

Seed in the Ground: Instructions for Reflection Time

Remember how it felt during the month of March, when the ground was still bare and appeared lifeless? It seemed like spring would never arrive. Yet buried within the cold earth were seeds, waiting quietly for the time when their hulls would split open and sprout new life. The “death” of each seed released the tiny plant embryo within so that it could push through the earth, unfurl its leaves, and begin to produce blooms and fruit—and even more seeds. Now, in April, the unbelievable has happened: spring has come!

Predicting His own death, Jesus told His disciples in John 12, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.” Fittingly enough, John 19 tells us that Jesus was buried in a garden: “At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid . . . since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.”

God’s glory is revealed in death giving way to life, in His sacrifice of Himself for our sakes. We are called to live our lives according to this mysterious pattern as well: to sacrifice ourselves for His sake, to become buried seeds so that we can sprout life.

Think of parts of your life that may feel dead or at least dormant—places where you’ve been waiting for God to bring new life and maybe even doubting that it can happen (a difficult relationship, marital strain, joblessness, infertility, financial trouble, etc.). Or think of places in your life where He seems to be calling you to die to yourself, to make a sacrifice of your time, comfort, desires, plans, or identity. Ask Him to bring a harvest from those seemingly silent, dark places—perhaps even a harvest that is different and more uniquely bountiful than what you could imagine.

Plant a seed today: at the table in this room, take a seedling container and scoop a spoonful of dirt into it. Sprinkle 2-3 cucumber seeds on top of the dirt. Then gently cover the seeds with another spoonful of soil. Breathe in the smell of the soil, reflecting on the death and burial of Jesus so that you could experience salvation. Praise Him for bringing you life!

If you are feeling “kinesthetic,” consider praying with physical movement to celebrate the life that springs from Jesus’ death. Start by crouching down on the ground and curl up like a seed that has been buried in the dirt. Move your arms slowly up like shoots sprouting from a seed. Stretch up like a plant that is reaching for sunlight. Let your movement reflect your joy and gratitude in the salvation Jesus brings you by dying for your sins and rising from the dead!

NOTE: Please take your seedling container home with you! If you spritz it with water daily and leave it near a warm, sunny window, you should see germination within 3-7 days.