

THE CHURCH'S CALLING AND PROMISE

INTRO: Psalm 126 is a song of degrees, song as God's people would go up to Jerusalem.

- We cannot determine the time of the Psalm. Always the church is in captivity. The word means in sore distress.
- Important is not the time, but the Who. The Lord turns back the captivity of his people. And he uses means.
- God uses the means of grace, the sowing of the precious seed of his Word.

I. THE NATURE OF THAT CALLING.

- A. The setting of our text.
 1. There is laughing and singing.
 2. The nature of the song: "The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."
 3. But the song quickly turns into a fervent prayer.
- B. The figure used:
 1. It is a figure well known and used in the Scriptures. The farmer sowing his fields.
 2. It is a picture of the seed of God's Word planted into the regenerated heart.
 3. It is a picture of the sprouting, growing and bearing of much fruit.
 4. Jesus teaches the Parable of the Sower or the Parable of the Soils.
 5. At times it is a picture of the church as she is called to sow abundantly in good works (II Cor. 9:10).
- C. The task that is assigned to us.
 1. Many today are confused as to the calling and work of the church.
 2. The church is not called to entertain or to make the world a better place.
 3. She has one calling: to take the precious seed of God's Word and proclaim and scatter it.
 4. We are to do this individually and collectively as a church in our families, in the church & world.
 5. We are to do this with fidelity and faithfulness, in diligence and in obedience.

II. HOW THE CHURCH CARRIES IT OUT: WITH TEARS.

- A. There are tears because of the hard soil.
 1. The farmer finds hard difficult soil that needs much difficult work.
 2. This hard work is not only in the work of evangelism, but also in sowing the seed in the church.
 3. We labor not with the impression of the 'natural goodness of man' but the truth of depravity!
 4. Sowing of precious seed is not for the fainthearted. Not tears of frustration but compassion.
- B. There are tears because the enemy also sows seeds.
 1. Jesus tells us that the enemy comes in stealthfully sowing seeds of wickedness.
 2. The devil labors making use of our sinful flesh using many means to sow wicked seeds.
 3. We must expect that where there is the faithful sowing of the Word, the devil will labor!
 4. We sow with tears: tears for the church and tears for the glory of God.
- C. There are tears regarding the afflictions of God's people.
 1. Great are the afflictions of God's people.
 2. We sow tears of a soft heart towards God's needy saints.
 3. We come to them not with platitudes, but bearing precious seed.
- D. There are tears towards the precious seed that we sow.
 1. It is precious seed, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. Are we worthy to sow these seeds? Are we doing the utmost of our ability.
 3. We sow with tears of love for the Word, and the Christ we preach.

III. THE PROMISE GIVEN TO THE CHURCH.

- A. It is a sure promise.
 1. "Those that sow in tears shall reap in joy (vs. 5)."
 2. "shall doubtless come again with rejoicing (vs. 6)."
 3. God's word does not go forth void but accomplishes his purpose.
- B. The needed patience.
 1. The farmer does not see the result of his labor overnight. He must in dependence wait for God.
 2. So also the church in prayer looks and waits for the Lord of the harvest to give the increase.
- C. The promise realized.
 1. In the earthly figure, at times like last year there were poor harvests.
 2. But God promises that the remnant is a great multitude that no man can number!
 3. There is joy, when the Lord says to us, "Enter into the joy of thy Master."