

AMANA TRUST BIBLE STUDIES

Lessons from the Gospel of John (13): Life's Issue and Multiplication

Bible reading

You may find it helpful to also read the entire case found in John 12:12-36.

John 12:12-13, 23-24

12 On the next day, the great crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem,

13 Took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!

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 the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Introduction

In the first eleven chapters of the Gospel of John, the Lord presented Himself as the One who can meet the need of man's every case. Now we come to John chapter 12, a chapter on multiplication. How could the wonderful Christ be joined by so many believers, and how could the church come into existence? The answer was not at all what the disciples thought but something altogether more mysterious and wonderful.

Bible study reading

Please prayerfully read through the following portions of ministry related to this lesson.

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...Because the Lord had raised Lazarus from the dead, a great crowd of the Jews highly esteemed Him and warmly welcomed Him (John 12:12-19)...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.

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. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 26, section 1)

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.

Suppose we have a flower seed. Although much beauty is in the life of that seed, how can that beauty be manifested? The seed has to die. If the seed falls into the earth, dies, and grows up, the full beauty within it will be manifested. That is the glory, the life in the seed glorified. Likewise, at one time God was confined within the flesh of the Lord. The Lord had to die that God within Him might be released, manifested, and glorified in resurrection. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 26, section 2)

Going deeper

Please read or listen to these materials for an in-depth study of this lesson.

Further reading:

[*Life-study of John, msg. 26*](#)

Radio broadcast link:

Broadcast 30, [*Life's Issue and Multiplication \(2\)*](#)

(Click the link above and select Broadcast 30.)

Footnotes from Recovery Version of the New Testament:

John 12:23, footnote 1

John 12:24, footnotes 1-2

Questions for personal or corporate study:

References in brackets indicate readings or broadcasts that may be helpful in answering the questions.

- What did the Lord say when He was welcomed and honoured by both Jews and Greeks?
- How did the disciples' concept of the Lord's glorification differ from the Lord's view as illustrated by a grain of wheat falling into the earth to die? (*Life-study of John*, msg. 26, section 1)
- What are the three expressions of glory shown in John chapters 14—16? (John 12:24, footnote 2, Recovery Version of the New Testament)

Next week

Life's Washing in Love to Maintain Fellowship

In this lesson we saw that through His death on the cross, Christ released His divine life from within the shell of His humanity to produce His multiplication, the church. Next week we will see an unusual outward act performed by the Lord—the washing of His disciples' feet. However, just as all the previous outward matters were signs or pictures full of spiritual significance, in the same way we will see the deeper meaning and profound significance of foot-washing in the Christian life.

Works Cited

Lee, Witness. *Life-study of John*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1985. www.ministrybooks.org

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Charity number 1093401, Company number 4366897
Bower House, Orange Tree Hill, Romford, Essex, RM4 1PB