

BREAK UP YOUR FALLOW GROUND

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The field of agriculture is often used in Scripture to portray a spiritual truth and such is the case in the "Parable of the Sower" in Mathew chapter 13 and references to fallow ground found in Jeremiah 4:3 and Hosea 10:12. With the help of the Holy Spirit, I would like to show how these Scriptures can be applied to our lives.

Jeremiah 4:3 says, *"Break up your fallow ground and do not sow among thorns"* (NKJV). Fallow ground is untilled ground that has not been prepared for seeding. It typically will be ground that is infested with weeds and therefore sowing good seed in such ground would be unprofitable. When Jesus spoke to the multitudes in the parable of the sower (Matthew Chapter 13), He said, *"Behold a sower went out to sow"* (verse 3). And some seed *"fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them"* (the seedlings) (verse 7). He then explained the parable in the 23rd verse, *"Now he who received seed among thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."*

Note that fallow ground is not necessarily poor or infertile soil, but rather it is soil that has not been prepared to accept the seed. Fallow ground has growth potential, but that potential is only realized if the ground is prepared for planting and thus productivity. Therefore, in like manner, we need to break up the fallow ground of our hearts in

preparation for the planting of the Lord, i.e., fertile ground to receive all that the Lord has for us. Fallow ground, whether in the natural or the spiritual is unfruitful.

Hosea 10:12 speaks to sowing and reaping in this way. *"Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up the fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord til He comes and rains righteousness upon you"* (NKJV). The result of natural rain to the tilled and planted soil is natural growth and the result of the spiritual rain to the tilled soil of our hearts is spiritual growth. Sow righteousness in your heart (doing what is right, fair, honest, and just). Reap or harvest in mercy (compassion, forgiveness). So, righteous living reaps a harvest of compassion toward those with whom we interact on a daily basis. It would seem from this scripture that righteousness is contingent upon seeking the Lord. Seeking involves persistence or perseverance.

In regard to seeking I am reminded of the Scripture found in 2 Chronicles 7:14, *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear (them) from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land"* (NJKV). What does God require of us according to this Scripture? He requires humility, seeking Him in prayer, and turning from our own ways. What is the promise that follows? He will hear us. He will forgive

our sin. He will heal our land. I believe the healing of our land extends to our physical bodies, as well.

Galatians 6:8, NKJV says, *“For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”* If we sow to the flesh we will reap the works of the flesh, but if we sow to the Spirit we will reap the fruit of the Spirit. The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are found in Galatians 5:19-24, NKJV, *“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication (sexual immorality), uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”* The difference between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are like the difference between night and day. The inheritors of the kingdom of God are those who manifest the fruit of the Spirit and those who practice the works of the flesh will have no part in the kingdom of God.

Music has been put to the words of Isaiah 61:3:

*“He gave me - beauty for ashes
The oil of joy for mourning
The garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness
That we might - be trees of righteousness*

*The planting of the Lord
That He might be glorified.”*

I began this article with reference to agriculture to portray a spiritual truth. I would like to extend that comparison to another portion of Scripture found in Ezekiel 11:19, *“Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God”* (NKJV). The Living Bible translation says, *“I will give you one heart and a new spirit; I will take from you your hearts of stone and give you tender hearts of love for God, so that you can obey My laws and be My people, and I will be your God.”*

If a farmer has stones on his farmland, they have to be removed from time to time. But the job is never finished because new ones are pushed to the surface every year through the working of the soil and heaving of the ground. God says he will remove the stones from our hearts and they do not have to reappear because, in place of the stony heart, He will give a heart of flesh. This heart is tender, malleable, forgiving, compassionate and receptive to His moving. It is a heart of love.

So, I say unto thee, O My people, break up the fallow ground of thine heart and prepare it for the planting of the Lord that he may come and rain righteousness upon thee, that thou mayest reap a harvest of mercy. For surely, sayeth the Lord, as you abide in Me and I in thee, My attributes of love and compassion will be made manifest in the earth and I will lift a fallen creation into harmony with Myself. ✝



Anoint means to set someone apart, to authorize and equip him or her for a task of spiritual ministry. Jesus Christ was set apart for his ministry of preaching, healing, and deliverance. We read in Luke 4:18-19, *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”* Again, in 2 Corinthians 1:22, *“He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”* The Holy Spirit sets us apart with heavenly power for the ministry of Christ who is the anointed of God. Such a power will rest on us and directs our spiritual walk.

