

The Seed & Harvest of Resurrection

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[0 : 00] Well, if you have a Bible, please turn to John chapter 12.

Amen.

John chapter 12 from verse 23.

And Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it.

[1 : 34] And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me.

And where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honour him. Amen.

Amen. Now, I realise that I forgot a very important prop.

So I will be right back. Less than a minute. You can count if you want. Just give me a minute. Let's pray.

No, it's not an Amazon box.

[3 : 01] Okay, if you've got really sharp eyes, do you know what this is? Shout out if you know what this is.

Seed, yeah. And some barley. Any advances? Wheat. This is wheat grain, and it's pretty tiny.

Look at the size of it. Would I be right in saying you can barely see it? You can barely see it? Sorry. Now think about what this seed is meant for.

What is this seed's destiny? What is its purpose? What was it created for? Yet, as long as I hold this and look at it, it will never change.

Actually, I bought this a good few years ago. It's already out of date, apparently. As long as I hold it and look at it, it will never change. And this will mean, this will mean a little bit more in a few minutes.

[4 : 08] This statement that I'm about to say will mean a little bit more in a few minutes because it will be about more than just a seed. But as long as I try to keep my eyes on this little thing, and as long as I try to keep a hold of it, it will never change.

It will never change. Now, get five points for us today in this passage. Okay? My five points are as follows.

That nature has been telling us. Secondly, the power of his death. Thirdly, the glory of his resurrection.

Fourthly, the organic and logical connection. And fifthly, the glorious joy to come for those who follow him. Now, I know that was quick, but you can grab it later on.

Nature has been telling us all along. All along, nature has been telling us. And we live in a world where death is feared and dreaded. And it seems like an end.

- [5 : 18] Death seems like an end. When Jesus said, unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it will remain. It's terrifying.
- Death. It's a terrifying mystery. Where no one has really gone into it and come back to tell us about it. There's charlatans that you can go to to hear all about that.
- There's people who have experiences. There's people who have near-death experiences who get a little kind of tingling taste of it. But no one's really gone right into it and then came back and said, this is what it's like.
- Death is a terrifying mystery. Death is a terrifying mystery. The Bible tells us, actually, that death is both a result of sin and death is an enemy.
- Yet it seems like God has written it into nature many signs that while death may be an enemy, death does not have the last word.
- [6 : 18] It's in nature. God has written it in nature that death will not have the last word. For instance, God shows us through nature that although the sun, every single night the sun goes where?
- Into the ground. Not literally, of course, but to our perspective, the sun goes down beyond the ground and yet every morning the sun rises.
- Again, the son of God goes into the ground yet death is not able to keep a hold of him and he rises in power and glory just like we see every morning.
- Not so much in Scotland, but you get the point. Likewise, every single winter, trees and plants seem to fade and become lifeless.
- Yet is that the end? Does death have the last word? No, every spring comes along and life bursts forth and bloom and blossom. And as Jesus said, unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it will remain alone.
- [7 : 24] But if the seed falls into the ground and dies, it will come up and bear much fruit. You see, it's been written in nature. Nature's been telling us all along the power of his death.
- And so verse 24, Jesus gives us this amazing little illustration in response to this request of some Greeks. And it seems unconnected at first.
- It seems strange. It seems like Jesus just ignores their request. If you look at the verses before, some Greeks had come to the feast and they came to Philip and they asked him, sir, we wish to see Jesus.
- Philip doesn't know what he makes of this, so he goes to Andrew and they both go to Jesus and Jesus starts talking about his death. And he talks about the seed.
- And it seems unconnected. It seems like Jesus just ignores their request. Yet, I wonder if Philip and Andrew, when Jesus started talking about the seed, I wonder if Philip and Andrew thought, did he even hear us?
- [8 : 28] Is he listening? What is he even talking about? And so first he says, verse 23, they come and say, some Greeks wish to see you. And Jesus says, well, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
- Jesus, some Greeks want to see you. Unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it remains. But if it dies, it will bear much fruit.
- Jesus, did you hear us? Some Greeks want to see you. Yet Jesus knows what he's saying. So, there's something about this moment when Greeks come to see Jesus that indicates that the hour has now come.
- The Jewish leaders, think about this, at this moment the Jewish leaders are seeking to kill Jesus, and yet here are some non-Jews, Greeks, who are wishing to see him.

And the Pharisees, in verse 19, the Pharisees say, look, the world has gone after him. And the next thing that happens is we're introduced to some Greeks who wish to see Jesus.

[9 : 36] And so, Leon Morris, the commentator, says, Jesus sees this moment as evidence that his mission has reached its climax and that he must now die for the whole world, Greeks included.

