

Letters to the Church



NOVEMBER '24

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,

In a world of digital instants, it's vital that we remember that evangelism is patient work; for we are dealing with human hearts. We intend to persuade unique individuals who have their own lived experiences and hold their own convictions. They need to be honored as rational beings, even if they're held captive in spiritual error. Real gospel repentance can neither be rushed nor replicated, but its fruit is life everlasting.

The Biblical analogy for evangelism is farming, which is patient work. If we hurry to push people to harvest without having put in the proper time for weeding, tilling, planting, watering, and pruning, we will find very little fruit ready to be picked. We ourselves may become discouraged, exclaiming that "no one wanted the Word." Perhaps this says more about us than them.



Most evangelistic work is spadework. The majority of our efforts will be the rhythms of daily gardenkeeping. Historically, most cultures had a harvest festival at the close of the season because the time to reap marked the end result of many days of hard work in the fields and, therefore, was worth celebrating. So perhaps, instead of focusing our gospel witnessing on "closing the deal," our goal and joy in evangelism should be in daily groundwork. We can trust that in due season, we will reap, and then there will be much to rejoice over.

The Apostle Paul saw some plentiful gospel harvests, but he was first committed to the patient work of evangelistic farming. He also knew he wasn't alone in the field (see 1st Corinthians 3:6- 9). One day might be a time for Paul to water what another had planted. Another might be a day to present an argument to those who are deep in their opposition. The next day might present an opportunity to share with some women who regularly went to a riverside to pray.



“We are God's fellow workers.” We don't know how, but we trust that it is not men but “only God who gives the growth.” When precisely a moment of harvest might arise is a hidden matter to us, as God alone does that miracle of transformation on the inside. Our humble task is to be patient and faithful in our everyday evangelism.

Sometimes, we rush in too soon; other times, we hold back and miss the window. Often, we find ourselves too distracted or disheartened that we forget or forsake our privilege and purpose in evangelism entirely. However, if we are faithful in the field daily, working patiently alongside other laborers and astonishingly alongside God Himself. . . well then. . . the long-awaited and now perfectly ripe moments of gospel harvest are not likely to pass us by. In the meantime, let's not grow weary of the patient gardening work; we will see growth, and not just in those whom we are tending but in our own hearts as well.

YOUR PASTOR & SERVANT,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Shawn' written in a cursive, flowing style.