

Finding Seed Wheat for Jesus

by Brad Allen

Jesus Christ is calling us to be seed wheat, willing to bury our lives in Him and follow Him wherever He calls, so our lives can be multiplied and others can be drawn to Him.

Duration: 40:24

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 12:20-21, John 12:23-24, John 12:27, John 12:32, Revelation 20:10

Topics: "Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of surrendering one's life to Jesus Christ. He highlights three significant statements made by Jesus in the Bible. The first statement is that the world will be judged by the cross, as Jesus came to bring light into a world that loves darkness. The preacher emphasizes that salvation is not complicated, but rather, one should simply throw themselves in the general direction of Jesus Christ. He shares the story of Billy Graham's conversion and how God has been using him to bring people to Christ. The preacher calls on the congregation to be willing to be planted as seed-tweets for Jesus, whether it be in preaching, missionary work, or any other calling.

Transcript

Just a moment ago, thinking, very rarely I do that. I don't think much. You know, in heaven, when we get to heaven, we're going to spend a lot of time praising the Lord.

Isn't it great that we get to practice here? We're practicing for heaven. Words cannot express how Nancy and I feel about this dear church, you dear people. You have been so generous, so loving, so kind to us.

It's been astounding. And we thank you. We thank you.

The message this morning is very dear to my heart, very close to my heart. In just a little bit, there are going to be people standing all around this altar, and I want you to be praying for them. You may be one of them.

I want to invite you this morning to turn to the Gospel of John, chapter 12. The Gospel of John, chapter 12. I want to begin reading with verse 20.

Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn, Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

But Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Now the old King James, here Jesus said, Barely, barely, I say unto you. Now that means truly, truly.

I'm telling you the truth. One of my favorite preachers of all times. I loved him.

He's been in glory for a few years now. Great preacher. Maybe you've heard him.

Black pastor from Los Angeles, California, Dr. E.V. Hill. Any of you ever heard old Dr. Hill? Y'all, y'all, what a preacher. Several, several years ago, he was in Oklahoma, preaching at our Oklahoma Baptist Evangelism Conference.

And he read a text like this, where Jesus said, Barely, barely. And he stopped. And he said, now, he said, I don't know about you white folks.

But he said, we black folks, we never say barely, barely. He said, I don't think you white folks do either. He said, what that means is truly, truly.

But he said, we black folks don't use that word truly, truly. We don't use that word. He said, what we black folks say, we say, shownuff, shownuff.

Okay, let me go back. Verse 23, Jesus said, The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Shownuff, shownuff.

I'm telling you the truth. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and die, it remains alone. But if it dies, it produces much grain.

He who loves his life will lose it. And he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, let him follow me.

And where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, him my father will honor. Now, Jesus said, now my soul is troubled.

And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

Then a voice came from heaven saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said it had thundered. Others said an angel had spoken to him.

Jesus answered and said, This voice did not come because of me but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world has been cast out.

And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people, all people to myself. What I've just read from the scripture is the crisis time in the life of our Lord. The cross is just around the corner.

If you go back in the previous chapter, Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead in the village of Bethany. That's close by Jerusalem. If you go out the eastern gate of the city of Jerusalem down the little Kidron Valley and up the slope of the Mount of Olives up to the top, tucked away just over the brow of the Mount of Olives on the back side is the little village of Bethany.

It's less than half a mile from the city of Jerusalem. We don't know all the circumstances, but there were some Greek fellows, some guys from Greece who had come to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Feast

of Tabernacles. Now Lazarus had just been raised from the dead.

Word began to spread back into Jerusalem, this miracle, a man who had been dead for a few days and now he's alive. Do you know what happened? It had happened here. What happened was the people of Jerusalem, many of them, they began to stream out to the village of Bethany to see this dead man who now is alive again.

But suddenly here come these fellows from Greece and they come out to Bethany, but they don't come to see Lazarus. They said, we want to see Jesus. We want to talk to him.

So Jesus started talking to these Greek fellows and then out here in the circle were his disciples and then undoubtedly in this big circle there were another group of people, people from the village of Bethany and maybe some other people who had come out of Jerusalem. And here was this crowd and Jesus began to talk primarily to these fellows from Greece and he said, the Son of Man will be glorified. How's that possible? He's facing a cross between two thieves.

He'll be naked, blood all over him, spit, his beard pulled out. That's some glorification, isn't it? And then Jesus said, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains just that one grain of wheat. But if a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will come up many grains.

