

SERMON A DIFFERENT METAPHOR

John 12:23-24

(23) And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. (24) Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

Introduction

All language contains figures of speech. This is especially true of religious language. We call Jesus the Bright and Morning Star. We call Him the Rose Of Sharon, and the Lion of Judah. John the Baptist called Him, the Lamb that would take away the sins of the world. Many of the metaphors are so ingrained in our Christian culture that they have become dead metaphors. That is to say, we no longer view them as figures of speech.

Most of the metaphors in Scripture, which describe the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus, use the image of a Lamb before the slaughter. This image in this text is different. Here Jesus uses the image of a grain of wheat planted and its subsequent germination. Jesus is here speaking to his disciples and to some Greeks who requested an interview with him. His disciples had a problem with the idea of His crucifixion. They could not wrap their heads around a crucified king or a victimized messiah. They suffered from “confirmation bias.” The Greeks, on the other hand, who were Gentiles, were not too familiar with the sacrificial system of the Old Testament and had trouble identifying with it. This was a new approach to an established spiritual truth. Jesus used the image of a seed to illustrate the great spiritual truth that there can be no glory without suffering, no fruitful life without death, no victory without surrender. Of itself, a seed grain is weak and useless; but when it is planted, it “dies and becomes fruitful.” Let’s dig a little deeper.

Exposition

1. Jesus Applied the Law of the Harvest

- (A) You Reap What You Sow
- (B) You Reap Later Than You Sow
- (C) You Reap Like You Sow
- (D) You Reap More Than You Sow

2. There Are Different Uses of Seeds

- (A) Feed Grain-Consumed
- (B) Seed Grain-Reserved, Preserved, and Protected

3. Jesus Saw Himself as a Precious Seed Grain

- (A) His Death and Burial-Planting
- (B) His Resurrection-Germination
- (C) Our Salvation- Harvest Time

Closing Thoughts

If you leave a grain of wheat by itself, it will come to nothing. If you plant it in the ground and let it die, it will germinate and bring forth many more grains of wheat.

Jesus was telling them and us that His death would be the source of the spiritual life for the world. From His death would spring up a great harvest of blessings for the world. If He didn't die, He would abide alone like a seed grain of wheat that was never planted. In that case, only He, the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the angels would be in heaven. If He died-and He did-He would populate heaven with redeemed souls. There is a spiritual harvest brought about by His death. Thank God! I am part of the harvest. Every saved person is a part of the harvest. Give God Glory! Give God All the Glory!

Related Scriptures

Genesis 8:22

Psalm 125:5-6

1st Corinthians 15:35-38

2nd Corinthians 9:6-10

Galatians 6:7-9

End Note

Until recently, farmers kept seeds from the best of the harvest to plant for the next year's crop. Now, farmers buy it from feed stores. This was a critical part of the farming process. The seed grain had to be protected at all cost. During droughts and famines, it was eaten only as a last resort. Fasting had a spiritual purpose as well as a practical purpose. By fasting, the food supply was extended and the eating of the seed grain was avoided. If the seed grain had to be eaten to survive, the seed grain from another region was purchased, usually at an exorbitant price.

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