

Neville Goddard Lecture



Seedtime And Harvest

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As you have been told, this morning's subject is Seedtime and Harvest.

Although it bears the same title as my latest book, it is not to be found in that book, for that book is an attempt to interpret some of the more difficult passages of the Bible. I have given you in the nine chapters a mystical view, and also a certain approach how you yourself may approach the interpretation of the Bible, for, as you know, it is not a book of history. And so, when I became aware of deeper meanings in the passages than those normally assigned to them, I began to see them or to apprehend them mystically, and so I have given you a mystical interpretation of many of the darker passages.

For instance, when Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon, he made himself . . no one made it for him. That's what you must do . . that's what I must do . . that's what everyone must do . . and in that chapter, I showed you the wood is not wood as you know wood. It means the wood of Lebanon is the incorruptible mind. But you make it for yourself, and we showed you the sides, what they were made of and what the meanings really are.

Then we took that very strange passage, the instruction to the Disciples to take off their shoes or provide no shoes when they travel, and we showed you the word "shoe" is not just the thing I wear on my foot; it is the symbol of the spirit of 'let me do it for you'. For the shoe takes upon itself not only the dirt and the muck that would normally fall upon the wearer's foot, but it protects the wearer from any contact with the outer world, and

so anyone who offers to do for us what we should do, and could do far better ourselves, is offering himself as our shoe, and if I would awaken spiritually I must do it for myself.

I must take my own mind and control it . . . take my wonderful imagination and actually control it and set it to noble purposes and not have some intermediary come between myself and God. For the God of this world is an internal God. He is that inevitable force that expresses in outward facts the latent tendencies of the soul, and so, if I would discover that God I cannot have you do my work for me. I cannot have you eat my spiritual food and expect to grow spiritually. So that is really the attempt of the nine chapters in the book "Seedtime and Harvest".

But this morning's subject . . . I want to approach it differently. This statement is taken from the Book of Genesis, the 8th chapter of Genesis . . . it is a promise made to man that "while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, hot and cold, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease." We are told that man was placed in a garden . . . the garden was completed . . . every tree was bearing fruit . . . everything in the world was finished . . . and he was placed in the garden to dress it and to keep it. He doesn't plant it, he doesn't do a thing but dress it and keep it. He is not called upon to make trees or to grow new trees . . . everything is finished!

As we are told in John . . . "I have sent you to reap that whereon you bestowed no labor". . . for Creation is finished. Every conceivable human drama, every little plot, every little plan in the drama of life is already worked out, as mere possibilities while we are not in them, but they are overpoweringly real when we are in them. So man can get in touch with that particular state of his choice, for my imagination can put me in touch inwardly with the state desired so I am in it. If I am in it I will realize it in my world. The states in which we find ourselves are the seed time. The harvest is simply the encountering of events and circumstances of life.

But man's memory is so short he forgets the seedtime, but all ends run true to origins, so if the origin, say is misfortune the end will be misfortune. But when you reap misfortune, you wonder "Why should it happen to me? When have I set a thing like this in motion? Haven't I given to the poor? Haven't I attended service? Haven't I prayed daily, and why should these things happen?" But you see my God never forgets because He always gives the end in harmony with the origin, and you and I are selectors: we don't make; we are not creators; . . . creation is finished, the whole vast world of creation, as told us in Ecclesiastes "I AM the beginning and the end. There is nothing to come that has not been and is."

So look upon creation as finished . . and you and I are only selectors of that which is. By selectors I mean that you and I have the privilege (we may not exercise it) but it is our privilege to select that aspect of reality to which we will respond, and in responding to it, we bring it into existence for ourselves. Not knowing that we are so privileged, we simply go through the world reflecting the circumstances of life, not realizing we have the power to create or to out picture the circumstance of life.

So now let us now analyze what I personally mean by seedtime. If everything is finished and completed, then why the promise there shall be seedtime and harvest as long as the earth remains ? Now seedtime, to those who are here this morning, as we should really know, we are not taking it literally, our seedtime is that moment in time when you and I react to anything in this world. It may be to an object, it may be to an individual, it may be to a bit of news that we have overheard, but the moment of reaction, that emotional response, is our attitude. Our attitudes are the seedtimes of life, and although we may not remember the seedtime or the moment of response, nature never forgets, and when it suddenly appears in our world, that suddenness is only the emergence of a hidden continuity. It was continuous from the moment of reaction until it appeared in the world.