It will multiply itself. Jesus is about to bring up a new race of people. They're going to be called Christians.

You know, there are lots of Greeks in this world today who are looking for Jesus. We, the church, need to introduce the world to him. And then Jesus said, the hour has come.

This is it. Now, one time he had said to his mother, Mary, woman, my hour has not yet come. Another time, in his own village of Nazareth, they took him out to the edge of a cliff and they were mad at him and they were going to push him off the cliff and he said, hey, my hour has not come.

But now, he says, my hour has come. And then a voice from heaven spoke to him. There were some in the crowd that said, oh, it just thundered.

That's the natural explanation. When God speaks today, there are people always around in the crowd saying, oh, that's just thunder. That doesn't mean anything.

Others in the crowd said, no, that wasn't thunder. That was an angel talking to him. Well, that's better than saying it's thunder, but it still wasn't the truth.

Jesus said, no, that was my daddy talking to me. That was my father. I'm here this morning for one primary purpose.

I'm here hunting some seed wheat for Jesus Christ. Now, how many of you know what seed wheat is? Lift up your hand. Several of you do.

Let me tell you. I grew up on a farm in western Oklahoma. Wheat harvest was always usually the first, maybe the second week of June.

My western Oklahoma farmer daddy, about two weeks before the wheat was ready to be harvested, my dad would always get out and walk all of our wheat fields. He would walk and walk and walk. He was hunting what he considered to be the best wheat.

Then it was time to cut the wheat, and the big old combines would come in the field, and they would start cutting the wheat. They'd cut and cut. Most all the wheat, they would empty the wheat from the combines into the trucks.

The trucks would go to town to the elevator and dump the wheat. But when they came to the section that my dad had picked out as the best wheat, they'd cut the wheat, put it in the trucks, come up south of the hay barn to a granary, and they'd put that wheat in the granary. And that fall, that was the wheat we used to sow the new crop.

That was the seed wheat. And I'm here today, I'm hunting some seed wheat for Jesus. People who are willing to bury their lives in Jesus Christ, wherever He calls, whatever He wants you to do, so your life can be buried and come up many grains.

Many grains. In this text that I read, Jesus Christ, I think sometimes, made three of the most important statements He ever made. The first one is in verse 31.

He said, Now is the judgment of this world. This statement means that the world will be judged by the cross. The world will be judged by the cross.

The word, well, do you remember the text that says, This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light. Why? Because their deeds are evil. The word condemnation there is the word crisis.

This is the crisis. This is the crisis, that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light. I want to give you a news flash this morning.

The crisis in our world right now is not in Washington, D.C. The crisis is not the Democrats versus the Republicans. The crisis in our world today is not Afghanistan. It's not terrorism.

The crisis in our world today is not the price of gasoline at the pump. The crisis in our world is not the interest rates you get on your CDs. Might as well go bury your money out in a coffee can in the backyard.

But that's not the crisis. The crisis in our world this morning is that Jesus Christ has come into the world and put all of us on the spot. You can't dodge him.

You can't duck him. You have got to do something with Jesus Christ. That is the crisis.

The second statement Jesus made, he said, in verse 31, he said, I have come to put the devil out of business. Well, that's not exactly, he said, now the ruler of this world will be cast out. Jesus Christ came to put the devil out of business, and you may be like me.

You may say, well, Brad, if he put the devil out of business, there's something wrong because I have to do business with the devil every day. Well, listen to me and listen carefully. In the mind and purpose of God, the devil was put out of business when Jesus Christ died on the cross.

Out of business. Now here, I'm going to divide the congregation. We're going to divide it into us old folks and some young folks.

You old folks may remember this. Young people won't. How many of you ever remember a set of books, I cannot remember how many were in the set, a set of adventure books, the Bobsy Twins? Anybody ever

read the Bobsy Twins? No.

When I was growing up on the farm, we only went to town on Saturday afternoon. My normal procedure when I went to town as a kid, first I'd go to the movie. Big Western, the old Western.

When I got out of the movie, I'd go across the street to Matt's Ice Cream Parlor and drink a strawberry malt. But when I finished there, I would go two blocks up Broadway Street in Elk City, Oklahoma to the Carnegie Library. Had a library card.

And I'd check out enough books to last me until the next Saturday. I've read all my life. I read all the Bobsy Twin books.

Adventure books. I'd get in bed at night. I'd open up a Bobsy Twin book and, man, I'd be reading and reading and reading.

