

Bearing Fruit for the Kingdom of God (Graziano Crepaldi)

Prophetically we are living in a new season of preparation of our hearts and this is the year where many of us will enter in some of the spiritual land God has given us and where his plans would become visible for our life. We cannot wait longer and postpone to the future the restoration that God wants to bring in our relationships.

In his authority we will be able to see some of the promises come to existence and the limitations are not coming from circumstances or people, but from our attitudes toward our idols and availability to let Jesus deal with our hurts.

This is a season where the light of the Father is coming and the darkness in the world and in the church will be exposed. Lies and untruths will be revealed even more. The eternal light will affect people similar to Saul (who threatened and killed followers of Jesus Christ). As they are visited by the eternal light of Heaven they will abandon their old thinking, as they recognize the grace of God, which is Jesus Christ, they will take the new ways of God (Acts 9:1-9). Many will receive a stronger call from God and will actively enter in a new apostolic season that will change the world for ever and that will redefine deeply what is the real meaning of being a true disciple of Jesus!

Since a long time the enemy has been bringing a spiritual fog into our spiritual atmosphere. This has caused us to be unable to see clearly. It has created doubts around the things that we are making decisions for, on which we pray and on what He wants us to do. God will remove the fog so that we can see clearly and we can enter into a new season of light, and the His glory in this season shall come with great clarity, purpose of mind and a greatness of strength in the Spirit.

"Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you." (Isaiah 60:1-2)

We know that God is concerned with transforming the whole person and expects us to bear fruit in His Kingdom. These results primarily come through our relationship with Jesus. Then there are the fruits of the Spirit as we abide in God. Finally, we have the fruits that come from our transformed lives that bring blessings to the people around us and give glory to God.

In Mt.13 Jesus gives a parable saying that our fruitfulness will depend on the soil of our heart. He gives 4 examples of soil that help to understand our attitude towards the Father and only one gives good results. There are as well 3 ways Satan uses to steal or destroy the seed of God. In the first example Jesus says, that the enemy comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in the hearts. These are people who are unbroken and stubborn, Satan's kingdom opposes the truth of God's word, and brings doubt and distortion. Satan is active in immediately prevent the person from seeking the truth or acting upon the light given. Then there is a heart that is not deep, this heart rejects the life of the word because it is hard ground and has no roots. A root is something we can't see but they are indispensable for a plant to grow and produce fruits. A tree that has no root, can't grow and find its nourishment. Then Jesus explains about those who started off with gladness and then stop to grow because they have not installed the „operative system“ of the Kingdom of God (Jesus taught that in Mt. 5-7). The cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. Things that are necessities can become priority, and distract our focus from our heavenly calling. The desire for worldly things and fear of losing many of our belongings will slow down the growth. Many people, especially in western countries, would need to make a conscious decision to serve God.

There is as well another type of soil, the one that brings fruit with different gradations- 30, 60,100 fold. ***"But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." (Mark 4:20) "But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). "Those who hear the word, accept, understand it and do it are the ones with good soil."(Mt. 13:19,7:24-28)***

In order to see a deep transformation we have to receive the seed of the word in our hearts. We need to meditate on it so it becomes alive and active on the inside of us. Sadly we are often too busy and don't have time for God, than we get even upset with Him, when we don't see a quick change in our life. That's just as foolish as the man who didn't plant his seed but was upset when he didn't receive a crop. ***"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."(Rom. 10:17)***

In the last years of our ministry we have observed the path people tend to go as they respond to the seed of the Kingdom of God sown in their hearts. In the beginning the person is touched by the Holy Spirit and recognizes and receives the word. Then an

important question is coming: Do I really want to put faith in the seed of God and let Him transform my life completely? At this point some decisions are taken. Some believers will start to reject the word and others, if they decide not to apply what they have heard, they will try to change what they have heard to make it fit to their sinful mindset. The twisting of God's word is one of the most dangerous and popular practices in the Church and opens the door to different levels of confusion and religiosity. The last step that people in general take is to question the credibility of those that have shared the word. Some critical words would be spoken to invalidate the message and some logical excuses will be created to not have to follow what God is telling them to do (or not to do). Jesus had to face exactly the same challenges as He shared the Gospel of the Kingdom to the crowds. The religious and the lukewarm people often misinterpret His messages and when they could not stop him, they said he was getting his power from Satan, the prince of demons (Mt. 12:24). They even accused him of blasphemy and they killed him because they couldn't stand his authority!

We see that a radical change needs to happen, if we want that our lives would be deeply changed. The first step is to seek God with all our hearts and all our souls (Deut. 4:29) and therefore take the words and the commandments of Jesus very seriously. A receptive heart is available to submit as clay in the potters hands, who will form him his way so that he becomes a fruitful plant in the God's Kingdom Garden. To be fruitful means that we have a heart deeply changed by Jesus. God cannot work through us to others if we are not broken. We must change before we can expect others to change. The fruit of the Spirit must be seen in us (Galatians 5:22-23) as the Holy Spirit is imparting the holiness of God to us, to change us from glory to glory, giving us His divine nature and His character. ***"But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life." (Romans 6:22)***

The more we abide in Christ (John 8:31) and are filled with the Holy Spirit, the greater the manifestation of the Spirit's fruits are visible in that person's life and work. Only when a believer is full of the Holy Spirit, continually given to Him, can he exhibit the character of God. Men and women living in the Spirit, can be distinguished by their fruit in the same way that a carnal person can be recognized by fleshly works. If we are in Christ, the fruit of the Spirit will be seen in us. So also are the works of the flesh manifest in one who is not abiding in Christ. A carnal person is one who is not governed by the Spirit of God. This leads to a egocentric, self-centered life manifesting the works of the flesh, while a Christ-centered life will manifest the fruit of the Spirit. The Father is inviting us into a new relationship with Him, full of powerful blessings that will activate our hearts and give us a new strength.

There is another important attitude that we need to consider in those who ***"having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience." (Lk. 8:15)***. Patience is needed to see fruit form on a tree, it never happens overnight. As we receive the word in a soft and tender heart for God, we need to continually keep our heart soft otherwise the word will not reach its purpose. We keep watering our hearts with the word and set our mind and will to follow Him everyday. ***"We have need of endurance for after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36)***. Many men and women don't like to wait and get very frustrated when God is not giving them straight away what they want. Sadly we have seen many creating their own doctrine (if God is not blessing me I will bless my self). In this way a lot of the seed was wasted and several people have been pushed to start all over again!

God is finally allowing seasons of pruning in our lives and he deals with the branches that don't produce fruits (John 15:2). This is not a punishment but the caring response of a loving Father that wants to bless our lives.

God wants to accomplish His purposes in us and through us. He is looking for a willing heart, someone who really wants to do his will and give God the glory. ***"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them"(Eph. 2:10). We pray:"that you (and I) may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy." (Col. 1:10-11)***