Its appearance in the world is harvest so you and I may harvest anything we desire but we must first have a seedtime. It must be preceded by a moment of response or an attitude. How often you say, "I approached it in the wrong attitude" or "He is in the wrong attitude" or "You must change your attitude if you would get on in this life". I have said it . . you have said it . . maybe we have said it to each other . . but we know the importance of right attitude. We know this much: that I can change my attitude if circumstances change . . that's automatic. We know that if something happens suddenly in my world of which up to that moment I was not aware, I, becoming aware of a change of circumstance would automatically produce in myself a change of attitude. We all do that, morning, noon and night, but that's not important, that is a reflect of life. Ninety-nine percent of the world reflect life.

Now, can I consciously, can I voluntarily, can I deliberately produce in myself a change of attitude, one of my own discretion, one that I myself single out, and not one that is determined by or in any way is dependent on a stimulus of a change in the object itself. Must you change before I will change my attitude towards you? We know that if you do change I will change my attitude towards you, but must I go through life simply reflecting

these changes in the objects, and can I not deliberately determine the change prior to the change in the object?

For if I can, I am moving towards complete control of my fate and becoming the master of my fate if I can assume an active, positive attitude and not depend upon changes in the object for changes in myself. If I can do it, I really am, if not a complete master, I am becoming more in control of the circumstances of life, but ninety-nine percent of the world waits for things to happen on the outside and then they reflect; that's no accomplishment at all. If we would awaken and become real selectors of the beauty of this garden that God gave us so that we can single out that particular aspect to which we will respond, then we will do it by deliberately changing our attitude towards life itself.

There is a little fable given us to show us how it is done. If you will study the fable carefully, you will see the importance of imagination. The fable is the fable of the fox and the grapes. You all know it. When he failed to obtain the grapes then he persuaded himself that the grapes were sour, and by imagining the grapes to be sour he evoked in himself a change of attitude. He no longer felt about the grapes as he formerly felt. Now that's a little fable on a negative tone or a tragic tone. You and I take the same story but now we put it on a positive tone. We contemplate our ambitious dream, our noble concept of life. It may seem we haven't the talents to realize it . . . instead of saying what the fox did, that the thing is beyond us and therefore it is sour anyway, we can take the same technique and wonder what it would be like had we realized it. What would the feeling be like were we . . . (and we name it) . . . if I can contemplate what the feeling would be like were I the man that I want to be, were you the person that you want to be, and rejoice in that state as though it were true, I am producing in myself that emotional response necessary for seedtime.

I may not see an immediate harvest, maybe the thing that I am now giving expression to in the form of seedtime is an oak, it is not a little mushroom that would grow overnight. Maybe my dream would take a little longer interval of time between the actual planting and the reaping, but if I know that all these things are consistent, . . . "See yonder fields! The sesamum was sesamum, the corn was corn. The Silence and the Darkness knew! So is a man's fate born" . . . so, if that moment of response is the actual planting of the seed, and if it was corn, it must be corn when it appears in harvest time, then I can select the nature of the things I want to encounter in my world. I can take not just Neville as a man, I can take the request first of my circle, my intimate circle, as a family man . . . my wife's desires for her child, for her husband, for herself . . . the child's desire for itself .

. and move beyond my little circle as a family man into the circle of friendships, move beyond that into my acquaintances, move beyond that into total strangers, impersonal states, but if I know the law holds good, no matter when I operate it, if I do it unconsciously or consciously, you get results regardless, and the results are in harmony with the planting, with the actual seedtime.

Now what is now our seedtime today. There are maybe two thousand odd here, we have two thousand odd different requests, multiplied by a large number because we have requests for others but you can take, today, as you sit here and you can actually contemplate what it would be like . . suppose it were true. Suppose I could turn now to a friend and rejoice with him because of his good fortune and actually carry on a mental conversation with him from the premise that he or she has already realized the dream. Now as I do it in my imagination I am setting up within myself a certain changed attitude in regard to that individual. I am producing within myself a certain positive, deliberate, emotional response, and that very moment that I do it, is seedtime. I will encounter that individual tomorrow or next week or next month and he will bear witness of that thing I plant now.

