

Texas Baptists urged to plant seeds in changing landscape

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WACO—Victor Rodriguez encouraged pastors to “let the seeds fly” in his sermon during the closing worship session of Texas Baptists’ annual meeting.

Rodriguez, Hispanic evangelism associate and discipleship specialist for Texas Baptists, preached on Psalm 126:1-3, reflecting on the Judeans’ return to the land of Judah after their time in Babylonian captivity.

“As they reflected about how God had blessed them, they stopped to rejoice and expressed their gratitude unto God,” Rodriguez said. “It is good to stop and marvel and just reflect on how God has blessed Texas Baptists through these many, many years.”

‘Remember what God has done’

Rodriguez reflected on his family’s journey and how his life was changed forever in Midland-Odessa by Texas Baptists’ work.

His father lived “*la vida loca*,” he said, abusing alcohol and drugs. Rodriguez recalled hiding in fear when his father would come home drunk. Everything changed when his father’s employer told his father, “Manuel, if you don’t go to church with me this coming Sunday you can no longer work with me.”

That Sunday, Rodriguez stood on the pew in the back row, craning to get a look as his father walked the aisle in response to the altar call at Iglesia Bautista Emanuel in Midland. His father later went on to answer a call to

ministry.

As a result, Rodriguez was raised in Baptist life, influenced by Royal Ambassadors, Super Summer and other camps, and the annual January evangelism conference.

“Nothing strengthens faith more effectively than the memory of a previous God experience,” he said. “Just remember what God has done.”

Fresh mercies for fresh troubles

Turning back to the Scripture, Rodriguez said the Israelites’ laughing turned to mourning as they approached their land and saw how desolate it had become.



“For over 50 years, no one had watered or worked the land, and now it was a dusty, dry and barren land,” he said. “The people grew discouraged. They faced discouragement from within and opposition from without. God had worked a great deliverance for them in the past, and now they needed to trust God once again.

“Pastor, teacher, leader, church, you may face fresh troubles each day. I want to remind you that God has fresh mercies for you each day to face them,” he said.

After the Israelites' return to the land, the priest Ezra took a sack of seeds, walking the land and scattering them each day, regardless of those who questioned his actions and discouraged him.

Rodriguez encouraged pastors and churches to continue planting seeds, even though the world around them has changed drastically.

"Take the precious seeds and spread them in this diverse and changing community and see what God can do around your churches," he said. "One person who doesn't know Christ, in whatever culture that may be, is a worthy mission field."