

Only Through Death

by Charles E. Cowman

The sermon explores the profound truth that through death and sacrifice, new life and fruitfulness arise in the context of Christian mission.

Scripture: Psalm 126:6, Isaiah 6:8, Matthew 9:37, Mark 8:34, John 12:24, 2 Corinthians 9:10, Galatians 6:9

Topics: "Martyrdom", "Sacrificial Living"

Description

Charles E. Cowman reflects on the sacrifices and legacies of early missionaries like David Brainerd and Henry Martyn, who gave their lives for Christ's cause, leaving behind memories and converts. Despite the apparent waste and loss in their deaths, their impact birthed a noble army of modern missionaries spreading the Gospel worldwide, echoing the biblical principle of a grain of wheat dying to produce many more. Cowman encourages a willingness to be sent by God, even to deserts or boundless seas, trusting in His provision and the multiplication of blessings for His children.

Transcript

"Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remains a single grain, but if it dies away in the ground, the grain is freed to spring up in a plant bearing many grains" (John 12:24).

Go to the old burying ground of Northampton, Mass., and look upon the early grave of David Brainerd, beside that of the fair Jerusha Edwards, whom he loved but did not live to wed.

What hopes, what expectations for Christ's cause went down to the grave with the wasted form of that young missionary of whose work nothing now remained but the dear memory, and a few score of swarthy Indian converts! But that majestic old Puritan saint, Jonathan Edwards, who had hoped to call him his son, gathered up the memorials of his life in a little book, and the little book took wings and flew beyond the sea, and alighted on the table of a Cambridge student, Henry Martyn.

Poor Martyn! Why should he throw himself away, with all his scholarship, his genius, his opportunities! What had he accomplished when he turned homeward from "India's coral strand," broken in health, and dragged himself northward as far as that dreary khan at Tocat by the Black Sea, where he crouched under the piled-up saddles, to cool his burning fever against the earth, and there died alone?

To what purpose was this waste? Out of that early grave of Brainerd, and the lonely grave of Martyn far away by the splashing of the Euxine Sea, has sprung the noble army of modern missionaries. --Leonard

Woolsey Bacon

"Is there some desert, or some boundless sea,
Where Thou, great God of angels, wilt send me?
Some oak for me to rend, Some sod for me to break,
Some handful of Thy corn to take
And scatter far afield,
Till it in turn shall yield
Its hundredfold
Of grains of gold
To feed the happy children of my God?
"Show me the desert, Father, or the sea;
Is it Thine enterprise? Great God, send me!
And though this body lies where ocean rolls,
Father, count me among all faithful souls."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/charles-e-cowman/only-through-death/>

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