all the answers. Being young doesn't mean you should already be the finished product. It means you're still planting, you're still learning, you're still growing, and that's okay.

But eventually, if we keep planting, there comes a time when the harvest begins to appear. And that's where the story changes, because a harvest isn't only about what you have grown. It's about what you do with what you've grown. You could keep it all for yourself, or you could share it. If you develop a skill, teach someone. If you gain confidence, encourage someone. If you are given an opportunity, look for someone else you can bring with you. If you have a voice, use it for people who aren't being heard. If you succeed, remember the people who helped you get there. Your harvest isn't only what you achieve. It can also be what you make possible for someone else.

That's the kind of leader worth becoming. Not someone who walks into a room asking, "How can I become the most important person here?" but someone who asks, "How can I make this room better because I'm in it?" And maybe that's where Green Lantern comes back into the story. Green Lantern's light isn't useful because it stays inside the ring. It's useful because it shines outward. And perhaps our own gifts are meant to do the same. Your personality, your creativity, your energy, your ideas, your experiences, and your leadership aren't just things you're given so that you can stand out. They are things you can use to light the way for someone else.

A harvest that only benefits the person who grew it isn't the whole story. The real beauty of a harvest is that it can feed other people. So when you eventually see the results of the things you've planted, don't just ask, "What did I achieve?" Ask, "Who can this help? Who can I encourage? Who can I bring with me? Who can grow because I grew?" That is leadership. Not being the person who walks into a room asking, "How can I become the most important person here?" but being the person who asks, "How can I make this room better because I'm in it?"

So maybe the question we should leave with today isn't, "What have I achieved?" Maybe it's, "What am I planting?" What are you putting into the world? What are you putting into the lives of other people? What kind of person are you becoming? And perhaps the biggest question of all is, "What will grow because you were here?"

You may not know the answer yet, and that's okay. Because you're young. You're not supposed to have the whole field figured out. You just need to decide what seeds you're going to plant.

So don't rush the process. Plant well. Grow patiently. Keep your green light burning. And when your harvest finally comes, don't just ask what you can take from it. Ask who you can feed with it, who you

can encourage, who you can bring with you, and who you can help grow. Because maybe the greatest thing you can leave behind isn't simply what you accomplished. Maybe it's the people who became stronger because you were willing to plant something good in their lives.

And perhaps that's the real harvest. Not simply looking back and saying, "Look what I grew," but looking around and being able to say, "Look at what grew because I chose to plant."

That's leadership. That's growth. And that's a harvest worth celebrating.