
Church in Campbell Weekly News

April 14, 2024 Issue 24-14

LIFE'S MULTIPLICATION THROUGH DEATH AND RESURRECTION

In this message we come to the second part of John chapter twelve. In the first part of this chapter we see, in a shadow, that the church has come into existence through the Lord as resurrection life. We have the church by His resurrection life. But how can the Lord increase the church? This is shown in the second part of this chapter (vv. 12-36a). The first part shows how the church is here, but the second part shows how the Lord can increase the church through His death and resurrection.

A. The Golden Time for Jesus

At this point, according to the worldly view, Jesus was in His golden time. The raising up of Lazarus from the dead was such a miracle that it shook all the people. It was a real miracle for a dead person, buried for four days and even stinking, to be raised up. Because the Lord had raised Lazarus from the dead, a great crowd of the Jews highly esteemed Him and warmly welcomed Him (vv. 12-19). They welcomed Him by shouting, "Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" Humanly speaking, this very hour was the most glorious time for the Lord while He was on earth. All the people praised Him, welcomed Him, honored Him, and respected Him. Even the Greeks came to seek Him (vv. 20-22). The Jewish people welcomed Him, and the Gentiles, the Greeks, sought to follow Him. Could the Lord have produced and increased the church by accepting this kind of welcome and honor? No, this is not the way to produce or increase the church. This is not the way to bring the church into existence and increase it in life.

B. As a Grain of Wheat to Fall into the Ground

At that very moment, when the Lord was welcomed and honored by both Jews and Greeks, what did He say? If we had been there, or if such a welcome had been extended to us, we would have said, "Praise the Lord. Now is the time for us to do something to glorify God." The Lord Jesus, however, was not excited. The greater the welcome, the more calm He became. The more He was sought after, the colder He was to those who sought for Him. He told the seekers that He was a grain of wheat. He said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (v. 24). This was the Lord's attitude toward such a human welcome. This was His reaction toward the glory of human honor. What is the way for a grain of wheat to multiply? It is not by being welcomed or honored, but by falling into the ground to die. This is absolutely contrary to the human concept. Nevertheless, we must remember that this is the only way to bring the church into being and to increase it in life. Whenever a human welcome comes to you, you must say, "I must die." Whenever human honor comes to you, you must reply, "I must be buried." Do not say, "Hallelujah, praise the Lord!" This is not the best time for you to do something, even if your intention is to glorify God. The proper way to glorify God is for you to die and be buried.

The Lord Jesus did not seize the golden opportunity as the means to have His increase. If He had, He would have made a great mistake. The golden opportunity is never for the increase. If you read church history, you will see that whenever the church had an increase it was not the result of a golden opportunity but of persecution. The time for the church to increase is during persecution, not during a warm welcome. When the enemy puts the church into death, that is the time for the church to be increased. The more persecution and opposition there are, the more increase the church will have. The persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire did not frustrate the growth of the church during the first two centuries, but rather helped it to grow. What then did damage the church? The welcome of the Roman Empire. When the Roman Empire turned its persecution into welcome, the church life was ruined. Do not be excited by man's welcome. Man's welcome will always ruin and corrupt us. Praise the Lord that man's persecution and opposition are the golden opportunity for the increase of Christ. He is a grain of wheat, and there is no other way for that grain of wheat to increase except for it to fall into the ground the ground and die. This is the way to have the multiplication of life.

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will simply remain one grain and will never produce anything. But, praise the Lord, after it dies and grows up, the one grain becomes the many grains or the much fruit. These many grains or much fruit are the church. This is the way for the church to come into being. This is also the way for the Lord to increase the church. This has to be the way for us to bring the church into existence and to increase it. We must face human welcome by death, by taking the cross. The way for the church to come into being and to increase is not by human glory; it is by the death of the cross.

Although many good missionaries were sent to China by the leading missions, such as the one formed by Brother Hudson Taylor, history proves that there was not much result for the proper church life. Among the many missionaries who went to China was a sister named Margaret E. Barber who was sent there by a British mission. She was accused falsely, called back to England, and later vindicated by the Lord. Then the Lord burdened her to return to China. She was not sent by any mission but went there by faith, settling in a little town named Pagoda, very close to Brother Watchman Nee's hometown. She stayed there purposely, not visiting other places. In a sense, the Lord sowed her there as a grain of wheat. She remained there for years, dying there in 1929.

Brother Nee told me personally the complete story regarding his contact with Sister Barber. Along with other young people, Brother Nee went to her to receive help. She was deep in the Lord and was very strict. She often rebuked the young ones. Brother Nee told me that most of them could not stand her rebukes. Eventually he was nearly the only one who kept going to her, presenting himself to her as an offering for her rebukes.

He did this purposely. After a certain period of time had passed, he would feel the need for further rebuking and would go to her for another rebuke, and she did it. In 1929 she went to the Lord. She did not have much that anyone could inherit except a Bible containing many notes, which she willed to Brother Nee. Sister Barber was a seed that was sown, and Brother Nee was a grain that grew out of that seed. Brother Nee, as a seed that grew out of her, became a great vessel for the recovery of the proper church life. This is the way to produce and increase the church in life. It is absolutely not a matter of a golden opportunity.

