

When I was a boy up in N. Michigan we used to often sing that song (Bringing in the Sheaves) and in S.S. they used to have us recite Gal. 6:7, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Where I lived there was a copper mining area. Most of us had very little connection with farming. Yet we were using in our S.S. and in our Scripture those figures of farming, figures of sowing and reaping and harvesting. Though we had little direct connection with harvesting, or sowing, if it were not for the people who worked in those fields I'm sure none of us would last very long. It is very important for our lives and it has an important place in the Scripture. References to sowing and reaping and harvesting.

I would like to call your attention now to one of several passages related to that which we will look at this morning. This is in John 4:31. As all of you know the story there, the story of Jesus' talk with the woman at the well. There in Samaria after he had talked with her while the disciples had gone into the city in order to buy things to eat, they came back and just before they came back, the woman left him and went into the town to get her friends and brought a great many of them to see Him.

Before they came and after she had left, the disciples came to Him and offered Him some food. He didn't take any. They did not understand it. They urged Him to eat. Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work. Do not say four months more and then comes harvest. I tell you, Open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages. Even now he harvests the crop for eternal life so that the sower and reaper may be glad together."

This morning I would like to speak to you about three harvests. Three interconnected harvests. Now it is quite obvious I believe from the passage here that the first of these harvests of which we speak now is the accomplishment of the work of the Lord. It is the preparation for the accomplishment for which He came into the world, in order to gather together out of all the world those who would believe on His Name. Sometimes we hear somebody say, Why is it when I was saved, when I received Christ into my heart, that He did not take me right to heaven then? Why did He leave me here in this world of sin? and difficulty?

I think there are two answers to that. But the first answer relates to the servant. Certainly after we are saved God leaves us here in order that we may accomplish for Him. He uses human beings as His instruments for helping others come to know Christ and to grow in grace. Jesus spent a short time going through Judea and Galilee and preaching to the various villages there. Then he went to Jerusalem and performed that great atonement for us, and gave His life that all who believe on Him might be saved. Then He was raised from the dead and talked with His disciples. Why did He not stay here? Why did he just confine his preaching to Judea and Galilee? Why did He not go on and preach to all the people in the world?