And the Bobsy Twins, they'd get in all kinds of trouble. And a little old boy, I'd just lie there in bed worried about the Bobsy Twins. What in the world is going to happen to them? How are we going to get out of this mess? And finally, I'd just go over and read the last chapter.

Then I'd go back where I was reading and I'd read and I'd just laugh and laugh because I knew the end of the story. I know the end of this story. I've read the end of this book.

I know how it's going to come out. I'm so thankful that I've got a Bible that there was no devil in the first two chapters and there's no devil in the last two chapters. Jesus Christ, when he died on the cross, he put the devil out of business, period, period.

The third statement he said in verse 32, he said, I'm going to draw all people to myself. I, if I be lifted up, I'll draw all people to myself. The old English preacher of the 1800s, he made a statement, I've always loved this statement.

Some people make salvation so difficult, so complex. Oh, Alexander White said, just throw yourself in the general direction of Jesus Christ and he'll save you. Isn't that good? Jesus Christ is the greatest magnet in the world.

Now, the second greatest magnet in the world is sitting right here, Nancy. I grew up on a farm here three miles down Elk Creek. Nancy grew up and she was a great magnet.

She drew me that three miles several times a week. But the greatest magnet in the world is Jesus Christ. He draws people to himself.

He draws people to himself. When I was on the farm growing up, Dad would have an old battery that was bad. He'd put it out here someplace.

I'd break that battery open and I'd get a magnet out of it and clean it up, go up on Mother's kitchen table with some little old bitty nails. Those nails would just, you know, hook onto the magnet and then hook onto each other and I'd just make me a little choo-choo train. I'd go around the kitchen table.

Jesus is the greatest magnet in the world. Jesus Christ picks up drunks and broken dreams and crushed hearts. He attracts them.

I want you to look at some of the nails that Jesus has picked up. Back in the 1800s, a Christian layman went into a shoe store in Massachusetts. He went in there.

He wanted to speak to a teenage boy that worked there. Well, the boy wasn't out front selling shoes. He was back in the storeroom stacking shoes back there.

And the Christian layman went back and shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with this teenage boy. And back there among the shoes, this teenage boy got on his knees and asked Jesus Christ to come into his life. That teenage boy's name was Dwight L. Moody.

That's quite a nail Jesus picked up that day. Years later, Moody became a great evangelist. He went to London, England to preach a crusade.

While there, he ran into a young pastor who was so down, so depressed, he was about to just quit the ministry, just wash out of it. And through the preaching and counsel of Dwight L. Moody, this young pastor's heart was set on fire by Jesus Christ. His name was F.B. Meyer.

Any preacher worthy of salt has studied F.B. Meyer. Great preacher. Another nail Jesus picked up.

Years later, the American evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman, he went to London to preach a crusade. When he went, J. Wilbur Chapman was down. He was depressed.

He was tired, exhausted. He didn't know what to do. And he came in contact in London with F.B. Meyer.

F.B. Meyer talked to him about his depression and his exhaustion. And F.B. Meyer said, Brother Chapman, did you ever try to breathe out three times without breathing in once? And Chapman said, Well, it's impossible. It can't be done.

He said, That's what you've been trying to do spiritually. And it changed the life of J. Wilbur Chapman, changed his ministry. A young man was traveling with J. Wilbur Chapman on his revival circuit.

His main job when they'd get to a place, this young man was in charge of getting the tent, the revival tent set up. This young man, he had been a professional baseball player in a skid row mission in Chicago. He became acquainted with Jesus Christ and was converted.

So he's traveling with Chapman now. His name was Billy Sundry. Billy Sundry.

A few years ago, I was preaching in Indiana. Nancy and I drove over to Lake Winona where the great Bible conference was held for many, many years. Went through Billy Sundry's little house there.

All the furniture's there in his office. His Bible's lying open, his sermon notes just like it was. It was a great experience.

Billy Sundry became a great evangelist, tremendous evangelist. He was unorthodox. He had been a professional baseball player.

Sometime when church started, all the singing was going on, Billy Sundry wasn't anywhere around. And when it came time for him to preach, from off of the wings over at the side here, he'd come running to the pulpit and slide into the pulpit like he's sliding into second base. Then he'd stand up and preach.

One year, Billy Sundy went to Charlotte, North Carolina to preach a crusade. It was a great crusade. As a result of that, when he left town, they organized, men organized the Billy Sundy Prayer Club.

