

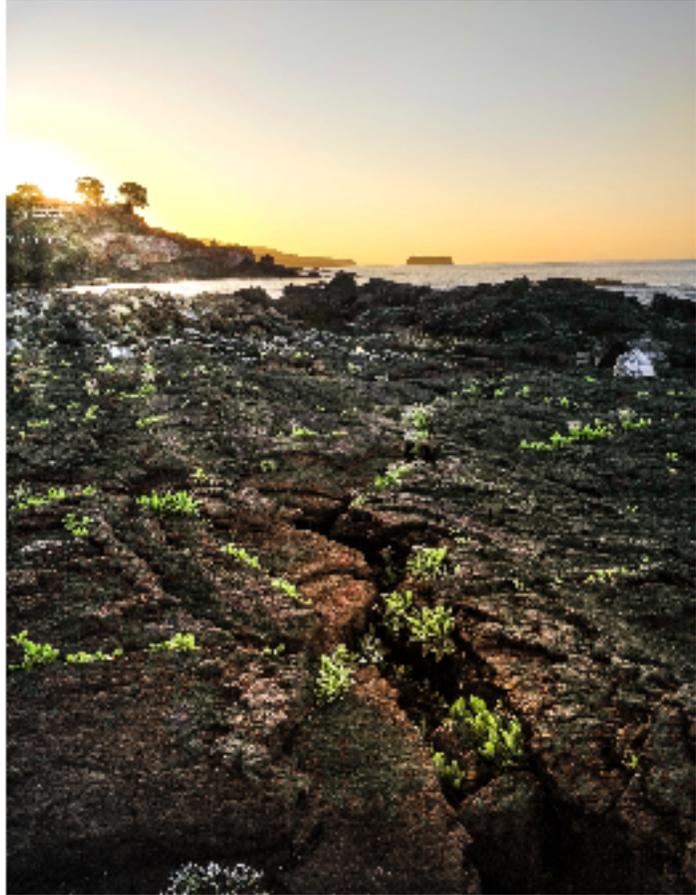
Ready for Seed?

January 5, 2020

It's now the twentieth year of the 21st century, 2020! I've heard many a pun indicating that this year will be the year of perfect vision. The word of the year for our church is clarity. On New Year's Eve, some of my girlfriends and I gathered to discuss our hopes, plans, and dreams for the future and to make vision boards to represent our mission.

As I prepared for the event, I didn't want my thinking to become too possessive or too self-centered. My goal for 2020 and beyond, is that my work be the work God has for me to do. I am a habitual planner. I run with my own ideas. I have had to realize that my life is not my own, that He created me for His purposes and that if I want to really feel fulfilled, I need to pray and ask Him to guide my steps, daily.

I recently came across two parallel verses in the Old Testament books of Hosea and Jeremiah.



Hosea 10:12

Sow righteousness for yourselves,
reap the fruit of unfailing love,
and break up your unplowed ground;
for it is time to seek the Lord,
until he comes
and showers his righteousness on you.

Jeremiah 4:3

This is what the Lord says to the people of Judah and to Jerusalem: "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns.

⁴Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts, you people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or my wrath will flare up and burn like fire because of the evil you have done—burn with no one to quench it.

Hosea advises that we sow righteousness, in other words, do what is right in God's eyes in order that we will receive His love. Jeremiah advises that we circumcise our hearts to prevent God's wrath. To circumcise our hearts means that our hearts should be obedient and filled with love for others, as demonstrated by the good Samaritan.

Both of these verses reference unplowed ground. For those less agrarian, this may need some explanation. Before we plant seeds, the ground must be prepared. When a farmer is planting corn, for example, he does not just throw the corn seeds on the ground, he must first prepare the soil. The soil has to be plowed. The ground's surface must be broken, the deeper and damper soil turned towards the surface, the large chunks broken into smaller pieces that the roots will be able to penetrate. Rocks, weeds, thorns, old roots, and in our time, plastic bottles and other litter, must be removed. Ellicott's Commentary states, "What the spiritual field needed was to be exposed to God's sun and God's free air, to the influences of spiritual light and warmth, and the dew and soft showers of His grace." The photo above shows a gorgeous view, but notice the sparse growth of the plants. The result of unplowed ground is sparse growth - scarcity.

I ask you today, on the first Sunday in January 2020 - **is your soil ready for seed or do you have unplowed ground?** Think of the seed as the Word of God and the soil as your heart. Is your heart ready to receive the Word of God in 2020?

Have you repented of the sins of 2019 and before?

Is there someone you need to forgive?

Is there someone who needs an apology from you?

Is your heart hardened to the Word of God?

Is there some form of idolatry in your life - what is it that you put before the Word of God?

Dear Lord,

We come to You, this first Sunday of 2020, or hearts are in various places, Lord. Some ready, some want to be ready, and some as hard as rocks, Lord. You know us, Lord, You know your people, your individual children, you know us inside and out, even the number of hairs on our heads. Lord, we need you. We need your intervention. This world is a bottomless pit of evil, lies, hatred, filth and idolatry. Lord, we live in a sinful place. There is darkness and no peace. Lord, we need your forgiveness. We have sinned against you. You have given us your Word, but we have ignored it, we did what we wanted, not as you wanted us to do. We've indulged in sinful thoughts that became sinful words and deeds. Lord, we need your correction, here in 2020. Lord we need you to fix our focus, fix our gaze. Show us your will and your ways. Soften our hearts, Lord. Circumcise us, Lord. Our will is not your will. Your will is greater than we can even imagine. Lord, we humble ourselves to you. Have your way, Lord. Plow our ground, Lord, and sow your seed. The time has come that we must yield to your will. You have work prepared for your people and the time has come that we do your will. Have your way, Lord. Amen.

For additional meditation this week, read [Matthew 13](#).