He may be totally unaware that I planted it in this garden. I am not seeking his praise, I am not seeking credit . . I am seeking results. If I see the man become the embodiment of the success I know that he desires and I desire for him, that's praise enough, that's payment enough. What more payment would anyone desire other than the results, for everything is a gift. Why should I be given more! My Father gave me the garden . . the whole thing is in complete and full bloom and gave me choice . . the greatest gift of all, complete freedom of choice of the nature of the fruit I will reap in my world; but I cannot just barge into the garden and start picking fruit . . there must be a seedtime, but I must always bear in mind I will reap that whereon I bestowed no labor. I don't labor to make it so, I simply plant it, for in that moment of response is contained all the plans, all the energy necessary to unfold that plan into a perfect wonderful objective fact which I will then harvest by becoming aware of it as an external reality, but I don't labor to make it so; I simply must know it is so.

So that is our privilege, that is our choice. If you believe it, aren't you amazed at the kind of things that you planted, at the kind of seedtime that in our ignorance, in our sleep, we allowed to actually scatter in our world? You see some will say, "But why does God allow it?" You cannot conceive of an infinite God that is not infinite in every respect. If I was incapable, actually incapable of assuming, say, an unlovely state, I could not be my Father's son because my Father is infinite, and if He were actually incapable of

assuming any state then He would not be God. Everything is within me . . but everything. You cannot conceive of something that I don't contain . . the most horrible thing in the world were it not so I could not be infinite, and, therefore, not the son of my infinite Father. So God is infinite and gave us everything, but He gave us freedom of choice that we may become selective, discriminative and bring out everything that is beautiful out of that garden. If I took the piano, the eighty-eight notes of the piano, if I could extract from that piano keyboard every discord, I would not have a piano keyboard. If I could strike a discord and because it frightens me or it disturbs me, the thing grates upon my nerves; if I could now extract the notes that produce the discord and then keep on extracting the notes that produce the discord, I would remove the eighty-eight notes . . there would be no notes left on which I could play tomorrow's harmony. But let me leave the notes and learn the art of playing the piano so I can from the same eighty-eight notes bring out all the harmonies of the world.

The same thing is true of man. Instead of looking at someone and accepting as final the evidence of the senses; there is someone who brought out into his own world, say disease: he is trying to analyze it from the outside . . when did I contract the bug, when did I come in close contact with someone who had the bug and they are taking me into the laboratory with my blood and try to find it there. You will never find it there, in spite of all the wisdom of man. You will find it only in the consciousness of the individual, who, at a moment now long forgotten, planted the thing he is now harvesting . . and you are not going to find it in any external analysis at all because things seen were never made of things that do appear. You are warned time and time again in all the books of the Bible, but especially in that 11th chapter of the Book of Hebrews, that "things seen were not made of things that do appear" but no man believes it.

He insists on finding it in things seen, so he extracts my blood, he extracts a little piece of my skin, and he starts to make an analysis of that, and he will tell me yes, he has found it. It's in my blood. I am not denying he has found it in my blood, but why is it in my blood ? It is in my blood or in my body, or in my world because at some point in time, I, exercising the right as a free child of God, singled out some unlovely state relative to another. It need not be to myself; it could be to another, wherein I rejoiced in the hurt of another; where my emotional response to the news I heard was "good" so, I set it in motion, but when it happened in my world, I did not think it was so good but it was my harvest . . and all these things are the harvest of things you and I have planted; for all things run true to form. Don't be surprised at the suddenness in our world . . someone is ill . . it is only sudden because we have forgotten, and man's memory is very, very short.

You know that lovely little poem of George Meredith:

Forgetful is green earth; The Gods alone Remember everlasting; they strike
Remorselessly, and ever like for like. By their, great memories The Gods are known.

If man could only remember these moments of seedtime, he would never be surprised when the harvest appears in his world. But because he has no memory as to that moment in time when he dropped that seed, which is simply his emotional response to something he contemplated, something he overheard, something he observed, at that moment the thing was done; he didn't have to labor to bring it to harvest . . . he simply encountered it as something already full grown, so he reaps now that on which he bestowed no labor, outside of choice. He selected it by his attitude, by his reaction.

