

A WORD FOR THE WEARY Galatians 6:9

August 6, 1930, 45-year-old JOSEPH CRATER ate dinner with friends at a restaurant in New York City. He was never seen or heard from again. He was called "The Missingest Man in New York. Because Crater was a New York Supreme Court judge, there was a massive investigation. Decades of investigation produced multiple theories but no conclusions. In 1979, Missing Persons Case No. 13595 was officially closed. But a search of Crater's apartment did produce an interesting clue. It was a note to his wife attached to a sizeable amount of money. It read in part, "I am very weary. Love, Joe." Those words may have been an innocent expression. Or they may be the epithet of a despairing man.

Many Christians end up on the proverbial milk-carton because they intimately identify with the words of Crater's note: "I am very weary." I am not talking about physical exhaustion or mental fatigue. I am talking about spiritual weariness. You may have never scribbled Crater's words on a note. But they may be tattooed on your heart.

- **You hunger for maturity, but you still you feel like you're in one of those sawed-off little chairs in God's elementary school.**
- **You have been struggling with an addiction, longing for deliverance, but it is yet to come.**
- **You have been contending for reconciliation in a marriage to no avail.**
- **You have been waiting months - perhaps years - for some prodigal child to return; yet his room is still empty, her place at the table is still vacant.**
- **You have put God first in your finances, but you are still facing the creeping shadow of bankruptcy.**
- **You have been faithful in your service for Christ, yet your field is still barren.**

But though there may be no "Under Construction" signs up. There may be no tracks of heavy machinery to be found. There may be no sounds of heavenly jackhammers in the background. But the master Architect and Builder is busy at work on your behalf right now! God is aware of your circumstances and moves in the midst of them. God is aware of your pain and monitors every moment of it. God is aware of your emptiness and seeks to fill it beyond your wildest dreams. God is aware of your wounds and scars and wants to heal you everywhere you hurt. God is aware of your soul that's been screaming, "I'm tired of this." And God has left a word for the weary in **Galatian 6:9**: "*Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.*"

The central phrase of this verse is "*we shall reap.*" We should not grow weary from doing good, because we shall reap. "*Due season*" is when we shall reap. We should not "*give up,*" because we shall reap. The central phrase of this verse is, "*we shall reap.*" Here is the word to the weary: Hold on! Harvest is coming! The wait may seem unbearable, but harvest is coming. The grass may be greener on the other side of the fence, but harvest is coming. The land may seem barren, the seed may seem powerless, and the weeds may seem unmovable, but harvest is coming. **Psalm 126:5-6** says, "*Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out*

weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

**SOWING IN THE MORNING, SOWING SEEDS OF KINDNESS
SOWING IN THE NOON-TIDE AND IN THE DEWY EVE
WAITING FOR THE HARVEST AND THE TIME OF REAPING
WHEN WE SHALL COME REJOICING, BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES**

What should you do in the meantime?

I. PERSIST IN DOING GOOD.

Galatians is THE MAGNA CHARTA OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. It declares our spiritual freedom in Christ. In chapters 1-4, Paul defends and explains the gospel truth that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ independent of any good works we perform. But chapters 5-6 present the other side of grace. **Galatians 5:13** says: *"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."* Grace is not license to do your own thing. It is the means by which we live for God. Chapter 5 teaches us *why* we should live for God. Chapter 6 teaches us *how* to live for God. **Galatians 6:7-9** motivates the saints to live for God with an agricultural allegory.

Verse 7 is a word of warning: *"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap."* In a real sense, you determine your tomorrow by how you live today. How you live determines how God will treat you. In his book *The Scarlet Thread*, GARDNER TAYLOR rightly calls this. "The Law of Kingdom Investment." You reap what you sow.

Verse 8 is a word to the worker: *"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."* The emphasis of verse 7 is on divine sovereignty. The emphasis of verse 8 is on human responsibility. You have no control over the harvest after you plant, but you can control the harvest by what you plant. You can plant sinful things that will bring a crop of corruption and a future of despair. Or you can plant spiritual seeds that will bring a spiritual harvest and an eternal bounty.