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. And this is what the disciples have been waiting on. They've been waiting for Jesus to be glorified, but they don't realize that his glory will only come through his suffering.

Just like a harvest will only come through the death of a seed. In order for these Greeks to be a part of the harvest, he cannot just spend some time with them.

He must die for them like a seed. Commentator William Hendrickson says, apart from his voluntary sacrifice, Jesus could do nothing for these Greeks.

What's he going to do? So Jesus sees these Greeks and he says, the time has come. I must die for the world. Jesus' words in verse 24 are connected to the request of the Greeks.

[10 : 41] He's responding to this request by saying that their request indicates the time for him to be glorified and the only way to give them what they need is not by seeing them, but by dying for them.

They want to see Jesus. When shall he see them? When shall he see them? Well, interestingly, in Isaiah 53, it gives us the answer, the suffering servant.

Isaiah 53 says, When his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. Jesus is the Son of Man and it is his destiny to be glorified, yet he will be glorified no other way than first through his death and then his resurrection, ascension and coronation.

As Daniel 7 says, When on the clouds of heaven to God his Father, he receives his eternal, everlasting kingdom. Now, if you've ever planted a seed, hands up if you've planted a seed in your life.

Well done. Well done. If you've ever planted a seed, you bury it into the ground and sometime later, what pops up and comes out of the ground?

[11 : 55] Let me ask you a question. When you've planted a seed and it's watered or whatever and it pops up out of the ground, is it the same seed just as it was that pops up out of the ground?

No. Does it come out looking exactly the same? No, it does not. Something's different. Something is new. Something is greater than this little seed.

Something is more glorious than this little seed. And so when it comes to Jesus' resurrection, we cannot think that he's just merely come back to life as though he's come back in the very same state, the same body, and the same life.

That would be like the seed going into the ground and that same very seed coming back out of the ground. But the resurrection, as Jesus says in John 12, is more like a seed going into the ground being hidden out of sight.

And then a little moment later, something completely new comes out. Something greater, something more glorious springs forth with power. Think about it, how it breaks through the ground.

[13 : 03] And so nature's been telling us all along of the power of his death. It's like that of a seed that falls to the ground and dies, yet in so doing, it germinates, it transforms into something greater and more glorious and something that will bear much fruit.

the difference between this and this. It's wonderful. It's so wonderful. And so, it's a seed's very purpose to go into the ground and only, only in the ground can the seed both fulfill its purpose and display its power.

You understand? Jesus, only when a seed goes into the ground can it display its purpose and its power. only when Jesus goes into the ground can he display his full purpose and his power.

If Christ is like a seed then his death is not a hindrance to his purpose and power. The cross is the path of his purpose and power. And like a seed, his death and burial should not be resisted or thought of as being an end.

Jesus suggests it's the opposite. Jesus suggests that if he didn't go into the ground it would be an end. If the seed didn't go into the ground it stops, it produces no more.

[14 : 23] And so, see how it would actually be an end if the seed did not die. I mean, how could anyone fathom that? How could his disciples even think like that? Yet nature has been telling us all along.

You see, we have been, we've become so accustomed to this world, haven't we? we've become so accustomed to these worldly eyes and senses that we cannot see beyond this world.

We cannot see beyond this world. And Jesus challenges our worldly short-sightedness, our eyes of flesh rather than eyes of faith. And we do not know, but it's very possible that somehow in some way Jesus had a sense or memory of his pre-incarnate glory.

Jesus knew this world was not all there was. Jesus spoke about understanding heavenly things in John 3. He spoke about coming down from heaven in John 6. He spoke about the glory that he had with God the Father before the world existed in John 17.

And then even when he was in front of Pilate, Jesus said that he came into this world for this purpose to bear witness to the truth. And so Jesus is saying, I know that I don't come from this place.

[15 : 37] I come from another place and I've come into this place to tell you something about the truth because folks, with our senses and our worldly eyes, we don't see the whole picture.

And Jesus brings us some truth about our reality that our earthly eyes and our senses have not told us. The world does not give us the full picture of truth and so we cannot see beyond it.

We fear death and we think of it as an end. yet Jesus was able to see joy beyond the cross. For the joy set before him he endured the cross and he knew of life beyond this world.

So Jesus can take something within this world and he can show us that the body is not all there is, folks. Your body is not all that there is. It is not your whole existence and that when the body dies there is a reality beyond our present experience.

And so the glory of his resurrection. When a seed germinates, here is an interesting thing to think about resurrection and death. When a seed germinates you will never again see the seed again.

