

Summary – *Planted with Kristi Vitali (9 Aug 2026)*

Opening Focus: The Seed and the Call to Be Planted

Kristi opens with prayer, asking God to speak through her and prepare hearts to receive His word. She introduces the central metaphor of the message: **everything begins with a seed**. Seeds are handed out to the congregation as a physical reminder that spiritual growth starts small, fragile, and hidden.

She honours those who sowed into the church—through prayer, giving, serving, and sacrifice—emphasizing that the church exists today because someone planted a seed before others arrived.

"A seed is small and fragile... but with God, it can be more."

The Hidden Growth Beneath the Surface

Kristi highlights that while we celebrate visible growth, most transformation happens unseen. Just as a sprout emerges only after deep root development, spiritual growth begins underground—in the unseen places of obedience, prayer, and perseverance.

She introduces two growth directions in trees:

- **Phototropism** – branches growing upward toward light (symbolizing worship and reaching toward God).
- **Gravitropism** – roots growing downward into the soil (symbolizing being anchored, nourished, and stable).

Both are required for a flourishing life.

Theme of the Year: *Planted*

Psalms 92:13–15 forms the foundation of the church's theme:

- Those planted in God's house **flourish**.
- They bear fruit even in old age.
- Their lives declare God's goodness.

Kristi explains that *being planted is a decision*, while *flourishing is the result*. You cannot flourish without first choosing to be planted.

Present vs. Planted

A person can attend church without being planted. Sitting in a seat is not the same as opening your heart.

Evidence of being planted includes:

- A teachable spirit
- A willingness to be changed
- A desire to be used by God
- A posture of worship

Worship is described not as performance but **interaction with God**. She challenges listeners not to critique worship like entertainment but to engage fully.

The Battle for the Word

Kristi shares her personal struggle with feeling sleepy when reading Scripture, identifying it as spiritual resistance. The enemy distracts because he knows the power of God's Word.

She compares spiritual attentiveness to Netflix's "Are you still there?" prompt—asking the congregation the same question regarding their spiritual engagement.

Planted Like a Tree – Jeremiah 17:7–8

This passage reinforces the message:

- Trust in God anchors a person like a tree planted by water.
- Difficult seasons will come, but deeply rooted people remain steady.
- Community acts as the river that nourishes believers.

Kristi urges the church to build relationships, join groups, and grow together—because **you cannot grow in isolation**.

Storms, Strength, and the Power of Deep Roots

Kristi shifts the message toward resilience. She explains that storms reveal what has been growing beneath the surface. Trees with shallow roots fall easily, but deeply rooted trees—like palm trees—bend without breaking. Their flexibility comes from strength developed over time.

She encourages the church to look to people who have endured storms. Instead of writing off those who have struggled, she urges learning from them, because their endurance has produced wisdom and depth.

"Tough seasons come and go, but deeply rooted people remain standing. You may bend, but you don't have to break."

Flourishing is redefined: it is not wealth, ease, or success. Sometimes flourishing simply means **still standing**.

Generational Planting and Priorities

Kristi highlights the generational impact of spiritual habits. When parents treat church as optional, children learn the same pattern. Consistency in worship and gathering shapes future generations.

She challenges the church to model commitment, not convenience.

The Weeds: Internal Obstacles to Growth

Kristi introduces the metaphor of weeds—unwanted growth that competes with healthy roots. Weeds represent:

- Worry
- Bitterness
- Offence
- Pride
- Fear
- Insecurity
- Unresolved pain

Weeds do not mean the garden is ruined; they simply mean it needs attention. Removing only the visible part of a weed leaves the root intact, allowing it to grow back stronger. True healing requires addressing the root, not just the symptoms.

She encourages honesty, vulnerability, and seeking help:

- Come to the altar
- Speak to pastors
- Join an iGroup
- Talk to trusted friends
- Seek counselling when needed

Preferences vs. Planting

Kristi humorously describes setting out chairs and imagining a service with none—highlighting how easily people become attached to preferences.

She warns that some leave church because something doesn't match their taste: worship style, lights, message, or feeling unnoticed. But church is not entertainment, nor a restaurant to critique. **Church is a family**, and families are messy.

Even Jesus did not operate according to people's preferences—referencing the healing where He spat in a man's eyes.

Psalm 1: Planted by Rivers of Water

Psalm 1 reinforces the theme of plantedness:

- Delight in God's Word

- Meditate day and night
- Bear fruit **in season**

Kristi emphasizes the phrase *in season*. We live in a world of instant gratification, but spiritual fruit requires time. Apple trees take years before producing fruit. Growth follows a divine order:

Seed → Time → Harvest

The waiting season tests faith, patience, and obedience.

The Seed You Hold

Kristi returns to the physical seed in each person's hand. She asks what it represents:

- A calling?
- A prayer?
- A dream?
- A step of obedience?

The harvest is celebrated because it is visible, but the time between seed and harvest is where character is formed.

She encourages the church to keep praying, serving, forgiving, worshipping, showing up, and trusting God. The fruit will come—but in His timing.

Planted People Participate

Kristi transitions from personal growth to active contribution. Being planted is not passive; it is expressed through participation. Planted people do not ask, "*What can the church do for me?*" but rather:

- What can I do to help?
- Who can I encourage?
- What need can I meet?
- How can I contribute to building God's house?

She highlights Kids' Church as a powerful example of seed-sowing. Every volunteer invests in children who may one day become pastors, worship leaders, or youth leaders. The seeds sown today shape the future church.

"The child you encourage today might be the pastor in 10 or 20 years."

Choosing to Be Planted

Kristi emphasizes that plantedness begins with a **decision**:

- *This is my church.*

- *This is my spiritual family.*
- *This is where I will grow, serve, and help build.*

The church is not perfect, but belonging means committing to grow alongside imperfect people. God places each person in the body where they fit, and growth happens as each part does its share.

Ephesians 4:15–16 reinforces this: the church grows when every member contributes.

She summarizes the mindset of planted people:

- They don't take up space; **they take their place.**
- They serve, encourage, pray, gather, and carry the vision.
- They help transform lives **together.**

Sowing and Watering

Kristi reminds the church that they are living in a harvest produced by those who came before them. Someone prayed, gave, served, and built before today's congregation ever arrived.

1 Corinthians 3:6–9 teaches that:

- Some plant
- Some water
- **God brings the increase**

Obedience is the believer's role; growth is God's.

She encourages listening to God's promptings—even small ones, like giving a red letter to a stranger. Seeds of obedience produce fruit in ways only God can see.

The Call to Salvation

Before anyone can be planted in God's house, they must first be connected to Jesus. Kristi reads John 15:4–5:

- Jesus is the vine
- We are the branches
- Apart from Him, we can do nothing

She invites those who have never put their faith in Jesus—or who need to reconnect—to respond. One person lifts their hand, and the church celebrates as they come forward.

The congregation prays together:

- Acknowledging sin
- Receiving forgiveness
- Turning from the old life
- Being planted in God's Word, presence, and purpose

Healing the Weeds at the Root

Kristi closes with an invitation for anyone carrying weeds—worry, bitterness, unforgiveness, offence, fear, shame, disappointment, trauma—to come to the altar.

Surface-level fixes cannot remove deep roots. God wants to begin healing at the root so true growth can happen.

She encourages the church not to settle for attending, but to come forward, receive prayer, and allow God to uproot what has been holding them back.

"Come here to grow. Come here to get rid of your weeds."

The worship team leads as the prayer team ministers to those responding.