

A Season of Reaping

Discussion Notes - August 23, 2026

1. What is one habit, value, or pattern, positive or negative, that you can trace back to a previous generation in your family?

This week's message looked at sowing and reaping from three directions. First, the good news: we reap what we sow. God's law of the harvest means that what we plant in faith will grow in time. Second, there is more good news: we also reap things we did not sow. We enjoy blessings that came from people who came before us, from the community around us, and from a God who provides even when we have done nothing to earn it. But the same truth cuts the other way too. We can also reap what others planted, including their sin, their broken patterns, and the consequences of their choices. The turning point of the message was this: the cycle can stop with you. What you inherited is not your sentence. Joshua stood before a whole nation and made a public choice. And the sermon ended with one question: what if I break the cycle?

Read Galatians 6:7-9

"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

Paul wrote Galatians to a church that was drifting away from grace and back toward trying to earn God's approval through rule-keeping. In chapter 6, he uses the picture of a harvest to remind them that spiritual seeds are real. What you plant in the Spirit through prayer, generosity, and faithfulness will grow, even when it takes longer than you expected. The phrase 'do not grow weary' tells us the harvest is often slow. But Paul says keep going. The fruit is coming.

2. The sermon described three different kinds of reaping: what you sow yourself, what others sowed as a blessing, and what was passed down as a burden. Which of those three felt most personal to you today, and why?

Read Ezekiel 18:20-23

"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?"

The Israelites in exile had started using an old proverb as an excuse. They would say, 'The fathers ate sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge,' meaning they blamed their own choices on what their parents had done. God's response through Ezekiel is both firm and full of grace: every person stands before God on their own choices, and the door of repentance is always open. This passage does not pretend that generational patterns are not real. It just says they are not the final word. You are not locked into what was handed to you.

3. Is there a pattern in your life that you know was passed down? Something that does not have to define you but still does? What would it look like to actively sow something different starting this week?

Read 2 Timothy 1:5-7

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

Paul wrote this from prison near the end of his life. He wanted Timothy to remember where his faith came from. It started with his grandmother Lois, then his mother Eunice, and then Paul himself. Three people planted into Timothy before he ever planted anything himself. But Paul still calls him to fan it into flame. To take what was given and do something with it. You can inherit faith. But you still have to tend it and pass it on.

4. The sermon said the first one to break the cycle always pays the most. Do you think that is true? What makes it hard to be the first in your family or circle to choose differently, and what might make it worth it?

Read Joshua 24:15

"And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua gave this speech at the end of his life, at a place called Shechem. That was the same spot where Abraham had first built an altar when he arrived in Canaan. Joshua chose that location on purpose. He gathered all of Israel there and made them declare their answer out loud. He knew some of them had already gone back to worshipping other gods. He named those gods by name. He was not subtle about it. He did not just make his own quiet decision. He made a public declaration and called everyone else to do the same. He was the first planter, and he did it in front of everyone.

5. The sermon closed with the question: "What if I break the cycle?" What is one specific area, spiritually, financially, relationally, or in terms of a habit or pattern, where you sense God is calling you to be the first one to plant something different?

Prayer Points

- For the courage to be the first in our families or circles to choose a different way, even when it costs us.
- For patience in sowing faithfully when the harvest is not yet visible and the wait is long.
- For those in our group already paying the cost of breaking a cycle, that God would strengthen and sustain them.

DEEPER DIVE: Ruth - A Life of Breaking the Cycle

Ruth was a woman from Moab. When her husband died, she had every reason to go home, back to her family and her gods. Nobody would have blamed her. Instead, she made a deliberate choice to follow her mother-in-law Naomi to a land she had never been to, with a God she was still learning. She left behind everything familiar to become the first planter of something new. That faith grew through her son Obed, to Jesse, to David, and eventually all the

way to Jesus. Ruth is the sermon's closing question lived out: what if I break the cycle? She answered it. And what grew from her answer she never fully lived to see.

Read Ruth 1:14-18

"Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. And she said, 'See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.' But Ruth said, 'Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.' And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her."

Both women are standing at the same crossroads. Same grief. Same loss. Same invitation to go home. Orpah made the reasonable choice and went back. The Bible does not fault her for it. Ruth made a different choice. She used serious, binding language to lock herself in, not just to Naomi but to Naomi's God. She was the first one to choose differently. She said it out loud, in public, and it cost her everything familiar.

Read Ruth 2:10-12

"Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, 'Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?' But Boaz answered her, 'All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!'"

Boaz tells Ruth that people had been talking about what she did. Her faithfulness was not invisible. The Hebrew word for 'wings' here is *kanaf*, and it is the same word used for the corner of a garment. When Boaz later covers Ruth with his garment as a sign of betrothal, it echoes this very moment. God is already at work. The harvest from chapter 1's seed is beginning to take shape in chapter 2. Faithful sowing does not go unnoticed.

Read Ruth 4:13-17

"So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.' Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Naomi.' They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David."

The genealogy at the end of Ruth is not filler. It is the whole point. The book closes by showing us what grew from one woman's choice on a dusty road. Her faithfulness ran all the way through Obed, Jesse, David, and into the family line of Jesus in Matthew 1. Ruth never knew any of that. She just chose. The sermon said the first one always pays the most. Ruth paid. And the harvest from her seed outlasted her by generations.

Deeper Dive Discussion Questions

1. Ruth made her defining choice in a moment of grief and loss, not strength. When have you found it easier or harder to make a life-changing commitment when you were already running on empty?
2. Boaz told Ruth that her faithfulness had been "fully told" to him. People were watching and talking. How does being seen, or not being seen, affect your willingness to do the costly right thing?
3. Ruth's choice bore fruit she never lived to fully see. It ran all the way to David and beyond. How does that change the way you think about the seeds you are planting right now, especially the ones with no visible harvest yet?