

RELINQUISHING CONTROL

“I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” (John 12:24)

As we attempt to understand these words of Jesus let us return to things as they were at the very beginning. In the beginning God placed man in the Garden of Eden to dress and to keep it. He further granted him the right to rule over fish, birds, and animals. Note: **“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” (Gen 1:26)**

It must have been exhilarating for man to be in control. He had been created in the very image of God and he was destined to rule. His preeminence in creation was again affirmed by God in Gen. 9:2 **“The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands.”**

Can you not in your mind’s eye see the satisfaction of man when he killed a deer, caught a fish, or trained an ox to pull a plow? These successes confirmed the view that man was in control where God had placed him. He was doing what the Sovereign of the Universe had destined him to do.

There was, however, a different principle involved in the planting of a seed. Yes! Man was to make his living by tilling the soil and planting seeds. Man could control that seed, but as long as he did so it produced nothing. The secret of the seed was only released when man relinquished control. For the power of the seed to become reality man had to put it in the ground and take his hands off of it. For the tree to grow or the flower to bloom man had to trust that seed to the care of God. The life within the seed represents a new dimension of spiritual energy and power. Jesus illustrated this very principle by His own death.

Just as the seed must fall into the ground and die to produce fruit, so also man must also die to himself and relinquish the control of his life to God. This is not a peripheral issue but is the very heart and core of Christianity. To follow Christ we must deny ourselves and take up a cross. Note carefully what Jesus said: **“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.” (Matt 16:24-25)** Unfortunately, self does not die easily. This is why Paul wrote to the Corinthians “I die every day” (1 Cor. 15:31).

Relinquishing control of our lives to God does not destroy our effectiveness, it enhances it. Just like a seed that dies produces much fruit, so also much fruit is produced by the believer who dies and is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). Paul put it beautifully: **“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal 2:20)**

Without a doubt the largest living thing on earth is a redwood tree. Here are some facts about the redwood tree known as the “Sequoia sempervirens”. Height: to 367.8 ft. - Age: to 2,000 years - Weight: to 1.6 million lbs. - Bark: to 12 in. thick - Branches: to 5 ft. diameter - Bases: to 22 ft. diameter - Reproduce: by seed or sprout - Seed size: like tomato seeds - Cone size: like a large olive - Grow on northern California coast.

Did you note that the size of the seed for a redwood tree is the same size as a tomato seed? What a beautiful illustration to impress upon us the power of a planted seed. Our lives can be like that! We can remain tiny and insignificant “on our own” or we can die and relinquish control of our lives to Christ. In Christ there is no limit to our growth and potential. Note!

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” (Eph 3:20-21)