

10/25/2026 Unless a Seed Dies

Text: John 12:20–26

Big Idea: To follow Jesus means dying to self, which looks like multiplying our faith in the lives of others.

I. Introduction (Slides 1–5)

- Read John 12:20–26.
- Hook: a personal audience with a famous thinker who says, "Unless you charge your phone, it's gonna die." The Greeks get a farming saying.
- Jesus speaks everyday language (seeds, fruit, phone chargers). He meets you where you are.
- Personal story: a hard year without "traditional Christianity." What does it really mean to follow Jesus?
- Principle: true growth in following Jesus starts with death.

II. Two Kinds of Death

- Without Christ we are dead in sin (Eph 2:1). Jesus is "dead to us."
- In Christ we are made alive, then called to die again (Bonhoeffer: "bids him come and die").
- The seed either stays alone or dies in the ground. Both paths feel like death.
- The question: dead to Jesus, who loves you and gives purpose? Or dead to Satan, who isolates and destroys?

III. What "Hating Your Life" Is Not (Slide 6)

- The two deaths intermingle: study for information vs. transformation; loving family vs. idolatry.
- Not "do the opposite of whatever I want" (spaghetti → burrito, new car → lemon).
- Jesus was called a glutton and drunkard; 30 years in a carpentry shop were not wasted.
- 1 Timothy 4:1–5. Pause 30 seconds and ask Jesus to correct you. His yoke is easy.

IV. Dying That Bears Fruit (Slides 7–11)

- Seed → plant → fruit → more seeds. Faith multiplies.
- Followers don't hoard what Jesus gives; they pass it on.
- Greear: kingdom seeds planted vs. stored as food. Chan: "A disciple is a disciple maker."

V. The Principle Explained (Slides 12–13)

Biblical backing: Gen 1:28; Gen 12:1–3; Deut 4:5–8; Ezek 36:19–23; Matt 4:19; Luke 6:40; Heb 5:11–14; 1 Cor 14:20–25; 2 Tim 2:2.

Practical illustration:

- Church: Going deeper looks like reproducing.
- Everyday life: Discipleship happens in relationship.
- Not just for extroverts.

VI. Objections

- "I don't have anything worth following." Pass along what you do have.
- "Isn't this utilitarian?" Is my faith only as good as it is useful?

VII. Conclusion: Jesus Went First (Slide 14)

- v. 23: Jesus starts with himself. To follow, we walk behind him.

- He died to multiply his faith in us. Not to make us tools (he could use donkeys, angels, rocks) but because he loves us.
- Our worth is tied to the cross, not to what we give away.
- He gives freely through his Spirit (John 16) and is near (John 17).
- A king uses servants for treasure but gives himself to his children.
- **Take heart:** it is not your faith you are multiplying but the faith of Jesus in you.