

On the Corner

by Robert Docter –

Just the other day spring arrived.

The wind is kinder. The rain more gentle. The sun warms more deeply. The earth opens itself to receive seeds of new life. She returns to all who occupy her space the beauty and bounty and blessing of this remarkable gift of God. The days gradually lengthen. From what was once barren and brown, new life emerges. “Dead” plants renew and burst forth with fragrant beauty. Ugly roots, dormant for months, suddenly send green shoots heavenward to hold the promise of a rose. Trees, just yesterday nude and desolate, their seemingly impotent branches useful only for burning, bend heavy with new growth. promising shade from the hostile summer sun.



Hope fills the air.

Children emerge from the closets of winter, their voices filled with new joy and excitement. Birds return from distant places, rejoicing in song. Farmers make their soil ready for the seed. Bending, they scoop the earth in their hands and feel its warmth. Smiling, they move with new vigor to the tasks of planting. In their hands they carry the expectation of a rich harvest. In the cities, humdrum recedes in volume as the darkness of winter flees an opening earth. One must almost desire hopelessness to escape the hope and promise of spring. There is an urge to clean and paint, to restore and build, to reach and grow.

Spring reminds us of God’s irrevocable law of the identical harvest.

What we plant, we reap. This is not simply a lesson in agriculture. It is a fundamental lesson in life as well. Whatever seed we place in the soil of our lives will spring forth in the certainty of the law of the identical harvest. Spring reminds us to examine the seed we intend to plant with great care, to be aware of its qualities, characteristics and worth. When God said the sins of the father shall be visited on his sons for generations, he wasn’t providing a lecture in genetics. There aren’t any sinful genes. When parents plant seeds of physical abuse, or addictive behavior, or dishonesty, or inconsistency, or infidelity, or unlove, they not only reap the harvest of their own autumn, they also discover that those seeds are perennial. They persist. They endure. They live on beyond the seed bearer from season to season and bear an identical growth of their own in following generations.

The same is true, of course, of parents who plant seeds of respect and love, of congruence, genuineness, consistency and faithfulness; of parents who know how to set boundaries and teach discipline, who reveal positive values in all they do. Parents are not the only seed planters in children's lives. Some of those seeds will deliver a harvest rich in beauty while others will contaminate the soil of our children with ugliness. The parents, however, condition the soil and make it ready for the planting in crucial early years. If there is a readiness to receive those seeds, they will be either nurtured or rejected. Children see and hear far more than we think. When parents advocate one behavior and demonstrate another, the child chooses to relate to the more powerful demonstration than the verbal lesson. Inconsistency might just be the worst parenting possible. It might even be worse than the parent who is consistently evil. The child can learn to find protection from this person, but the inconsistent parent delivers only unpredictability. Life becomes a guessing game, a learning experience in parental "reading." Survival is determined by the degree of skill in interpretation. The law of the identical harvest reveals itself in our own lives and in the lives of the following generation.

Spring is more than a physical phenomenon. It is an attitude of optimism. Problems can be solved; rough places made smooth; differences explored; distance shortened; hardness softened. We can begin the process of recovery from the ravages of winter. Ice melts. Snow disappears. Both form streams to nurture new life.

The arrival of spring is a harbinger of Easter. New life. Let each of us affirm the potential of our own rebirth—our own resurrection. It can be achieved to the degree we, with Christ, throw off the binding grave clothes and roll away the imprisoning stone. Then, we, too, can walk out into the dawn of a new day in a garden of hope.