

He who loves his life loses it

John 12:20-26

20 Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; 21 these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." 22 Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 "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. 25 "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. 26 "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

This will be a very challenging message.

After Jesus said that His hour had come to be crucified, die, and be raised from the dead, He turns to His disciples and teaches them what following Him is all about.

John 12:24 "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. 25 "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. 26 "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

/Jesus uses the metaphor of the grain of wheat to issue a challenge to His disciples - and to all of us.\

He first of all applies this metaphor to Himself. But then He extends the metaphor to His disciples – and that includes us.

/So yes – first and foremost, Jesus is the grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies. And because He dies, He bears much fruit.\

As He will soon say to a crowd of onlookers who heard the great noise of the Father speaking to Jesus:

John 12:32

32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

/The book of Hebrews also speaks of the fruit which Jesus bore by means of His death.\

Heb 2:9-13

9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying,

*"I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN,
IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE."*

13 And again,

"I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM."

And again,

"BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME."

/The fruit is people: Believers. The fruit consists of the many brothers and sisters which the Father has given Christ. It's every member of the body of Christ. \

Back to John 12:25

John 12:25 "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. 26 "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

/Verses 25 and 26 make it clear that the grain of wheat principle also applies to the disciples of Jesus.\

Verse 25 explains the metaphor as it applies to the disciples and to us.

/The one who loves his life is like a grain of wheat that fails to go into the ground and die.\ This person remains alone: barren and unfruitful.

/And here's the truth: that grain of wheat will eventually die anyway. \ The hot sun will dry it up and it will blow away. Or else birds will come along and devour it.

The book of Galatians says it this way:

Gal 6:6-10

6 The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

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Back to John 12:25

/The one who loves his own life sows to his own flesh. But the one who hates his life in this world will sow to the Spirit.\

But what does Jesus mean by loving one's life versus hating one's life?

/The Greek word for "loves" (*phileo*) means to be a friend to or to be fond of.\

I am fond of myself. In its most extreme, this turns into narcissism. <pic><pic>

/The Greek word for “hates” (*miseo*) means to have relatively little regard for, to be disinclined to in contrast to preferential treatment. To have disregard for the claims of one person or thing relatively to those of another.\

Matt 10:37-39

37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

/Here in John 12:25 it means to have disregard for one’s own life in comparison to the great regard he has for the claims of Christ.\

John 12:25 "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.

/I would caution you here: don’t take John 12:25 to be a salvation verse.\

/Keeping one’s life to life eternal is akin to reaping eternal life in Galatians 6:8. \

Remember, what Jesus says about eternal life in the gospel of John.

/First, we receive eternal life at the moment that we believe in Christ.\

John 5:24

24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

And what is eternal life? /Second, note how Jesus defines eternal life in chapter 17:\

John 17:1-3

*17 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, 2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 "This is eternal life, that **they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.***

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Let's return now to chapter 12 verse 25. I want to give you two Greek words. Both are translated "life" in verse 25, but they refer to two very different kinds of life.

/NT:5590 psuche (psoo-khay') = natural or soul life\

/NT:2222 zoe (dzo-ay') = God's life.\

John 12:25 "He who loves his life (natural life = psuche)) loses it, and he who hates his life (psuche) in this world will keep it to life (the life of God= zoe eternal.

/So keeping one's soul or natural life to eternal life (the life of God) results from exchanging the earthly things of one's temporary, natural life in this world for the things of Christ - heavenly things. Treasures in heaven. \

This is what it means to reap eternal life - abundant life. *Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.*

/Or another way of putting it is to sacrifice or disregard one's own selfish interests in order to pursue the interests of Christ.\

In this way we come to really know the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Paul expressed it well in Philippians 3:

Phil 3:4-11

4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

What about us?

/Jesus wraps things up here with an appeal to serve Him. \

John 12:26 "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

This is where the rubber meets the road.

2 Cor 5:14-15

14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

/In the context of the grain of wheat, then, service means being sacrificial in your manner of living.\

Rom 12:1

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

It means to lay down our lives for the cause of Christ, and for the good of others.

/It means to sacrifice our treasure, our time, our energy for the work, the ministry, that the Lord has called us to.\

It means to put the interests of Christ above our own selfish interests.

/It means to love others as Christ has loved us. \

Gal 5:13-14

13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."