They promised God and promised each other that they would meet regularly and they would pray until God did something in Charlotte, North Carolina that would change the world. They prayed for month after month. They prayed year after year.

When the weather permitted, they met out in a pasture and prayed. Finally, one year, the old Baptist evangelist Mordecai Ham came to Charlotte to preach a crusade. Mordecai Ham, what a man he was.

For two years, they talked him into coming. He wasn't sure he wanted to. He was an evangelist, but he came.

For two years, he was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City. During that two years, the Wednesday night prayer meeting averaged 2,200 people on Wednesday night. Old Mordecai Ham came to Charlotte to preach a crusade.

During that crusade, a 15-year-old farm boy was converted to Jesus Christ. His name was, you tell me, Billy Graham. God's been picking up nails by the thousands and thousands ever since.

Jesus Christ is the greatest magnet in the world. His message to us today, Jesus says, I want you to be my seed wheat. I want you to be my seed wheat.

There are some of you here right now that God is calling you to preach. There are some that God is calling to be a missionary. There are some that God is calling you to be a Holy Spirit-filled plumber.

That's insignificant what God wants you to do, but what is significant is what he wants you to do with your life. You see, his way is the way of the cross. And if you're ever going to find Jesus Christ, you're going to have to get into his lost-and-found department.

Jesus said you have to lose your life to find it. You have to die to live. You have to go down before you can go up.

Today, down at the coffee shop, some man will say, you know, old so-and-so is on his way up. Well, in God's business, you have to be on your way down before you can ever go up. A lot of years ago, there was a company.

A company in London, England. Their only business, they dyed clothes. That's all they did.

They dyed clothes, cloth. Their motto. Their motto, I love it.

We dye, D-Y-E, dyeing clothes. We dye to live. We live to die.

The more we dye, the more we live. And the more we live, the more we die. That wouldn't be a bad motto for a Christian.

Now, in certain circles today, religion is very popular. But listen, religion is the most dangerous thing in our nation. Just religion.

Religion is popular these days. Seem like there are a lot of tycoons and movie stars and athletes. They get on the bandwagon.

Well, I just, you know, I just talk to an athlete or a movie. Well, I just want to thank the man upstairs. Well, he's not a man.

He's God. Or someone, well, God is my co-pilot. No, he ain't.

He's the pilot. And he doesn't need any help from me and you. Everybody seems to have kind of, you know, a good word for God.

And that kind of makes me uneasy. The church can stand anything but prosperity and popularity. You let a church get prosperous and get popular, you better look out.

At the very first church conference after the close of the New Testament, it's a matter of history. There were not more than 12 people who attended that conference who did not bear in their bodies the marks of suffering for Jesus Christ. They'd been tortured and beaten.

But today, the old rugged cross has lost its reproach. It's become now a charm to wear around the neck, a necklace. That's all it is, the old rugged cross.

Jesus Christ has never been popular. Our Lord never tried to play to the gallery and get their approval. Do you remember that time they were walking down the road in Galilee? Jesus and his disciples and James and John, the two brothers, the sons of Zebedee, they came up beside Jesus and said, Lord, we've got a request to make.

Now this is the Brad Allen translation. They said, Lord, when you come into your kingdom, we'd sure like to have reserved seats in glory. We want to sit one on your right hand.

And Jesus, as much as told John, he said, Fellas, I'm not handing out seats. I'm handing out suffering. Christianity is not some lollipop, tra-la-la, popcorn, Alka-Seltzer brand of religion.

It costs to be a Christian. It costs your life to be a follower of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul said that Christians were the scum of the earth, a spectacle to the world for the scandal of the cross.

Now how many volunteers do I have this morning? You just get right up. If you want to be known in your town as scum and a spectacle and get yourself involved in a scandal, you see. Jesus talked about, most of the time, how difficult it was to be his disciple.

We talk about how much fun you can have. Come on down to church. We're going to eat watermelons.

We're going to have a barbecue. Come on down. We're going to have fun down at church.

No. I mean, that's all right. But that's not real Christianity.

Jesus spent much of his time thinning his crowd out. We spend almost all of our time trying to build our crowd up. There's an old hymn.

I haven't seen it in a modern hymnal in years. It was in the hymnal when I was growing up. There's a verse that says, Today we've changed that verse.

We like to sing it like this. I would be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease while others fought to win the prize. I'm not so hard to please.

