**What it Means to Be A Christian - 5
The Christian is…a Farmer**

**INTRODUCTION** - We have been studying the qualities of a Christian by making comparison to various descriptions in the New Testament. With these descriptions we gain an idea of what the work of a Christian actually involves. WE have seen how the Christian is a citizen, a soldier and an athlete. Today we notice how he is like a farmer.

Descriptions of farming as a Christian are usually associated with growth in the body, and in particular as it relates to our sharing the gospel with others. It is no secret that as Christians we need to share the word of God with others. [**Mark 16:15**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mark%2016.15)**; Matt. 28:19-20** describes the great commission. [**Acts 8:4**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Acts%208.4) describes how when persecutions arose in Jerusalem the disciples were scattered but they took the gospel with them.

As we examine our role as a farmer we will see principles associated with planting the seed of God’s word. So let’s get started.

 I. [***Matt. 13:1-9***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.%2013.1-9)***,*** [***18-23***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt%2013.18-23) ***– the parable of the Sower taught and explained***.

           In one of His best known parables Jesus is speaking to His disciples about the kingdom of heaven. In this parable Jesus emphasizes that not all will accept the truth and even among those who do, not all are truly converted – either their faith is shallow or they have divided loyalties. Either way they quit or are less than is acceptable.
But I find it interesting that as Jesus explains this parable He calls it, “the parable of the sower.” (18) Instead of the parable of the soils, Jesus is speaking to the sower. Typically when Jesus discussed farming He would appeal to the broadcast method of sowing seed. In this parable His point is that we need to broadcast the seed. And while not all will accept it, our task is to sow it anyways.

 II. [***2 Tim. 2:6***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Tim.%202.6)***, “The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.”***

          In a context where Paul is encouraging Timothy to endure in his work he now turns his attention the example of a hardworking farmer. This farmer is diligent – he is hardworking.
As he works, he will be first to partake of his crop. Physically, a farmer typically provides food for his family and then sells what is left. As we strive to sow the seed of God’s word and cultivate it, we will benefit from it. Even if those we are trying to teach reject the truth, we benefit –
- We become more experienced at teaching and sowing “the seed of God’s word”.
- **James 5:7-8** - We learn various characteristics that make us better. For example patience.
- 2 Timothy 2:1 - We become stronger in the faith as we defend it.

 III. ***[1 Corinthians 3:5-9](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Corinthians%203.5-9%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), planting and watering*** –

           In a passage where Paul is trying to get the brethren at Corinth to be united, he seeks to draw attention away from himself and Apollos. He seeks to give God the credit.
As to sowing seed he says, **“*Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.”***
In this text we are reminded that as we sow the seed of God’s word, whether it be in our own hearts or in the hearts of others, let us always give God the glory. All we do is plant and water. It is God who takes care of the results. Like the farmer we learn to put our trust in Him.
[**Mark 4:26-27**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mark%204.26-27) – parable of the growing seed. A short parable found only in Mark, Jesus describes how a seed is planted and grows. We do not see how it grows but we notice it in stages. Eventually it reaches maturity and is harvested. In this parable we are reminded as with Paul’s point, all we do is plant and water – and let God take care of the growth.
ONE observation – often the sickle at harvest is associated with the judgment of God, but here it seems to mean the plant reaches maturity and produces a crop. Friends that is our goal as we plant the seed. In so doing, let us be patient as we give the seed time to do its work.

 IV. ***[John 4:34-38](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%204.34-38%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) – the fields are white unto harvest***.

           Early in His teaching, Jesus sought to emphasize the importance of looking for searching souls. This verse comes after His conversation with the Samaritan woman, an interesting study itself. Jesus shows us that you never know WHERE and WHO is a field in which to sow seed. In this passage Jesus is telling us the time is NOW to sow the seed of His word.
He also notes that you don’t know whether or not you are planting or watering that which another has planted. THE BOTTOM LINE – we don’t know what condition a heart is in until we try.