Verse 9 is a word for the weary: *"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."* This verse assumes the Christian life will be characterized by doing good. The phrase, *"doing good,"* encompasses all the commands in chapters 5 and 6 of this letter. **Galatians 6:10** exhorts: *"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."* But there is no command in verse 9. It assumes we will do good to others at every opportunity. Verse 9 does not command us to do good. It commands us to not to stop doing good.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, *"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted."* There is a time to plant and a time to pluck up. That's

great. But there is also a time between the time to plant and the time to pluck up. And in that time between the times, we are tempted to get tired. You cultivate you land. You plant your seed. But you cannot come out the next day and bring in the harvest. It takes many long days of sunshine and many wet nights of rainfall before anything breaks ground. And when the reward does not follow the investment as quickly as we think it should, we are prone to become tired of sowing, frustrated with waiting, and anxious for the harvest. The Puritan JOHN BROWN said it well: "Many Christians are like children, they would sow and reap the same day." Verse 9 confronts this childish tendency with a command: *"And let us not grow weary of doing good."*

This verse does not command us to pretend we are bionic Christians. We are human beings. And we grow weary sometimes. Even Paul grew weary. In **Galatians 4:11**, Paul confesses, *"I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain."* These are words of weariness, frustration, and discouragement. Even Paul got tired. In fact, the word for the weary in **Galatians 6:9** was just as much for Paul as it was for the Galatians. In verse 8, where Paul gives instruction, he speaks in the third person (*"the one who sows"*). But in verse 9, when Paul gives encouragement, he speaks in the first person (*"we shall reap"*).

JOHN PIPER says, "Human beings have a sad capacity for getting tired of wonderful things. Vacationers get tired of sunsets, millionaires get tired of money, kids get tired of toys, and Christians get tired of doing good." Even godly, committed people grow weary sometimes. How do we correlate the fact that Paul said do not get weary with the fact that weariness is inevitable? The text says, *"And let us not grow weary of doing good."* I learned this verse from the KJV that says, *"And let us not be weary in well doing."* That classic, poetic rendering leaves the point somewhat obscured. But this verse does not command us to not grow weary while we are doing good. That's is inevitable. The verse commands us not do grow weary of doing what is good. Do not grow weary of doing what is right. Do not grow weary of doing what is pleasing to the Lord.

Some years ago, during a Monday Night Football game between the Chicago Bears and the New York Giants, one of the announcers observed that Walter Payton, the Bears Hall of Fame running back, had accumulated over 9 miles in total career rushing yardage. The other commentator responded to this incredible statistic by saying, "Yeah, and that's with someone knocking him down every 4.6 yards." If you want to go the distance, when life knocks you down, you've got to get up, not give up.

II. BELIEVE THE HARVEST IS COMING IN DUE SEASON.

Galatians 6:9 says: *"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."* This word of encouragement addresses an important aspect of spiritual labor: Harvest doesn't happen in a hurry! In **John 4:35**, Jesus says, *"There are yet four months, then comes the harvest."* But Jesus was talking about the transition of seasons. He was not giving a timeline. Likewise, in the realm

of spiritual agricultural, you cannot chart the coming of the harvest. But know that harvest does not happen in a hurry.

- **It takes time to develop a Christ-like character.**
- **It takes time to grow a healthy church.**
- **It takes time build a mature relationship.**
- **It takes times to raise responsible children.**
- **It takes time to establish a productive career.**
- **It takes time to reach worthwhile goals.**
- **It takes time to effect positive change.**

We live in a society that is driven by two passions: I want it all. And I want it now. But planted seed does not bear fruit overnight. In his infinite wisdom, God has set up seasons of the soul. As a result, harvest may not come in a hurry. It may not even come in this life. But waited time on God is never wasted time. You are not in God's waiting room for nothing. Believe the harvest is coming in due season.

A. THE TIME OF YOUR HARVEST HAS BEEN SPECIFICALLY SELECTED FOR YOU.

The text says: *"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap..."* That little term *"due"* translates the Greek word from which we get our English terms *"idiom"* and *"idiosyncrasy."* It means that which pertains to self or that which is one's own. It is used to speak of something that is individual or private or peculiar or separate or unique. Paul uses it here to say that God has given you your own separate season to reap your harvest. God has given you your own private period to reap your harvest. You do not ever have to be jealous, insecure, or bitter because someone else receives a blessing, reaches a milestone, or reaps a harvest. You can rejoice with those who rejoice because you know that God has given you your own separate season to reap your harvest. **Psalm 1:3** declares the blessedness of one who sows to the Spirit: *"He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."* If you live according to the word of God, you do not have to worry about what other people are doing around you. God will give you your own fruit to bear. And God will give you your own season to bear your fruit.

