

## The fields and harvest

When the Samaritan woman and the people of Samaria came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, an interesting conversation took place between Him and the disciples. They brought food to him and asked him to eat, so he said: *“I have food to eat of which you do not know...My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.’”* (John 4: 32-38).



+ At first, we notice that the Lord Jesus draws our attention to a new type of food we've never known before, which is to do the will of God in our lives. This spiritual food is so fulfilling, to the extent that it makes man does not even think about the food of the body. This explains why those who dedicated their lives to faithfully serve God live in a permanent state of fulfillment. Unlike others, they don't need to fulfill their physical instincts with covetousness and self-indulgence, but rather the very little is enough for them since they are in a state of fulfillment through grace.

+ Also, the Lord Jesus confirms that the present time is the harvest season; it is now rather than later, and that the fields are full of harvest. It is an invitation to serve God, there are many who are waiting for a simple word to repent and to get closer to God. They are waiting for an act of love or a caring touch, waiting for someone to light their way or gather them and lead them to the storage towers [silos] of God. The fields are full of harvest all over the world and the invitation is to every one of us to gather with Christ, because he who does not gather with Him, scatters abroad. (Matthew 12:30).

+ The Lord says that he who reaps receives his wages and gathers fruit. This confirms that the ministry has its blessing and despite the toil and sacrifice that come with it, it is a real gain to anyone. The fruit of the ministry is not only to build the kingdom of God, but it is also a personal heavenly reward and a glorious joy. For God is not unjust to forget the labor of love (Hebrews 6:10), but rather, He gives each one his own reward according to his own labor (1 Corinthians 3: 8) no matter how small this labor is, as He confirmed that he who gives a cup of cold water, by no means shall lose his reward (Matthew 10:42). All of this shows the extent of the love of God who invites us, the weak, to participate in working with Him and building His kingdom.

+ The Lord also brings to our attention that working with Him encompasses various roles, there is he who sows, there is he who waters (1 Corinthians 3: 5-8) and there is also he who reaps. Each one plays his role so that everyone rejoices together at the end. No one can play all these roles by himself, regardless how talented he is, nor should we insist on playing a particular role that may have not been chosen for us by God. This means that, for instance, God may choose for us the role of the sower and for someone else the role of the reaper. We should not be sad that we did not reap what we sowed ourselves; rather we should accept it knowing that at the end we [the sower and the reaper] will all rejoice in eternity with abundance of fruit.

+ Finally, The Lord Jesus emphasizes to us that our faith today is the fruit of labor of many before us, and the success of our ministry today is also the result of entering into the labor of many servants before us. This makes us always have a sense of gratitude and give credit to those who preceded us, who sowed the seed, and handed to us the Orthodox life in all its depth. Additionally, this thought guards us with humility because the real reason for the abundance of fruits which we reap is not because of our own capabilities or efforts, but because others labored before us and we are merely reaping the fruit of their labor.



*Fr. Yohanna Naseef*

[fryohanna@hotmail.com](mailto:fryohanna@hotmail.com)

St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, Palatine, IL