On the Pentecost Day, which is the fiftieth day of our Lord’s resurrection, the Holy Spirit descended on the people and they were filled by the Spirit of God and spoke in tongues or languages (Acts 2:1-4). Since then, people have been filled by that power on a continuous basis and received the special gift of speaking in tongues (Acts 10:46, 19:6) and

also possessed the other gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-12). This phenomenal event happened in Jerusalem at the temple precincts. However, we must note that in the Old Testament period, the Holy Spirit had descended on individuals as well, for example, Moses and the seventy elders, Joshua, Othniel, Gideon, Samson, Saul, David, and others. They even prophesied. However, it was only for that time for a specific task. The anointing of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, however, is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28, *“I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”*

Following are some of the salient tasks of the anointing:

1. Anointing makes us aware of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Anointing sets us apart from the world for a specific objective.
3. Anointing breaks the yoke and destroys the bondage.

4. Anointing heals our physical and spiritual diseases.
5. Anointing binds us with the Holy Spirit.
6. Anointing empowers and encourages us with the power to minister.
7. Anointing builds us and makes us steadfast in the faith.
8. Anointing enables us to live in the realm of the Spirit.
9. Anointing makes us Holy.
10. Anointing teaches us the truth.
11. Anointing sets us free.
12. Anointing gives us introspection of our lives (inward-looking, self-analyzing, reflective).
13. Anointing imparts life to us.
14. Anointing opens our spiritual eyes to see Christ in everyone.
15. Anointing unites us and does not divide us.

We would like to draw your attention to John the apostle who is also called the apostle of love, John the Divine, John the Revelator, John the Evangelist, who was on the island of Patmos not by choice but by the order of Roman Emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.) for his faith in Jesus Christ. Patmos is a small island off the west coast of modern Turkey.

Revelation 1:9-11 *"I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. On the Lord's Day, I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: 'Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea'"* (NIV).

Apostle John was alone on that island, where he was anointed by the Holy Spirit and inspired to write to the seven churches of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). In Verse 17, we read, *"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."* This means that he was consumed by the Holy fire of the anointing and no natural life was left in him.

Think about the background of this scripture. John is in a place where he has no one to talk to or to worship with. He might be reminiscing of the days of Spirit-filled worship with the other apostles and believers back in Jerusalem. Yet, he was not disappointed in his loneliness. He began to pray and the word of God says, *"On the Lord's Day he was in the Spirit."* What does that mean? It simply means that disregarding his circumstances, he was transported (not physically) but spiritually to a heavenly realm and he saw someone *"like a son of man among the seven golden lampstands, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. He fell at his feet as though dead"* (Revelation 1:13-17, NIV).

When we are under the anointing, we see and hear the things of the Spirit. We see the invisible. Hear the inaudible, comprehend the incomprehensible and explore the unexplored in the Spirit. Living in the Spirit or anointing is a supernatural experience indeed! Apostle Paul was under the unction of the Spirit and he was transported to the third heaven or caught up to paradise (2 Corinthians 12:2). He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. Through that experience, he heard the voice of God, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12:9). Apostle Paul had pleaded with God three times to take the thorn in his flesh from him, but the reply was not the physical healing but

to depend on the grace of God. When we realize that we live in His grace that is sufficient for us. *"For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12:10).

When the anointing is upon you, God begins to reveal to you about yourself. The great Apostle John fell as though dead, unable to say anything until our Lord Jesus placed his right hand on him and said *"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades"* (Revelation 1:17-18).

John saw and heard something extraordinary. When Ezekiel was among the exiles, he saw the glory of the Lord and when he saw it, he fell facedown, and he heard the voice of one speaking to him. (Ezekiel 1:28). Daniel was under the anointing, he was alone, gazing at this great vision, he had no strength left, his face turned deathly pale and he was helpless. Then he heard God speaking, and as he listened to him, he fell into a deep sleep, his face to the ground (Daniel 10:8-9). Revelations of God began to flow out of the mouths of these great men when they experienced the heavenly power of the anointing. The anointing breaks our carnality and shapes our spirituality. It smoothen the rough edges of our lives.

