

43-12-01 --One Grain of Wheat
 memorial message, death, resurrection, salvation
 John 12:24
 Christ is our experienced Guide through death and resurrection.

INTRODUCTION:

--[Pioneers who came to this part of the country often hired guides to lead the way through the wilderness to and get them here safely. They'd never been here. It was unknown territory. An experienced guide was a blessing....] Death is also unknown territory, and for those who want to travel safely through it, **Christ Himself is our experienced Guide not only through death and but also through resurrection.**

--Jesus faced His own death knowing two certainties: 1) He knew He would be raised from death, and 2) He knew His work would allow us to be raised as well.

--With that in mind, He said this in John 12:24 (NASB), "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*"

--These words of Christ before His own death are a *tremendous source of hope* in times of grief or as we anticipate our own death.

I. He Called Himself a "Grain of Wheat" to Identify with Us.

- A. Jesus often used the metaphor of a *harvest of grain* to refer to the souls He sought to save.
- B. When He referred to Himself as "*a grain of wheat*," He was expressing the first essential element in the divine plan of salvation:
Incarnation-- John 1:1, 14, (NKJV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

TRANS: God cared enough about us to become one of us, through the Incarnation of His Son. But that was only the first step.

II. Jesus Said That the Death of that Grain Was Also Essential

- A. Christ' death *for our sins*, was *the only way* to make sinner into saints. (There was no *better* or *easier* way to accomplish this. Jesus

had to become one of us... to die in our place.)

- B. Christ is a Human King who doesn't intend to reign "alone."--
Heb.12:2a, Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross... (that "**joy** set before him" was the joy of having us as His children)

TRANS: What a comfort, knowing Jesus cared enough to suffer in our place so that He could populate Heaven with us.

III. Jesus Said We're the Fruit of His Death and Resurrection

- A. Each Christian became a believer by coming to the same cross where the dying "grain of wheat" (Christ) was planted [The Old Rugged Cross is everybody's *old rugged cross*] and each believer is a part of the harvest from that planted grain.
- B. A fruitful Christian life is also the *fruit of Christ's death*, but it can only be lived out in the power of *Christ's resurrection*.
- C. Finally, a Christian's own death is the doorway to a future life of even greater fruitfulness-- 1Co.15:20, But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep. [seeds won't yield a harvest of more seeds, unless they also fall into the ground and die; caterpillars won't become beautiful butterflies unless they fall asleep never to return to their former state; we and our loved ones who live in God's grace through Christ won't discover our greatest fruitfulness until we enter our eternal destination in *heavenly life* and *resurrection*.]

CONCLUSION:

--John 12:24 (NASB), "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*"

Our Lord Jesus Christ led the way for us through His Cross and the empty tomb. **He is our experienced Guide through death and resurrection.**

--GOD'S ACRE

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls
 The burial-ground God's-Acre! It is just;

It consecrates each grave within its walls,
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.

God's-Acre! Yes, that blessed name imparts
Comfort to those who in the grave have sown
The seed that they had garnered in their hearts,
Their bread of life, alas! no more their own.

Into its furrows shall we all be cast,
In the sure faith, that we shall rise again
At the great harvest, when the archangel's blast
Shall winnow, like a fan, the chaff and grain.

Then shall the good stand in immortal bloom,
In the fair gardens of that second birth;
And each bright blossom mingle its perfume
With that of flowers, which never bloomed on earth.

With thy rude ploughshare, Death, turn up the sod,
And spread the furrow for the seed we sow;
This is the field and Acre of our God,
This is the place where human harvests grow.