

Seasons of Life: Part 1, A Season of Sowing

Discussion Notes, August 9, 2026

1. Have you ever invested heavily in something, a relationship, a habit, a skill, without seeing results for a long time? What kept you going, or what made you quit?

Every season has a purpose attached to it, and you did not choose when it starts or ends. In a sowing season, doing the right thing can look a lot like wasting your time. The sower throws seed on ground he cannot control, and only later does anyone know whether it was worth it. The Psalms are honest that sowing is tearful work, and they do not try to talk you out of that. Weeds are the default. A harvest only happens if someone goes out and does the work. But here is the other side of it: growth is not your job. The seed does what you cannot make it do. That is freeing, but it also means the window is real. Because of the resurrection, the work you put in during a hard season is not wasted. That is the promise underneath all of it.

Read Matthew 13:3-8

"And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.'" (ESV)

Jesus is teaching a big crowd near the water when he tells this story. Back then, farmers would throw seed out broadly and then work it into the ground. They did not carefully pick a spot for every seed. The sower in the parable does the same thing. He just scatters. Some of it lands in bad places and nothing comes of it. But the seed that hits good ground? A hundredfold return was an incredible yield by anyone's standard. The point is that the sower did not hold back, and in the end the harvest more than made up for everything that looked like it was wasted.

2. The sower scattered seed across all four types of ground without testing first. Why do you think Jesus presented that as the model rather than the exception?

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." (ESV)

Paul is wrapping up his letter to the churches in Galatia and he gets very practical here. What you put into something is what you get back. That is just how it works. He is not just talking about farming. He means your life, your choices, your habits. And he is honest that doing the right thing gets tiring. "Do not grow weary" assumes you will want to quit at some point. The promise of reaping "in due season" is real, but the timing is God's, not yours. The condition is not that you work hard enough. It is that you do not give up.

3. Where in your life right now are you most tempted to stop sowing because the season has gone on too long?

Read Hosea 10:12

"Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you." (ESV)

Hosea is speaking to Israel at a time when the people have drifted away from God. He uses farming language because that is what his audience knows. Fallow ground is not ruined ground. It is ground that used to grow things but has been left alone long enough to go hard. You cannot just plant in it anymore. It has to be broken up first. That takes real work. Hosea says that breaking up the ground is what seeking the Lord looks like. Getting ready to receive is not passive. It is something you have to go do.

4. What does fallow ground look like in a person's spiritual life, and what makes it hard to break up?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:58

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (ESV)

This verse comes right at the end of 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul has just spent a long time making the case for the resurrection. So when he says "therefore," that word is pointing back at everything he just said. Christ was raised. The dead will be raised. Death does not get the last word. That is why your work is not in vain. Paul is not just trying to encourage you to keep going. He is saying there is a reason underneath it. The resurrection is the reason. Being "steadfast and immovable" is not about being stubborn or tough. It is about standing on something real.

5. The sermon pointed to "therefore" as anchoring steadfastness in the resurrection. How does resurrection change the way you think about a sowing season that feels invisible or pointless?

Prayer Points

- For courage to keep sowing faithfully in seasons that feel like waste
- For trust that God is working in what we cannot yet see or measure
- For those in our group who are in a long, costly waiting season, that they would not grow weary

DEEPER DIVE: Joseph, A Life of Patient Sowing

Joseph's story is probably the longest example of a sowing season in the whole Bible. He is gifted, he has a calling, and then everything falls apart. His brothers sell him. He ends up a slave. He serves well and gets thrown in prison for something he did not do. Year after year, doing the right thing seems to produce nothing good. But the text keeps saying the same thing at every low point: the Lord was with him. Joseph's story does not ask "what should you do in a sowing season?" It shows you what it actually looks like to live through one.

Read Genesis 37:3-7

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him. Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. He said to them, 'Hear this dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.'" (ESV)

Joseph did not ask for his calling. He gets these dreams and shares them, and his brothers hate him even more for it. His dad loves him best and that makes things worse too. The very thing God puts in him makes him a target. From the outside it looks like his life is heading toward

disaster, not destiny. What God is planting in Joseph starts in a field with a coat that sets him apart, and the first thing it produces is rejection from the people closest to him.

Read Genesis 39:19-23

"As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, 'This is the way your servant treated me,' his anger was kindled. And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed." (ESV)

Joseph has already been sold by his own brothers. Now he has worked hard and done everything right in Potiphar's house, and he ends up in prison for something he did not do. Doing the right thing got him punished. If there is a low point in the story, this is probably it. And yet, right here, the text says the Lord was with Joseph. No explanation. No "even though things are terrible." Just: the Lord was with him. And Joseph does not fall apart in prison. He leads. He keeps sowing even in the darkest place in the story, with no reason to think a harvest is anywhere close.

Read Genesis 45:4-8

"So Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come near to me, please.' And they came near. And he said, 'I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.'" (ESV)

When it all finally comes together, Joseph does not say his suffering was just an unfortunate part of the journey. He says God sent him there on purpose. He can look back at every hard thing and see it as preparation, not waste. The betrayal, the slavery, the prison, all of it was God getting him to exactly where he needed to be. That does not make the cost disappear. But it changes what the cost was for. And his harvest is not just his own success. It is food and survival for an entire people. That is fruit he could never have dreamed of back when he was sowing in tears.

Deeper Dive Discussion Questions

1. What do you think kept Joseph from bitterness through betrayal, slavery, and false imprisonment? Is there anything in the text that gives you a clue?
2. Joseph says "it was not you who sent me here, but God." Can a person hold that kind of interpretation in the middle of a hard season, or does it only make sense looking back?
3. If someone in your life is in a Joseph-style sowing season right now, what would you say to them, and what would you not say?