

DAY 40

DIE



John 12:24

“Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

A year ago, for the first time, Lindsey and I planted a small garden in our backyard. The initial idea was to find some sort of a daily task that got us outside and our hands dirty as a way of navigating the lockdown. Well, as we meticulously gardened and cultivated onions and bell peppers, and cherry tomatoes, we watched

them take on new life and, over the next few months, explode with growth. Fast-forward toward the end(ish) of summer, and we start to harvest our beautiful little garden. So we take the onions, we take the bell peppers, we take the tomatoes, and we pluck them from the vine. We take them inside, chop them up, add some cilantro, lime juice, salt, and pepper, and made a delicious fresh salsa.

If we are paying attention to the world around us, we get a glimpse of what Jesus is doing. The concept of life coming from death is baked into our world. Consider the salsa for the moment. There is a life-giving quality to all living things. Those veggies, when harvested, were experiencing a form of death, but at the same time, they were giving life. The process of the garden to salsa is, in some small way is the process of resurrection. The foods that are most life-giving (literally and figuratively) are the foods that are the closest to life. There is a difference between eating a processed and pre-packaged something vs. a fresh salsa with vegetables fresh from the vine.

Whether it is a burger, salsa, salad, whatever...Baked into how the world operates is the truth that from death comes life. And Jesus understood this. Now, of course, Jesus' death is unique among this process.

And in this text, Jesus is primarily speaking of his own death. At first, his death will appear as a tragedy, but in the end, it will be a triumph. Obviously, we know the end of the story, so it is difficult for us to really appreciate the shock of Jesus' teaching here. His death will be the ultimate victory of the resurrecting power of God over the forces of evil, sin, and death.

But this wasn't as easily understood 2000 years ago on Holy Saturday. Imagine the dismay and the confusion for the disciples as they were experiencing the disillusion of the death of their leader, Jesus. Holy Saturday is about silence; it is about the lonesome, dark, disorienting silence of waiting for God.

The breathtaking message of Good Friday and Easter Sunday is that life comes out of death. And the invitation is to follow Jesus into this death. He invites his followers to die as well. Like a seed that is planted in the ground and dies, Jesus invites us to die to ourselves in order to bear good fruit. We are asked to lay down our lives in love so that we can be raised to new life.

The question, then, that is before us as we journey into the cross and resurrection is...What do we need to die to this Easter in order to more fully enter into the life of Jesus?

Daily Practice

What do you need to die to this Easter in order to enter more fully into the new life Christ wants to give us? Write down your answer to the question above on a small piece of paper, tear it up, and then bury it in the ground.

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book Pauses for Lent and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.