

# “God Has Promised There Will Be a Good Harvest”

Philippians 4:6-20

The harvest is over for most of our farmers. Throughout the planting, growing, and harvest times, there was plenty to be anxious about this year. First it rained too much. Then it rained too little. Then it rained during harvest time. Yet, the Lord provided his bounty. It seemed like He was ignoring our prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Yet, the Lord provided. There was no need to be anxious.

Now, this does not mean that our farmers have no reason to plan ahead or work long hours. A year like this one does not come along because we didn’t “pray hard enough” – whatever that means. Scripture says “the rain falls on the righteous and the unrighteous.” Luther rightly states in his Small Catechism that “God indeed gives daily bread to everyone, even to all evil people.”

It is not a question of what do I need to do to get God’s attention to make sure that He provides. The reality is: God provides – period. This does not mean that God guarantees fabulous wealth, or even marginal wealth. Jesus taught us to pray for our daily bread. Do remember that if you have two or more pairs of shoes, you are in the upper echelon of all the people in the world.

I have been corresponding with a young man in Uganda who will be ordained as a Lutheran pastor next June. I have shared some of his pictures on Facebook. The pictures are of people filled with joy. They have little material wealth compared to what we are accustomed to, but I love conversing with him as his joy in the Gospel is so genuine. He asked me to come to his graduation and ordination as his “friend.” I can’t this June, but the church where he will be serving is in Jinja, Uganda – which is right on Lake Victoria (which is a bucket list destination for me) – mostly because of historical reasons (and it is really beautiful).

I enjoy conversing with my friend whose Christian name is Geoffrey, but whose actual name is Waidha. (I really wish he went by Geoffrey, but, in case I am mispronouncing his name, I will learn to pronounce it correctly, because a name is important and every child of God is worth our time and attention no matter how wealthy they are).

God provides, but the reality is that there will be children of God who have less than two pairs of shoes, and we will have years like our farmers did this past year. In the spring of the year, it would not stop raining. The farmers couldn’t get into the fields. For the ones who started extra early and got some seed in the ground, it would not get warm enough for the early seed in the ground to bring

forth life. When it finally did dry out, it seemed like planting crops so late could be a disaster. That seed has a cost.

There was much anxiety. In the spring of the year, many prayers were made for the rain to stop. God heard your prayer. The rain stopped; and stopped; and stopped some more. Then we got anxious; and then we prayed for rain.

It was a year filled with stress and anxiety. God did not answer our prayer in the way that we wanted Him to answer. We prayed for good weather for planting, and we got rain. We prayed for rain in the middle of summer and we got “good planting weather.” It seemed like God had it all wrong. If He really wanted to bless us, why did everything seem backwards? Why wouldn’t He just bless us in the way we wanted to be blessed? It would be easier on us all. We wouldn’t have to be anxious, and He wouldn’t have to listen to all our complaining disguised as “prayers.”

We had a year filled with anxiety and stress. But the problem was not with God not listening. The problem was with us not listening. Paul says, “Do not be anxious about anything.” The secret to joy in this life is to be content in all situations – whether you are faced with hunger or an abundance. Be content and know that God provides. Just because He does not answer your prayer in

the way you want or in the timeliness you desire, it does not mean that He does not hear and provide according to His good and gracious will.

This growing season was a microcosm of our lives. We faced the unknown. We were filled with fear and doubt. We were anxious. And all of this was unnecessary. God provides. But it was not until the harvest that God revealed that He had answered the prayers of our farmers and had rescued them from the disaster they imagined back in April or May.

This past year is a lot like our lives, except we have a clear advantage over the farmers. God has promised there will be a good harvest (which is a metaphor Jesus uses numerous times to describe the gathering together of all His faithful on the Last Day). Leading up to the harvest, we get anxious about many things. We pray for what we think we need. And then we pray for things to get back to the way they were before. Paul says, “Do not be anxious about anything . . . but pray for everything . . . let your requests be made known to God . . . and do all of this with thanksgiving.”

Rain will come. Sunshine will come. Rarely will they come exactly when you want it. Even when it seems like the opposite of what you are asking for keeps happening, it does not mean that God is not hearing and answering your prayer. In the end, He has promised there will be a good harvest. Amen.