



Planted with Purpose

GOD'S CULTIVATION BRINGS OUR TRANSFORMATION

Lesson 3: Planted Alive

(Chapters 3 – 9)

This lesson is part of a series of bible studies entitled "Planted with Purpose." This lesson series is a type of companion study of Bishop T. D Jakes' book entitled "Planted with a Purpose" Although this series will feature some of the themes of Bishop Jakes' book, it will not precisely follow the author's premise or literary structure. Nevertheless, you may find that using the book along with these lessons will greatly enhance your learning experience. The chapters in parenthesis under the lesson's name refers to the chapters read in Bishop Jake's book in preparation of this lesson – Blessing to You!

Not Dead Yet

John 12:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. KJV*

There once was a time when many people were so afraid of being buried alive that they had a clause written in their wills that they should not be buried until 72 hours after they were thought dead. Some historians explained this concern came from grave robbers finding scratching on the inside of coffins which indicated that the person had been buried alive. This would be an almost unimaginable horror and inconceivable powerlessness! However, as we discovered in earlier lessons, that a seed is "alive" – it is a container of life. According to Jesus in order for this life to bring forth much more life it must be buried while still alive. **QUESTIONS:** Are there times when you felt that certain situations made you feel as if your gifts and talents had been buried away? Has some unanticipated circumstance caused you to have to put your personal dreams and ambitions on an indefinite hold? As mentioned in the previous lesson, it is only the outer portion of the seed that perishes in the earth. Yet, in its perishing, it provides needed nutrients that feeds the "germ" – the only part of the seed that can produce life. **QUESTION:** How does this concept provide a good illustration of: **2 Cor 5:17** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. KJV* This is that "transformation" in our life that is a direct result of God's loving "cultivation" in our lives.

So then, you can take comfort in knowing that though at the moment, things may seem dormant, you are still alive! In fact, it is during this dormant stage that faith and confidence in God's plan for our lives can become stronger. **Phil 1:6** *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: KJV*

God Plants But People Bury

John 11:34 *And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. KJV*

This scripture is part of the incredible story of Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, who having been pronounced dead was buried by his sisters Mary and Martha. Jesus arriving some four days after his friend's burial is confronted by the dead man's somewhat irate sisters who appear to imply that Jesus is in some degree responsible for their brother dying v.32 *"Jesus, if you had been here then my brother wouldn't have died"* (italics mine) We are all pretty much familiar with what happens next; how Jesus resurrects Lazarus; (or though some teach that Jesus resuscitated Lazarus rather than resurrected him – we'll discuss this later) and restores him to his family and friends. **QUESTIONS:** Who buried Lazarus? Why did they bury him? Was there any expectation that Jesus would restore their brother alive to them?

The truth of the matter is they buried Lazarus because they thought it was all over for him. They buried him with no expectation of restoration in this life. This what people do when they perceive something is dead. Jesus knew that his friend Lazarus had only been “planted” for the purpose of proving to everyone that Jesus was indeed “the resurrection.” Likewise, there are times when people will pronounce your dreams, aspirations and callings dead and will insist on them being buried. Maybe you even participated in the funeral. But, just like in this passage, Jesus shows up and asks “where have you buried them?” God wants us expect a resurrection. No matter how deep the seed gets planted, God still raises it up and out. The Apostle Paul describes this condition in:

2 Cor 4:8-10; *8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. KJV (see Ps 37:24)*

In these scriptures the Apostle juxtaposes the life’s dire experiences with its powerless after effects. Because of the “treasurer” which is the Holy Ghost, that Paul says we who are Christ carry inside our “earthen vessels” – we can experience troubles and yet not be overly concerned; we can be perplexed and feel no misery or anguish; persecuted but never lonely. The child of God can even be cast down “planted deep” and still remain alive!

The War of Waiting

Rom 4:17 *(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. KJV*

Although this is one of the most misapplied verses in the NT, it does rightly lend itself to illustrate the point here intended. God alone is the uncreated creator. God calls into existence that which he so desires. Even when it comes to our life, God calls us not by what we are, but by what He desires us to become. The scripture teaches us that despite the fact that both Abraham and his wife Sarai were well beyond childbearing age, the power present within God’s word called Sarai’s womb back to life and Isaac was conceived in their very old age. Initially, Abram and Sarai grew tired of waiting on God to make good on his promise of giving them a son, taking matters into their own hands they crafted their own plans to fill up the empty place in their lives. Patience is a virtue almost absent in this generation. Our microwaves have taught us that waiting is no longer a necessary part of life. **QUESTION:** What makes us become dissatisfied with what we have while waiting for what we want?

This strong desire that we have at times to want to help God out – is a component of Adam and Eve’s original sin to achieve independence from God. **QUESTION:** We know that “faith without works is dead...” but is there a place where our “works” abandons God’s will?

There is always a need for us to self-validate. By this I mean, we tend to find away to approve, defend or in some way sanction our own thoughts and actions. Often, even giving ourselves permission to do what we really want to do. Sarai considered herself far too old to birth a child so she gave herself permission to side-step God and remedy this matter herself by giving her handmaid to her husband Abram. Giving into our flesh can be self-soothing but the feeling is a fleeting one because the stinging reality of sin soon arrives. Satan tries to take advantage of us even in our time of divine cultivation. We can never let our guards down and be caught in the snares that Satan sets for us.

Ps 124:7 *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. KJV*