

# SEND IN THE PLOW

By Shara Case



A few weeks ago, I had a three-hour lunch date with my mother in a cute little mountain tavern. The place was empty when we arrived and the waitress told us we could have our pick of any table. When we took over five minutes choosing just the right spot, she laughed and asked us if this was some kind of special occasion. “It’s National Adoption Day!” my mom nervously blurted out. The waitress raised a confused eyebrow, politely smiled, and walked away. We sat awkwardly in our not-too-big, not-too-small booth and giggled a little. You see, this was the first lunch we had ever had together. In fact, this was the first time we had met in 41 years. I wasn’t sitting with the mother who raised me, but with the one who gave me life and then gave me up. Every day for us is National Adoption Day, but our reunion just so happened to fall on the official day. God has perfect timing, and a fantastic sense of humor.

The road to this lunch was a long one, full of hard choices and sacrifices. In the weeks leading up to the ‘big reveal’ as I called it, there was a single verse that kept popping up all over the place: “Break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord till He comes and rains righteousness upon you” (Hosea 10:12 NKJV). Fallow ground is land that is idle and useless. It’s been left alone to compact and harden. Perhaps in the past it has yielded a crop, but it now lies silent and barren. The opposite of fallow land is plowed land. This is terrain that has been

dug up and disturbed by sharp blades to allow for planting. Often, the plow uncovers big rocks and roots that need to get out of the way in order for a seed to grow. If anything is to thrive, the land has to first yield itself to the plow. I started picturing two very distinct fields: the first was undisturbed, quiet, and dusty. The second was exposed, messy, and ready for the next step.

As I wondered why I kept hearing and seeing this particular verse at this time in my life, I felt God gently asking me if I was ready for that next step. I realized that He was sending in the plow to break up some hard ground in my life. Weird thoughts were dancing around in my head: “Do I really want all this disturbance right now? Am I ready for my life to be busted wide open like this? What if all kinds of crazy stuff gets brought to the surface?” The fallow ground may not yield a lot of fruit, but it sure is tranquil. That plow promises nothing but exposure and chaos. I had a big choice to make.

The beautiful truth I came to embrace was that when God does the plowing, it is always with our best interests in mind. Perhaps it’s a mess for a time, but it’s out of that mess that something beautiful and useful will grow. Don’t get me wrong, plenty of stones and old rotted roots came to the surface during this process. Insecurities, fears and decades-old questions all took their best shot at keeping me from digging any further. It was and still is an uncomfortable process. In the end, I decided to yield to the One who is a master at bringing life out of lifeless things rather than remain stagnant. Jesus says in John 15:8 that it is to the Father’s glory that we “bear much fruit” as we show ourselves to be His disciples. I want to be a fruit-bearer, not a dusty old plot of land. Even if it’s been ages since our last crop, it is never too late to allow God to come in and break up our ground. I’m thankful for the sharp blades of the plow that came in and tossed out the stones so that new life could grow.