

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die

by William MacDonald

Transcript

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24)

One day some Greeks came to Philip with the noble request, "Sir, we would see Jesus!" But why did they want to see Him? Perhaps they wanted to take Him back to Athens as a popular new philosopher. Or perhaps they wanted to save Him from crucifixion and death, which now seemed inevitable.

Jesus answered with one of the great laws of harvest: a kernel of grain must fall into the ground and die if it is to become productive. If He were to save Himself from death, He would abide alone. He would enjoy the glories of heaven by Himself; there would be no saved sinners there to share His glory. But if He died, He would provide a way of salvation by which many would enjoy eternal life. It was imperative for Him that He die a sacrificial death rather than live a comfortable life.

T. G. Ragland once said, "Of all plans of ensuring success, the most certain is Christ's own, becoming a grain of wheat, falling into the ground and dying. If we refuse to become grains of wheat...if we will neither sacrifice prospects, nor risk character, and property and health; nor, when we are called, relinquish home, and break family ties, for Christ's sake; then we shall abide alone. But if we wish to be fruitful, we must follow our Blessed Lord Himself, by becoming a corn of wheat, and dying, then we shall bring forth much fruit.

Years ago I read of a group of missionaries in Africa who had labored tirelessly for years without seeing any lasting fruit for God. In desperation, they finally announced a conference where they would get before God in prayer and fasting. In the discussion that followed, one of the missionaries said, "I don't think we'll ever see blessing until a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies." Shortly afterward, that same missionary took sick and died. Then the harvest began - the blessing which he had predicted.

Samuel Zwemer wrote:

There is no gain but by a loss, You cannot save but by a cross; The corn of wheat to multiply Must fall into the ground and die.

Wherever you ripe fields behold, Waving to God their sheaves of gold, Be sure some corn of wheat has died, Some soul there has been crucified— Someone has wrestled, wept and prayed, And fought hell's

legions undismayed.

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