Now, am I responsible for others in my world? I certainly am! When I take my little mind, my little imagination and think because it's mine . . . my Father gave it to me, that I can simply misuse it, it isn't going to hurt another. I tell you, you do have to use more control for the simple reason I am rooted in you and you are rooted in everyone and all of us are rooted in God. There is no separate individual detached being in my Father's Kingdom. We are one. I am completely responsible for the use or misuse of my imagination.

Do you recall seeing on TV, a dramatized version of the sinking of the Titanic? Do you recall it? Have you read the book. "A Night to Remember"? Well the book itself is by Walter Lord: but 14 years before the actual harvest or that frightful event of the sinking of the Titanic a man in England wrote a book. He conceived this fabulous Atlantic liner and there he built her just like the Titanic, (only the Titanic was not built for 14 years) but he, in his imagination, conceived the liner of 800-ft. She was triple screw, she carried 3000 passengers, she carried few lifeboats because she was unsinkable; she could make 24 knots; and then one night he filled her to the brim with rich and complacent people, and on a cold winter night he sunk her on an iceberg in the Atlantic. 14 years later the White Star Line builds a ship. She is 800 ft., she is a triple screw, she can make 24 knots, she can carry 3000 passengers, she has not enough lifeboats for passengers but she, too, is labeled unsinkable. She is filled to capacity with the rich, if not complacent, but the rich, because her passenger list was worth in that day, when the dollar was one hundred cents, two hundred and fifty million dollars was the worth of the passenger list. Today it would be a billion dollars. All the wealth of Europe and the wealth of this country was sailing on that maiden voyage out of Southampton. Five

nights at sea in this wonderful glorious ship and she went down on a cold April night on an iceberg.

Now that man wrote a book either to get something off his chest because he disliked the rich and the complacent, or he thought it might sell or he thought this is the means of bringing him a dollar as a writer. But, whatever was the motive behind his book which, by the way, he called "Futility" to show the utter futility of accumulated wealth, but the identical ship was built 14 years later and carried the same kind of a passenger list and went down in the same manner as the fictional ship.

Is there any fiction? There is no fiction! Tomorrow's world is today's fiction. Today's world was yesteryear's fiction . . . the dreams of men of yesteryear. Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could talk with someone across space and just use a wire? And I couldn't see that one: it would be a mile away beyond the range of my voice . . . then maybe five miles and maybe a thousand miles . . . fantastic dreams . . . then they came true. When they came true, suppose I could do it without the means of a wire. And it came true; suppose now I could do it not just in an audio sense but in a video sense. Suppose I could be seen? And that came true, but when they were conceived, they were all fictional, all unreal.

There is nothing unreal, because God is infinite, and God has finished creation. You cannot conceive of something that your Father has not only done and conceived of it, it is worked out in detail, in all its ramifications. You and I are only becoming aware of increasing portions of that which already is. We are not making a thing . . . we are discovering God's wonderful world. But now in this church . . . at least here it should be done, for this is a church of the mind: this is Science of Mind, where there is a science to planting and you do it in a certain scientific manner. You just don't walk the street and reflect; read the papers and reflect . . . you go out a more positive person than people who gather in similar areas, for the simple reason they go just to hear a service and to be told how bad the world is.

You're not coming here to be told how bad the world is, for if you believe it is bad, there is something you must do about it because you have planted the world. You have your seedtime. So here people gather to be told how to operate this wonderful gift that the Father gave them. There is this wonderful mind and imagination. So you are told to go out and be choosey in your selection; single out that aspect of reality to which you want to respond, success, health, dignity, nobility, something wonderful that you contribute to the good of the world. As you walk by you are contributing to society, you contribute to

the community in which you live, not necessarily by giving dollars but you contribute by your wonderful seedtime. If, in your community, you see the need of maybe a church, you see the need of some wonderful school, you don't wait until people get together, you actually, in your mind's eye, contemplate the joy that is yours because of the wonderful school here for the children, a wonderful church here to lift man spiritually, and you wonder what it would be like were it true; . . you feel the thrill of witnessing it within. That is seedtime. Then in a way that you do not know and you need not labor to produce, you will encounter that school and that church and these lovely things in your community.