My daddy used to tell about a girl that he was crazy about during his seminary days. Problem was that every one else was crazy about her too. And so every afternoon this girl would have a porch full of young theologians all trying to impress her. Her mom would come out and serve them lemonade as they each sat around hoping to win a date with the beautiful girl. But in this crowd of budding prophets was a young man from the necessary. He liked this girl as well. But he wasn't handsome. He wasn't eloquent. And he wasn't a seminary student. So he would just sit there quietly every afternoon. My daddy said this guy ended up getting that girl. They even got married. Here's why. When the curfew hit, and my dad and the other guys had to be back in the dorms. That other guy was still sitting there. And if you are going to get what God has for you, you have to learn how to wait when other people walk.

B. THE TIME OF YOUR HARVEST HAS BEEN SOVEREIGNLY SELECTED BY GOD.

Verse 9 assures: *“for in due season we will reap.”* The term *“season”* refers to a special occasion. There are two Greek words for time used in the New Testament. One is the word *chronos*, English term *“chronology,”* which speaks of time in general or time in the abstract. It is the natural sequence of events. The other word is *kairos*, the word used in our text, which speaks of a set or proper time.

It means a set or proper time. It is the same word used in **Galatians 4:4**: *“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.”* God sent his Son Jesus at the right time. And that is when you will reap your harvest. Not only does God move in a period that is sensitive to my particular situation, but also whenever God moves it is the right time. In **Matthew 9:38** Jesus calls the father, *“the Lord of the harvest.”* God is in control of the harvest. And God’s timing is perfect. Whenever God decides to move, it is the always the right time. I repeat.

A woman went to a neighbor’s produce stand to purchase grapes. She stood in line while the farmer waited on other customers. The line was long and each person seemed to get special attention. When the woman finally got to the head of the line, the farmer greeted her with a warm smile of recognition. She ordered her grapes, but the farmer did not immediately fill the order. Instead, he took her produce basket and walked away. Having to wait again, the woman began to fume, thinking about how the farmer had taken such care of the strangers in front of her, not wanting them to become impatient, but with her he took his time, because he knew his nearby neighbor would be reluctant to put up a fuss. Her smoldering anger was doused, however, by the farmer’s explanation as he returned with the basket full of beautiful, perfectly ripened grapes. “I know I kept you waiting,” the farmer said, “but I needed the time to get you the very best.”

III. DETERMINE NOT TO GIVE UP.

Galatians 6:9 begins with an exhortation: *“And let us not grow weary of doing good.”* Then it gives us a reason why we should not grow weary of doing good: *“for in due season we will reap.”* But the verse closes with a qualification: *“if we do not give up.”* The term *“give up”* means to relax. It pictures a worker in the field who loosens his belt out of fatigue or frustration. When the term is used in the passive voice, as it is here, it means to faint, give up, or lose heart.

This final clause emphasizes the point of the opening clause. All of us will be tempted to grow weary of doing good. All of us will be tempted to give up. All of us will be tempted to succumb to life’s quitting points. But don’t miss the magnitude of this conditional statement. There is only thing that can stop you from reaping the harvest in due season. The only way you can miss the harvest is if you faint, lose heart, or give up.

- **Satanic attacks cannot stop me from reaping my harvest.**
- **Heavy burdens cannot stop me from reaping my harvest.**
- **Difficult circumstances cannot stop me from reaping my harvest.**

- **Inadequate resources cannot stop me from reaping my harvest.**
- **Hostile people cannot stop me from reaping my harvest.**
- **Vicious lies cannot stop me from reaping my harvest.**
- **Not even personal failure can stop me from reaping my harvest.**

The only thing that can stop you from reaping the harvest is if you lose heart, give up, and walk away. But if you stay and stand in the will of God, nothing can stop you from reaping the harvest. **1 Corinthians 15:58** says, *“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.”* Since we have the assurance that the harvest is coming, we cannot allow ourselves to get tired of doing good, even though we may get tired while doing good.

I hear you, you are saying, “It’s easy to say I won’t quit. But how do you keep going when you feel long giving up? First of all, prayer will keep you from giving up. **Luke 18:1** says: *“And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.”* Likewise, waiting will keep you from giving up. **Isaiah 40:28-31** says: *“Have you know known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint nor grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”* Finally, thanksgiving will keep you from giving up. **Jonah 2:7-9** says: *“When my life was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!”*