In 1940, during the Sino-Japanese War, Brother Nee conducted a training in Shanghai. I attended that training. In China during that time, there were some prevailing Chinese preachers. They always had the greatest following, and large crowds attended their preaching. Brother Nee, on the contrary, used to tell us that the work is not a matter of the endeavor of outward activity, but of the outflow of the inner life. The work that the Lord needs is the overflow of the inner life. In Brother Nee's training in 1940 there were not more than eighty trainees. But Brother Nee was satisfied with such a small number. Whenever he held a conference, there were, at the most, not more than 350 people. He always stressed that the work is the overflow of inner life, not the endeavor of outward activity. Today we see the issue of Brother Nee's ministry: many churches produced in the Lord's recovery throughout the world.

Do not be troubled by the temporary success of others' outward activities. Let the Lord have some time and He will vindicate His way in life. Although Brother Nee has gone to be with the Lord, his ministry is still prevailing and his work continues to go on. Such a work is not a matter of activity, but of life. This is the work of life to produce and increase the church.

We may use the illustration of making artificial flowers. If you were to hire people to make artificial flowers, a great number could be produced within a short time. However, if you are going to grow flowers, it will take a longer time. You must first sow the seed. The seed will grow and multiply. Then more seed will fall into the ground and grow and multiply again and again. This kind of multiplication will last for a long time. What kind of increase do you expect to have—artificial flowers produced by outward labor or genuine flowers produced by life?

1. To Produce Many Grains—to Draw All Men

The Lord Jesus fell into the ground and died that His divine element, His divine life, might be released from within the shell of His humanity to produce many believers in resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3), just as a grain of wheat has its life element released by falling into the ground and growing up out of the ground to bear much fruit, that is, to bring forth many grains. Instead of receiving a warm welcome, the Lord preferred to fall into the ground and die as a grain of wheat that He might produce many grains for the church. The Lord, as a grain of wheat falling into the ground, lost His soul-life through death that He might release His eternal life in resurrection to the "many grains."

In one aspect, the Lord's death was a falling into the ground as revealed in verse 24; in another aspect, it was a lifting up on the tree (v. 32; 1 Pet. 2:24). To "fall into the ground" as a grain of wheat was to produce the many grains; to be "lifted up" on the tree as the Son of Man was to draw all men to Himself. The many grains produced by His falling into the ground are the "all men" drawn by His being lifted up on the tree.

In chapter twelve of John the Lord's death is revealed not as the redeeming death (as referred to in 1:29) but as the producing, generating death. According to this chapter, by His death the Lord had His incarnation shell broken that He might accomplish three purposes: the producing of the many grains, the drawing of all men to Himself (vv. 24, 32); the releasing of the divine element, the eternal life (vv. 23, 28); and the judging of the world and the casting out of its ruler (v. 31).

2. To Release the Divine Life, the Divine Element—to Be Glorified and to Glorify the Father It was by His death that the Lord was glorified and glorified God the Father. In verse 23 the Lord said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified," and in verse 28 He prayed, "Father, glorify Your name." How was the Lord glorified? He was glorified through death and resurrection because it was through death and resurrection that His divine element was released and manifested. How was God the Father glorified? It was by the Son's being glorified. When the Son's divine element was released and manifested through His death and resurrection, the Father's divine life was released and manifested. Thus, the Father was glorified in the Son's glorification through His death and resurrection. The death and resurrection of the Lord glorified God the Father because His death and resurrection released God's divine element from within Him. God's divine element was confined in His flesh, just as the life element of a grain of wheat is confined within its shell. The grain has to die so that the life element within it can be manifested and glorified. (Life study of John Message 26)

Burdens for Church Prayer

- 2024 renew our consecration and new beginning.
- Establish a prayer life individually and corporately to seek God's desire for all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.
- Building up a healthy life practices and opening our homes to raise up our next generation.
- Pray for the campus work and for the remaining fruit at West Valley College.
- Pray for our reaching out to Campbell community.
- Pray for the saints in HuaLien, Taiwan, who were affected by the 7.4 magnitude earthquake, and their financial needs.

Announcements

- Life-study of Second Corinthians 11&12
- HWMR: 2023 Winter Training. Week 3
- 4/16 (Tue.) 7:30pm Prayer meeting at Campbell meeting hall
- 4/19 (Fri.) 7:30PM - 4/21 (Sun.) 12:00PM, NorCal Spring YP conference. Fremont. \$50/ea.. Registration by 4/14.
- 4/27 (Sat.) 10:30am -noon, South Bay Churches Blending: 2024 Spring ITERO respeaking, location tbd.
- 5/1 Semiannual Training (July 1-6) Registration by 5/1
- 5/25-27 Memorial Day Conference will be held in Bellevue WA at Hyatt Regency Hotel (900 Bellevue Way NE). Registration is required for children service by 5/1.
- Financial Giving:
Church in Campbell on-line donation account:
PayPal/Venmo/Zelle: churchincampbell@gmail.com
Church in Campbell book room account (PayPal):
churchincampbellbooks@gmail.com