When Apostle John was under the anointing or in the Spirit, he saw Christ in His glorified form. John had a preview of this when he saw Jesus on the mount of transfiguration in a glorified state. But here at Patmos, he saw the resurrected Jesus in glory. Jesus gave up his physical body with his death on the cross. Now we see Jesus in His glorified spiritual body. Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:16, *"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer."*

When we see Christ in His glory, we see our weaknesses, our failures, and shortcomings. When John saw Christ in glory, he fell down as though dead and he knew that he was nothing before the glorified Christ. In fact, we see ourselves completely in His reflection during such an experience. If we live by the spirit, we will know how to lay everything on the altar to be consumed by the Holy fire. In 1 John 3:2-3, we read, *"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure."*

Job said, *"My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes"* (Job 42:5-6). At the end of his trials, Job saw God in His glory. When Job saw God, he knew how wretched and miserable are his good works before the almighty God. Job's friends (Elihu, son of Barakel the Buzite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, Eliphaz the Temanite) could not find any fault in Job after many cross-examinations. God had to test Job through a fiery furnace experiences to make him pure gold without any impurities. God Himself descended on him to show His glory. Previously, when he was tormented by his agony and the interrogation of his trusted friends, he said *"I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes - I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me"* (Job 19:25-27). God remembers his (Job's) longing to meet His redeemer.

Dear brothers and sisters, we might be able to put on a robe of holiness before society, the church and even at our homes, but we have to be crucified to our pride, ambition, and carnality in order to stand before the almighty God. God knows our hearts clearly. Apostle Paul says,

"If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians, 3: 4-11, NIV).

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he asked his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were distraught, and each went his own way, unwilling to take on the responsibility. In other words, fear gripped them and they went back to their old professions of fishing (John 21:1-3). Among the disciples, there was confusion regarding the future of the church. Jesus had not nominated anyone in particular who would succeed him in leading the church. Apostle Peter had a pedigree of walking on the waters of Galilee with Jesus and Andrew thought that he was the first one to follow Jesus and even brought Peter to Jesus. Andrew also found the boy with five loaves of bread and two fish and John had thought himself as the most beloved disciple who had leaned on Jesus' bosom. James and John were called sons of thunder, for their thunderous qualities (Luke 9:54) and Bartholomew (Nathaniel) had been surnamed as a man without guile (John 1:47). Levi (Matthew) was a tax collector who had despised other disciples as mere fishermen, Simon the Zealot always despised the Roman rule and even waited to kill a Roman, with a concealed dagger in his pouch, if an opportunity provided. This was the mindset of the apostles when Jesus had promised to them that He was going to send the Holy Spirit. They had not understood the message of the kingdom because they were still uncertain, even as he was going to heaven, whether he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6).

However, on the Day of Pentecost which is the fiftieth day of His resurrection, they were all together in the upper room in one place. In Acts 1:14, we read, *"They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."* In the original version, it says that *"they wrestled in prayer, like Jacob wrestled with God."* He wrestled with the angel of God until he was blessed, but not without a permanent limp on his hip (Gen. 32: 4-28).

People who had gathered there in Jerusalem laid their all at the altar of the Holy Spirit. I strongly believe that, just as the offering was burnt on the altar in the Old Testament period, here the people offered their all on the altar for the heavenly fire to consume their fleshly natures. Sure enough, suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (languages) as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-4). As promised by the anointed one, the anointing of the Holy Spirit was now available to all those who believe in Him. What a powerful impartation of the Spirit of God on that day!

Dear people of God, it is very imperative that in an age such as this, we need to be baptized by the Holy Spirit and continue to manifest the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It is not a one-time baptism of the Holy Spirit, but a continuous infilling experience is vitally important to reflect the Christ in us. The Psalmist says, *"You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows"* (Psalm 23:5). Our cup must be always full with the anointing. Let's be Spirit-filled people. Dear young and old alike, let's desire to be filled with the Spirit for it is immunity against the carnal desires. A Spirit-filled person is a challenge for the devil. He will make noises like the bee buzzing around but can't stick around too long. *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings"* (1 Peter 5: 8-9). ✝

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