[16 : 51] Never. You will never see that seed ever again. It will be transformed. And so why should we expect to see anything of another world when it is of a completely different nature?

And why should we expect to ever see people who have died to see them again as though they've not gone on to a different nature? How should the perishable see the imperishable?

When a seed when we see a seed going into the ground into a dark dead out of sight place it will never again be seen like that.

Never. That's we won't see it like that ever again. And see nature tells us of resurrection and Jesus uses this illustration to tell us something of his own unique person and purpose because Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 that the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

You see Jesus not only transformed in the resurrection but like a seed is transformed into something new that produces fruit. Jesus is transformed into a life-giving spirit for he is the life-giver.

[18 : 12] As he said of himself in John chapter 5, as the father raises the dead and gives them life so also the son gives life to whomever he wills. And he goes on to say as the father has life in himself so he has granted the son also to have life in himself.

While Jesus was in his earthly body he gave life to whomever he willed, bringing people out of death and restoring their earthly life.

So when he was in his earthly body he gave earthly life to people yet when Jesus is in his glorified everlasting body he can give glorious everlasting life to whomever he wills.

1 Corinthians 15 again says Christ has been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order Christ the first fruits and then it is coming those who belong to Christ.

[19 : 25] What went into the ground on that day? Good Friday. What went into the ground? The seed that went into the ground was the most glorious human being that this world has ever seen.

The best human to walk the face of the earth. The very image of the invisible God says Colossians 1. Yet what came out of the ground was something far more glorious.

The first born from the dead says Colossians 1 again. The first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. The life giving spirit. The last Adam. The man of heaven.

Says 1 Corinthians 15. He is the beginning of a new creation. And so Jesus talks about an organic and logical connection between his resurrection and his followers resurrection.

If he is the first fruits then those who follow him and serve him will be the harvest. If he is the seed that is first planted and then bears much fruit of which his resurrection is the first fruits then there is an organic connection that assures our resurrection those who are in Christ.

[20 : 38] And so you may know this you may not but you probably know that Jesus died during the festival of Passover. You know that yeah. And so during Passover the Passover lamb was sacrificed.

And so Jesus was the Passover lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He died during Passover but did you know that he was raised on another feast day.

He was raised on the feast of first fruits. The Sunday that he was raised was the feast of first fruits. And we've explored that again. We've explored that a few years ago but let me remind you.

So the Sunday after Passover every year was the feast of first fruits. And on that day folks were to come and bring the first shoots of their harvest into the temple and wave it before God as a thanksgiving offering.

Because this initial sheaf of wheat or barley or whatever it was, this initial sheaf was a sign that God was giving them a harvest. So people would plant their seed and they would wait and they would wait they would be anxious probably wondering is God going to give us a harvest?

[21 : 53] You would never know. The only time that you would know if God was given a harvest is when the first fruits pop up. And they didn't all come up at once. There was just like a little few came up.

And as soon as a little few came up you thought okay it's happening. I now know for certain that God has given a harvest. So I'm going to take the first bunch and I'm going to take it to the temple and I'm going to thank God because I know what this means.

This means that a harvest is coming. First fruits mean that a harvest is coming. Without seeing the first fruits you just weren't sure if there was going to be a harvest.

But as soon as you seen it you were sure. Harvest is coming. without Jesus' resurrection you see Jesus is called the first fruits and he was raised on the feast of the first fruits to show us that God was giving a resurrection.

And if you are in Christ then you don't need to wonder whether you're going to be raised or not. Look at Jesus. He has already been raised. The first fruits have been waved before God.

[23 : 04] And so we can be sure that there's going to be a harvest of resurrection. Therefore like the sheaf is organically connected to the rest of the harvest so too are the followers of Jesus organically connected to his resurrection.

And for the farmer when he saw this there was one thing that he thought it's only a matter of time. Folks it is only a matter of time. Nothing more nothing less a matter of time and you will be raised.

So verse 25 Jesus then warns his disciples. He warns them against trying to keep a hold of this life. And the way we should understand this is being about trying to hold on to something which is perishable and corrupted.

Trying to hold on to this life is like trying to cling to something that's dead. It's like trying to hold on to a seed. Oh I don't want anything to happen to this seed. I'm going to keep it safe.

Never going to put it in the ground. And Jesus is saying if you try and hold on to your life that's what it will be like. It will never amount to anything. You'll lose it. You'll lose all the potential for life.

[24 : 20] And so imagine seeing a seed that loved its current state. Oh I'm a great seed. Look at me. I'm a barley seed. And it loved its current state so much.