 V. [***Matt. 15:13-14***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.%2015.13-14) ***– every plant which He has not planted will be rooted up***.

           A rule of nature begun in Genesis 1 is that every living thing produces after its own kind **(21, 24, etc.).**
The same is true spiritually. Whatever seed we plant is what we will produce. IF we plant seeds of error, we will produce a crop with error in it.

[**Matt. 13:24-30**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.%2013.24-30) - Jesus taught the Parable of the Wheat and Tares – in which an enemy planted tares (weeds). They looking at first like the wheat but as they matured they distinguished themselves. AT harvest, they were gathered up, separated and burned (in explaining the parable these tares are **“all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness.” (13:41)**
**Galatians 1:6-9** - We need to plant the seed of God’s word and only that – both in our hearts and in the hearts of others. THAT will produce true believers. Anything else will produce another gospel which is unacceptable.

[**1 Cor. 2:1-2**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Cor.%202.1-2) - Paul spoke of being determined to speak nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

 VI. [***Galatians 6:9***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Galatians%206.9) ***– you reap what you sow***.

           Just as the previous verse emphasizes that what we plant is the crop we will produce, so does this verse. BUT it takes this application a step further.
We need to sow the seed of God’s word in the hearts of others, but we also need to sow that seed in our own hearts. But even more, we need to consider this with whatever we do. Our actions have consequences. You cannot sow evil and expect good as a result.
You cannot live an immoral life and expect to not be harmed by it.

**Proverbs 22:8 - “*He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow, And the rod of his anger will fail.*”**
**Proverbs 11:18 - “*The wicked man does deceptive work, But he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward.*”**
[**James 3:18**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/James%203.18) - **“*Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*”**

 VII. [***2 Cor. 9:6***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Cor.%209.6) ***– he who sows sparingly, reaps sparingly.***

           Another obvious principle of sowing involves quantity. In other words, you reap in proportion to how much you sow. Farmers seek to sow the optimal amount of seed in a field to maximize its yield. If you sow less seed you will get less of a crop.
While this text is addressing our giving (financially), it is a principle that applies to sowing and reaping in all forms. We need to apply this to sowing the word of God with others (and in our lives).
How much seed are we really sowing with others? How much time are we really spending cultivating our own hearts? Are we watering our pure hearts and keeping the weeds out?
God knows what we are doing. He knows if we are spending enough time doing what we ought to.

**Matthew 25:14-30** - Consider the parable of the talents– what “talents” has He given us? Are we using ALL of them or are we burying them (or some of them) in the ground? God knows!
**Matthew 10:42** - He also knows what we do **- “*And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”*”**

 VIII. [***John 15:1-8***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2015.1-8) ***– we are branches in the Vine.***

Taking this analogy a different direction, Jesus also describes us as “produce.” In this text, speaking to His apostles Jesus notes that we are branches abiding in Him as the Vine. The message is that we ought to be producing fruit – which brings us back to the various thought we have previously discussed. Here we are told if we do NOT produce fruit, we will be cut off, cast out and cast into the fire and burned.

**Matthew 13:24-30** - And thus we can see some thoughts about the Christian as a farmer. One final observation ***- there is a harvest coming***. In the parable of the wheat and tares previously mentioned, the real point Jesus is making is that a day is coming in which the world will be “harvested”. It is the day of judgment. On many occasions in scripture, the analogy of harvesting is associated with the judgment of God.

[**Romans 14:10-12**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Romans%2014.10-12) – Warns us that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God and give an account of ourselves to Him.

[**John 5:28-29**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%205.28-29) – Jesus said that all who are in the grave will hear His voice and face judgment. It is because of this day that we need to be “farming”. When we stand before God we will answer for what we have done with our abilities. What will you say when you stand before Him?

**CONCLUSION** –

Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom?

What type of harvest do you desire?