

In today's Gospel, Jesus prepares his followers for his impending Passion and reminds them of the type of discipleship they are called to: one of service and sacrifice.

We meet Jesus and his disciples in Jerusalem days before the Passover. Jesus has raised Lazarus from the dead and has been welcomed into the city with palm branches and praise—what we celebrate as Palm Sunday. "Whoever serves me must follow me," Jesus says solemnly. What does it mean to follow Jesus? In this context, a lot. He is about to fulfill his mission on earth through his Passion, death, and resurrection. He knows what lies before him: torture, mockery, exhaustion, and death itself. If we are to follow Christ, he is asking us to do so in a way that involves carrying our crosses. The path to resurrection is filled with opportunities to grow in love and service of one another. Jesus reminds us, "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit."

This Lenten season, as we journey towards the celebration of Easter and Christ's resurrection, let us ponder what it means to follow Jesus and what role the cross plays in our discipleship. Are there certain things in our life that need to die in order to produce much fruit? Is Jesus asking us to give something up or work on something more deeply in order to better follow him?

Focus on: *Simplicity*

Simplicity is fundamental to deepening our lives of service. A commitment to detachment, whether physical or spiritual, frees us in order to better hear the promptings of God and be better disposed to the needs of others. Jesus himself lived a life of complete detachment to the will of the Father and one committed to simplicity. How can you practice a spirit of detachment and commit to a life of simplicity this Lenten season?

Service Suggestion

Are there things in your life that God is calling you to give up or be detached to? Go through your material goods this Lenten season and see if there's anything that can benefit others, be donated, or recycled. Take this spirit of detachment deeper by decluttering your mental and spiritual lives. Are you over-committed or always on the go? Try to slow down this season and focus on bringing the notion of simplicity into your prayer life by doing a daily spiritual practice and doing it well.

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John 12:20-33

"Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be."

~ prayer ~

Lord Jesus,

You said that a grain of wheat must die in order to produce much fruit.

Help us as we prepare to celebrate your Passion, death, and resurrection to die to ourselves in order to live more fully for you and for others.

Help us to practice a spirit of detachment and simplicity as we seek to serve and follow you more closely.

May we carry our crosses each day joyfully with your grace so that we too may experience the beauty of resurrection.

Amen.