

“VOICES FROM THE GROUND”

(How the Seed Encourages Us in Those Tough Seasons of Life)
(John 12:20-28)

“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.” (V. 24)

INTRODUCTION

In John 12, Jesus relates to four different people groups:

1. In (V. 1-11) Jesus is with friends in Bethany as Mary anoints the head and feet of Jesus.
2. In (V. 12-19) Jesus is with the Passover Pilgrims as the public parade reveals His Triumphal Entry.
3. In (V. 37-49) Jesus is with the unbelieving Jews who doubted and denied Him.
4. In (V. 20-36) Our text, Jesus is with the Gentile visitors who have come for an interview with Jesus:

“Sir, we would see Jesus.” (V. 21)
(And then Jesus speaks loud and clear)

In (V. 23) Jesus speaks about His hour of trial.
In (V. 24) Jesus speaks about a grain of seed.
In (V. 25) Jesus speaks about our response to be planted.

Fact: Jesus uses the image of a seed to convey a message.

Fact: Jesus uses a seed to illustrate a process that we all go through.

Fact: Jesus reveals how the power of life results from the process of death.

1. Jesus Himself must undergo a death process transformation to produce life afterwards.
2. The seed must undergo a death process transformation to produce life afterwards.
3. You and I must undergo a death process transformation to produce life afterwards.

Question: How does God bring glory out of suffering?

Question: What is the ministry of the seed?

Question: What does the seed teach us about ourselves?

Question: What are the “voices from the ground” that speak to us all today?

(A Few Seed Secrets)

1. Seeds Experience “Detachment”

Fact: The farmer pulls a seed out of the bag.

Fact: The seed planted is isolated from the other seeds.

Fact: The farmer plants the seed in the ground by itself.

Fact: The seed goes from being in the company of the multitudes (to the isolation and aloneness in the ground).

(Remember)

- ◆ It must be “detached” if it’s going to be planted.

- ◆ It must face the hour when it feels all alone.

Question: Why must the seed (Jesus) be detached from the others?

Answer: So that His Father can accomplish the purpose He has in store.

(Application)

- ◆ Have you ever been detached?
- ◆ Have you ever had to walk alone?
- ◆ Have you ever had earthly support let you down?
- ◆ Have you ever found yourself like Moses (alone in the desert, isolated from the mainstream)?

2. Seeds Experience “Darkness”

Fact: My dad plowed rows for my brother and I to plant corn.

Fact: After we dropped the seeds in the ground, we had to do something.

Fact: We were told to cover the seed completely, so the seed was barred from any light.

- ◆ The seed was hidden in secret.
- ◆ The seed was in the dark.
- ◆ The seed was hidden so that no one could see the process underground (but God).

Fact: The seed thinks that no one can see it.

Fact: The seed feels hidden and obscure.

(But Remember)

The isolation and darkness are the very tools God uses to prepare the seed for future glory.

(Application)

- ◆ Did you ever feel like you were in the dark?
- ◆ Did you ever feel like you were without direction?
- ◆ Did you ever feel like you were in the “night seasons”?

“In the night I water my couch with tears.” (Psalm 6:6)

(Just be sure)

1. The night seasons come to everyone.
2. These seasons may hide and conceal but they do not separate us from the Love of God.
3. Father knows best and is always in control!!!

3. Seeds Experience “Dryness”

Fact: Seeds are placed in the dry and dusty ground.

Fact: The farmer plants and takes his chances.

Fact: The chance is that the seed may stay dry for a very long time.

But faith tells the farmer to plant because he is sure that God will send the rain!

(The sun is hot/the heat is blistering/the ground is dry)

But the farmer hopes that the seed will understand,

1. That if the seed is patient, the needed rain showers will eventually come.
2. That if the seed will endure the dry time, the seed will enjoy the downpour.
3. That seeds must never equate dryness with displeasure (dryness simply produces a longing in the seed to find moisture).

