



JOHN 12:20-36

***“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.”***

***(verses 24-26)***

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My wife is an eager, aspiring gardener. Early this Spring she tried to start seedlings growing indoors in egg cartons, before the name “Spring” could even truthfully be used! She arranged the cartons, filling them with topsoil, opening packets and extracting a variety of seeds (tomato, zucchini, arugula, nasturtium, basil). Then, using her finger, she pressed each seed under the soil, effectively burying it.

Buried. Yes. And there they stayed, out of sight. As good as dead. Indeed, some of the packets had been slightly dated (by years!) so her enthusiasm was considerably tempered. Perhaps what was in the cartons was, indeed, thoroughly dead. That possibility was very much alive.

Each day she came back to check. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing.

But, then, lo and behold! Death turned to life! Tiny shoots of green started pushing up through the soil. New life popped up, stretched out, aggressively reaching for the light. It was glorious. Not yet harvest, but those single seeds were on their way to fruitfulness!

In John 12, right after the Triumphal Entry, some Greeks arrive seeking an interview with Jesus. Something in this circumstance is like a tolling bell, and Jesus knows the hour of his crucifixion has come. So, he begins to speak of death, both for himself and for his followers. He speaks about seeds.

Like a single seed, Jesus is going to fall to the ground, giving up life – indeed, he'll be dead and buried. But in that death, unseen in that moment, would be the prospect of life. The result, bursting forth from that grave, will bring life for many, producing many seeds.

That's the promise. Many seeds.

I am one, so are you, if indeed we've trusted Jesus. We now, following his example, are called, like him, to give up our lives. Rather than focusing on this present existence, we are to hold to it loosely, focusing eyes instead on what is to come: eternal life. That life, as Jesus tells us in John 17:3, is to know the Father and Son, to live in such committed connection with them that priorities of this life turn pale.

*"I have been crucified with Christ," Paul would later say, "and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me ..." (Galatians 2:20).*

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*O Lord Jesus, may it be. So live your life in me that I continually die to self and live to you. May your fruitfulness be borne in me. To the Father's glory.*

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Reflect:

What circumstance or relationship or responsibility over the next day or two will require you, once again, to die to self? What steps will you need to take to follow Jesus' example? Entrust it all into his hands.

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