The narrow gate, my friends, the narrow gate has never been widened. It used to be a pilgrimage. Now it's become a picnic.

It used to be a fight. Now it's become a frolic. It used to be an execution.

Now it's just become an excursion. I'm just trying to find some seed wheat for Jesus Christ tonight. I'm asking now as I come to the close, how many of you are willing to be planted where Jesus Christ wants to plant you? Now many of you are willing, if you get to pick the plot where he plants you.

You don't get to do that. He gets to do that. He may want to plant you in some humdrum shop somewhere.

He may want you to be a preacher or a missionary or a plumber or a doctor or a lawyer. He may want you to be a salesman. He may want you to be a nurse, a housewife.

I could go on and name a hundred occupations. I just want to know how many grains of seed wheat I can get tonight. You see, if God left it up to me, I would still be living on the farm today.

I had my life all planned out from the seventh grade on. Everything was planned. I planned to go to college.

I went to college on a basketball scholarship. I wanted to major in math. I wanted to come back out and teach school and coach and farm with my dad.

Truthfully, I don't really care for living in town. I don't like traffics. I don't like the sound of sirens.

I can't prove this from the Bible, but I think there's something sinful about houses being this close together. But when I was a freshman in college, God called me to preach. And God planted my life in the city.

And guess what? I've had a ball. It's been wonderful. You see, have you ever gone to the store and you see those pretty little packages of gardens, flower seeds, you know, and you buy some of those packages? If you take them home and you just pitch them on the kitchen counter and they just stay there, it's not ever going to be anything.

They must be broken open and planted. Some poet, I don't even know who wrote this, come ill, come well, the cloud, the rainbow, the thunder, I fling my soul and body down for God to plow them under. If you don't bury a grain of wheat, it won't ever be anything but one grain of wheat.

And if you don't allow God to bury your life where he wants you, you won't ever be anything but you. And pardon me for saying it, that's not much. Many years ago, I read about a woman in Paris, France.

She owned a thousand dresses. Wouldn't you love to be married to her and wait for her to get ready to go somewhere? A thousand dresses. Old General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, all he owned was that one old gray Salvation Army uniform.

But that old man lived a thousand lives in the slums of England, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Back in the 1950s, Dr. Lewis Evans was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Hollywood, California. He was a great preacher.

One year, he made a trip to Africa, and he was going to the different mission stations of the Presbyterian Church in Africa. Way back in the interior of Africa, he visited this Presbyterian Mission Hospital. It was a

crude, crude thing.

There was a young doctor there, a young medical doctor, and he was about to do surgery on this little African boy, eight or nine years old. He asked the preacher, Dr. Evans, he said, Would you like to go in and observe surgery? Oh, surgery, yes, yes. So Dr. Evans put on the gown and the gloves and the mask and everything, went in, and he watched this young medical missionary surgeon do surgery on this little boy.

When they came out, they were pulling off all their garb, and the preacher, Dr. Evans, asked this medical missionary, he said, If you did that surgery back in the United States, what would you get paid? He said, Oh, I don't know, maybe \$1,000. He said, How much will you get paid here? This medical missionary just grinned. He said, Oh, I'll get a few pennies and the smile of God.

But he didn't finish there. Listen to his whole statement. He said, Oh, I'll get a few pennies and the smile of God.

But then he said, Man, this is living. This is living. I'm asking you this morning if you're willing to be seed wheat for Jesus Christ.

Just plant your life where it goes. And I know, I know there are some of you who will say, Well, Brad, you know, I'm 60, I'm 70, I'm whatever. You know, my time has passed.

I can't rearrange my life. I'm just here. About 13 years ago, an old lady, 83 years of age, she planted her life.

She said, I'm willing to be planted as seed wheat. We Southern Baptists, with our foreign mission board, we have a program called the Journeyman Program. It's a two-year volunteer mission.

You can volunteer and go for two years overseas. 83 years old, she volunteered. She went overseas and spent two years serving on a foreign mission field.

When she came back, she said, It's the greatest time of my life. I'm just going to ask you right now. You're a Christian.

You've been saved. If you're willing to be planted as seed wheat for Jesus Christ, your life, I want you to lift your hand. Be honest about it.

Now, we're going to hurry. Well, I lost my watch yesterday afternoon, so I don't know what time it is. Oh, there it is right there.

Okay, put your hand back up. All right. Now I want you to put feet right behind your lifted hand.

If you lifted your hand, you get up and come all the way around the altar here, right now, right now.

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