So you plant the seed and let others, who think that they are bringing it into being, let them think so. You go about this world planting the good . . that is why you are here. We are gathered here on Sunday mornings to discover more and more about this wonderful gift that God gave us, that we may single out all the lovely things in the world and bring them to birth in our world;

This morning you take not only yourself . . start with self . . then turn to a friend in your mind's eye, and congratulate him on his good fortune . . congratulate him on his expansion in his world, and actually feel the thrill of such contact . . at that moment of response that was a changed attitude in regard to that friend. . at that moment you planted. Now, in a way you do not know and you need not know, that seed is going to go through its normal natural hidden passage and appear as a reality in your world. Then you will know the power latent within you and you will stop reflecting life and you become one what I call a true creator in the sense that . . I mean creator . . that you are creating by selecting wise, wise, lovely things in this world and giving them expression in this world of ours.

So that's what I mean by seedtime and harvest; the importance of the right attitude: and you can do it, you need not wait for circumstances to change, you need not wait for the stimulus of a change in the object to produce in yourself the change of attitude. In your office, does the boss act in a rude way towards you ?

Well then what would it be like if he now saw in me the lady, the helpful person that I really am, or want to be. Suppose he saw in me someone he could praise for my work and raise me in the salary world, give me an increase in salary because of my added effort; suppose he could see that in me, well, contemplate the boss seeing that in you as though he saw it and rewarded you with an increase.

That moment is the moment of planting. It may not come tonight, it may not even come this week in the paycheck, but it will come. You simply keep on planting the lovely things; but if every day when you leave the office you say, "What a skinflint", and you go home and you discuss him with your mother or your husband or someone else, and they sympathize because they really believe you, for they are playing the same reflective, negative approach to life; but if as you ride home or walk home, you walk in the attitude that he had done it . . . he had increased your income, he had praised your work, and day after day, in spite of other things to the contrary, you persist in it, do you know he will do it? You will produce in him the change of heart because you first produced it in yourself, and he will see in you qualities that he cannot now see, and then your whole vast world begins to blossom . . . you do it in every sense of the word. You know someone who is lonely . . . one who really should be happily married in this world. What would it be like if you were told, not by the individual necessarily, but by a third party of the good news concerning John, concerning Mary or someone else. Someone desirous of a lovely home and a gracious home. What would it be like ? Don't be envious. Try to rejoice. Feel the joy that is theirs, and that moment is seedtime for them. They will harvest it . . . and that is our opportunity to go through the world planting and planting wisely.

Unfortunately, too many of us in church movements . . . I don't think you will find it in this church . . . but too many of us in church movements have a very serious attitude towards life. And, of course, the basic attitude is the attitude towards life, not necessarily the individual attitude towards an object or towards an individual, but the attitude itself that the individual adopts through life, towards life, and they have a very serious one. Well, Orage very wisely and very humorously said the serious attitude is this, . . . they really believe that God has an enormous struggle against helpless odds, and he said that produces in the individual the emotion of "helping poor Father". They go to help poor Father who has created the world and gave it to his children.

Now he brought up another interesting point of the scientific attitude towards life. Having discovered the little molecule or the little atom and the wonderful construction, that is, theoretically . . . having discovered this wonderful orderly construction of the bricks that make up the world, their attitude is one of orderly insignificance because they believe the world is gradually burning itself out, so no matter how orderly it is, if they really believe the sun will eventually go out and the earth will consume all its resources, what other attitude could they adopt than all dressed up with nowhere to go, because if eventually it is all going to be in nothing anyway, no matter how orderly it is today, it could only be orderly insignificance, but I tell you, as one who has seen beyond the veil,

there is no such thing as coming to an end. Life is forever and forever and forever . . and forever you are moving up this everlasting pilgrimage revealing the infinite glories of your Father.

So go out wisely today . . go out determined to become more selective, more discreet in your choice of ideas you will entertain and single out the idea that would bless an individual and produce in yourself the emotional response that you have witnessed that state in his world, and know at that moment of response, you planted for that individual, and he is rooted in you, there is no such thing as he will not be found in your world for he is rooted in you. Everyone is rooted in you . . therefore you will not lose them. It is planted relative to that being and that being is going to harvest it, and you will know the harvest when it appears in his world. You simply plant and let the harvest take care of itself.

Now my time is up.