(Application)

- ◆ Are you dry and thirsty this hour?
- ◆ Are you walking through a desert (in need of water)?
- ◆ Are you parched and in need of fresh rain?
- ◆ Are you trusting in Isaiah's words, "God will turn dry lands into springs of water"? (Isaiah 41:18)

4. Seeds Experience "Delay"

Fact: So many times I've planted grass seed and waited and waited.

Fact: At times I've dug up the top soil, only to see that the seed was still there.

Question: What do I need to learn to do?

Answer: Keep my hands off of what God is doing (Repeat)

Leave the seed alone!

Let patience have her perfect work!

Quit forcing God's hand!

Quit giving deadlines!

(Remember)

1. You cannot improve on God's timing!
2. You need not rush God!
3. You lose when you fail in patience (Illustration: Abraham & Hagar)
4. You can trust that God knows what He is doing.

(Memorize)

"God's ways are not your ways." (Isaiah 55:8)

"Your times are in His hands." (Psalm 31:15)

"God makes all things beautiful in His time." (Ecc. 3:11)

Fact: God's delays are not God's denials!!!

5. Seeds Experience "Dampness"

Question: What happens when the showers come?

Question: What happens when the rain begins to fall?

- ◆ The kernel of grain gets damp.
- ◆ The kernel of grain becomes moldy.
- ◆ The kernel of grain turns black.
- ◆ The kernel of grain becomes soft and pliable.

Fact: The rain the seed has been waiting for is the very thing God uses to soften and prepare the seed for something.

Fact: It's the rain that makes it possible for the outer shell to change.

Fact: And, it's only the rain from heaven (the Holy Spirit) that enables us to change as well.

Fact: When the rain comes, the seed begins to change from "old life" to "new life".

(Application)

- ◆ Has the Spirit been convicting your conscience?
- ◆ Are we willing to let the Spirit work deep within?
- ◆ Has the Spirit been breaking your outer shell to change your inner man?
- ◆ Are we open to His outpouring which will affect the transformation process?

6. Seeds Experience "Decomposition"

Fact: This is dark just before the dawn.

Fact: This is injury just before blessing.

Fact: The outer shell begins to deteriorate.

Fact: The house that holds the germ of life begins to decompose.

Fact: The exterior begins to weaken so that the interior can become strong.

(Remember)

Until the kernel decomposes, the life of the grain is still imprisoned!

The Shell...

...Is full of potential, life, possibilities, and unknown treasure.

But the outer man must be stripped away of everything that hinders, interferes, entangles, restricts, constrains and impedes your progress.

(Application)

- ◆ We can rebel (against God's plan).
- ◆ We can resist (God's dealing with us).
- ◆ We can run (and forfeit what God has in store).

7. Seeds Experience "Death"

- ◆ The shell gets dark and damp and dies.
- ◆ The enclosure of security is broken.
- ◆ The walls of resistance have come open.

Fact: What is thought would never happen, now happens quickly.

Fact: Patience has allowed God to work in power.

Fact: And the place the seed dies, is the place new life resurrects!

(Application)

- ◆ God will bring life out of death!
- ◆ God still brings blessing out of brokenness!

- ◆ God's plan is for fruit out of your frustration!
- ◆ God will bring completion out of disappointment!
- ◆ God will bring you to the place He intends for you to be!

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yeildeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12:11)

Conclusion

(What's the result of this planting process?)

(V.24) THE PROMISE OF A FUTURE HARVEST

"It bringeth forth much fruit."

(V. 25) THE PROMISE OF A FUTURE HEAVEN

"Life eternal"

V. 26) THE PROMISE OF A FUTRE HONOR

"Him will my Father honor"

"BE ENCOURAGED SAINTS OF GOD"

1. God knows exactly **where** you live and **what** you feel!
2. God knows exactly **why** you are **where** you are!
3. God knows exactly **what** you need and **when** you need it!
4. God knows exactly **how** to bring life out of death!
5. God knows exactly **when** to turn darkness into dawn!

AMEN!
Bill Kirk