



Fallow Ground

Sow with a view to righteousness, reap in accordance with kindness; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord until He comes to rain righteousness on you.

Hosea 10:12

Land that is uncultivated is often overgrown with weeds, brambles and briars; its soil is hard and cracked after months or years of enduring the cycles of weather. Seed scattered on it becomes little more than bird food. The land appears useless. But in truth it is neutral. It is a base. It is what is done to and with it that brings value to the land. To be able to use fallow ground for crops, the overgrowth must be cut down, the land pierced with blades to break it and turn it. It must be softened, plowed, turned to reach the plantable soil.

So it is with the human heart. Left to our own devices, our hearts become cluttered and overgrown with weeds of sinfulness and wickedness and worry. We become dry and hard, cracked and dehydrated, unkind and unforgiving. What is left to grow there brings no value to anyone. The breaking and turning of the fallow ground of our hearts is rarely pleasant. We are comfortable the way we are, and the work of turning the dry earth is onerous and to be avoided. It becomes easier to accept that we are full of weeds and briars than to do the work of softening the ground.

I am reminded of a rebellious person. Looking at his or her heart, one may think it is hopeless to try to turn that heart toward God. There are so many weeds there, the overgrowth so dense that the ground cannot even be seen. But are we to abandon it? Leave it to be choked and useless? We are called to be more than just fallow ground. We are created to grow and produce fruit. But the fruit cannot be produced unless the ground is plowed.

It is time to break up our fallow ground. It is time to seek the Lord until He comes to rain righteousness on us. It is time to do the work in our own hearts and the hearts we are responsible for so that we can sow with a view to righteousness and reap in accordance with kindness. It will not always be pleasant; in fact, at times it will be back-breaking, seemingly unrewarding work. No sooner will one plot be overturned than another will sprout its withering weeds. It is a never-ending work, this work of tending the land of our hearts. But the rewards, though often unrealized in the present, are immense and breathtaking.

No heart is hopeless. Fallow ground can be softened and planted with seeds of righteousness if we pick up the plow.

Father, we ask You to soften our hearts today. We ask that You overturn the years of dried and hardened soil and pull the weeds of wickedness so that Your righteousness can be sown. Help us submit to the ministrations of the Master Gardener so that our hearts may produce abundant fruit.