I'm not going near that dirty ground. No way. I'm going to avoid the ground at all costs. And in so doing the seed would lose the possibility for something greater.

For true life. For true fruit. For true transformation. For glory. Don't you know seed you're made for more. You're made for more. Amazing.

If we are to follow Jesus we mustn't cling to this world and think about death as though it's an end. It's not an end. It's just a place where Jesus will transform you. So Jesus uses this illustration of a seed to show an organic connection but he also uses an illustration of a servant to show us a logical connection.

So verse 26 Jesus says if anyone serves me he must follow me and where I am there will my servant be also. Now think about this.

[25 : 27] What a wonderful simple logical and hopeful little illustration. Have you ever seen somebody with a servant now I'm not talking old school servant or slave or anything like that but someone with an assistant an aide someone who serves them.

If you've ever seen someone with a servant how unhelpful or an apprentice how unhelpful would it be if that person was just never around. That would be so unhelpful.

where's my servant? Where's my apprentice? Tam's not here but he knows what that's like just now he's got an apprentice that doesn't really do much. How unhelpful would it be if the servant was never around his master?

Never at hand for the person that they serve. Imagine a master and a servant. Now does a servant decide where to go and the master follows? No.

The master moves about at his own will and pleasure and wherever he goes the servant goes with him. Now what Jesus is saying is really encouraging.

[26 : 36] He is saying if I go there think about this if he goes to heaven to his father's house to glory he's like if I go there and you serve me then you're coming with me.

It wouldn't make sense for it to be any other way. The first part means that we must follow him to the cross. If anyone serves me he must follow me.

The first part means we must go to the cross. As Matthew 16 24 Jesus says pick up your cross and follow me. Yet the second part is John 14.

If I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and I will take you to myself that where I am you may be also. And so think about the glorious joy to come for those who follow him.

You see while following him involves picking up your cross only his cross leads to glory. John 17 5 Jesus says the glory that he had with the father before the world existed would be his again.

[27 : 41] And only he has this glory. No one else on earth has that glory. So don't you want to be with him where he is? And this is what he says. What a joy it will be for those who serve him.

There's no one else. No other prophet, no other person in history, no other religious leader will have this glory. There's no point following anyone else. But what a joy it will be for those who follow Jesus to be with him in such glory.

And he says in John 17 24, father, oh, it's my desire that they also whom you've given me would be with me where I am and see the glory that you have given me because you have loved me before the foundation of the world.

Jesus wants us to be with him where he is and see his glory. So if you serve Jesus, do you not think that he will take you to be with him where he is?

Of course he will. What a wonderful promise these illustrations give. And Jesus gives this last little logical promise. If anyone serves me, my father will honour him.

[28 : 51] It makes sense. As a carer, when I worked as a carer, I used to work for this boy in Cambuslang for many years. I used to work alongside one of the elders at Liberty Church.

And we tried our best to serve this boy well. We tried to support him well, give him what he needs, increase his quality of life, give him value and honour.

And because of this, very often his mum and dad would give us gifts and treat us kindly and sometimes we would try and refuse. And yet his parents, his mum would say this, no, this is because of how you are with our son.

We see how you are with our son. How you treat our son means so much to us. And so we want to honour you. Whoever serves me, my father will honour him.

Makes perfect sense. If you serve the son, will the father not honour you? Will God not honour you if you serve the son of God?

[30 : 00] And this is the big issue. This is the big issue in the world that people think they can serve God while rejecting his son. Doesn't make any sense. How can you ever hope to be on good terms with God while denying his son?

It cannot happen. It cannot happen. Yet for those who serve the son and love the son, how much more will the father in heaven love and bless you?

Folks, what hope there is in Jesus. He is our hope in life and death. It is great. And if you serve him and love him, you're connected to him.

You don't need to fear death. You will be with him where he is. There is great power and purpose in his death and resurrection. And if that is true for him, then we will follow him into that and see him in his glory.

What purpose and power there is in the death of Christ. What hope of life and transformation there is in his resurrection. what promise there is in serving and following Jesus and what joy and honour there will be in his glorious presence.

[31 : 13] Amen. Let me pray. Father, we thank you for this day that we remember the resurrection of Jesus, your son. We have great confidence because of his resurrection.

We have great confidence in the history of it and the evidence of it and the witnesses of it, the reassurance of it. And we thank you that Jesus pointed us even to nature to tell us about the nature of his purpose and power and death and resurrection.

And so we thank you. Please help us to trust in Christ and find our glorious hope and joy in him. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. ■ ■ voy voy voy voy!

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