

# Dying to Self Pt. 1



Dear

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." —John 12:24

Jesus had a very unique way of teaching spiritual truths in very practical settings. Many of the Jews were farmers and knew the cycle of plant life and animal life, and many examples and lessons were paralleled to the usual round of daily duties.

Jesus was saying in this text if a grain of wheat refuses to fall to the ground – obviously from its parent head, will eventually die alone. Whether that be rotting to death, or that it be ground up to be made bread, or perhaps fall on to unfertile soil.

But if that seed does die to itself in fertile soil, then through the process of natural reproduction, it will produce much fruit – an abundant harvest! So for it to produce, much fruit, what type of ground has it fallen on to?

Yes, rich, fertile soil that makes the right environment for the grain to sprout, feed and support that new growth into a new full head of grain.

So the verse has a two pronged meaning. "By the casting of the grain into the soil, Christ represents the sacrifice of Himself for our redemption. 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die,' He says, 'it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.'" —Christ's Object Lessons, p.86,87

So the spiritual lesson here, is that the death of Christ will result in fruit for the kingdom of God. Here is the absolute evidence of this fact. "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." —Revelation 5:12

Look what Christ gained from giving Himself to death. While this is the Lamb of God who sacrificed Himself for humanity, in accordance with the law of the vegetable kingdom, life will be the result of His death. With Christ, He gained power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing. All this is on offer to us, handed down from Him, who gave Himself to die, that we might not.

For us, all who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need.

*"All who would bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ must first fall into the ground and die. The life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need."*

*—Christ's Object Lessons, p.86*





*"The law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation. The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is multiplied. The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it away."*

—Christ's Object Lessons,  
p.86

Self-love, self-interest, self-preservation must perish. But while it may sound absurd, the law of self-sacrifice in this sense, is actually the law of self-preservation.

The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is not added to, but multiplied. The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it away, only in its season to return to him many times over. So in human life, to give is to live. The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. Those who for Christ's sake sacrifice their life in this world, will keep it unto life eternal.

The meaning of John 12:24 is first an example of Jesus dying – planted in this earth to produce a harvest of souls and secondly, for us to die, which is being planted in this earth to produce a harvest of souls for Christ. Now this may not be instant – in fact it will not be instant.

In my own Christian experience, there was time between from initially finding this message in 1983 – working in ministry for the last 40 odd years, even up to this day, to develop my Christian depth of experience. I would speak the same for our family, and for every one reading this article. Not one of us would have had the maturity at the beginning to see what we are now.

Nature is the lesson book that Jesus often drew from. "Christ presented His future, illustrating it by the things of nature that the disciples might understand.

"The true result of His mission was to be reached by His death. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you,' He said, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' When the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it springs up, and bears fruit. So the death of Christ would result in fruit for the kingdom of God. In accordance with the law of the vegetable kingdom, life was to be the result of His death. Those who till the soil have the illustration ever before them. Year by year man preserves his supply of grain by apparently throwing away the choicest part. For a time it must be hidden under the furrow, to be watched over by the Lord. Then appears the blade, then the ear, and then the corn in the ear. But this development cannot take place unless the grain is buried out of sight, hidden, and to all appearance, lost. The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is multiplied. So the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary will bear fruit unto eternal life." —Desire of Ages, p.623

## Submission

Paul wrote to the Philippians in regards to submitting their own selves for service to others. In other words, dying to our own human and temporal interests and humbling ourselves to firstly give to Christ and then to others, dying to self to produce a harvest – firstly bearing fruit in your own soul, then bearing fruit for others.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." —Philippians 2:5-9

So what is the message in these verses?

It is really a message that as Christ was, so may we be. We can have the mind of Christ; We should have the same opinion of ourselves, as Christ did – of no reputation; We should take on the role of a servant among men as Christ did. "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." —Matthew 20:27,28

We should humble ourselves and live the life of Christ – even though it may cost us. At the end of it all, as Christ was highly exalted, with a name above all others, so we will be.





So the message is, all that Christ was, we can be.

"Christ could have done nothing during His earthly ministry in saving fallen man if the divine had not been blended with the human. The limited capacity of man cannot define this wonderful mystery—the blending of the two natures, the divine and the human. It can never be explained. Man must wonder and be silent. And yet man is privileged to be a partaker of the divine nature, and in this way he can to some degree enter into the mystery." —Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 904

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature..." —II Peter 1:4

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." If you strive in all humility to understand what is the mind of Christ, you will not be left in darkness. Jesus says, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" —Youth Instructor, Oct. 13, 1893

Contemporary culture urges us all to demand and assert the rights of individuals. This has its place, to protect the rights of individuals from being exploited, but what is it that shapes culture? If it is built on secular foundations, it will function on political power, not divine power.

## Church and State

Is church and state combined a good thing or bad? Well, it's not all bad! It is when church and state combine to bring about a persecuting power that it is bad. But when a nation builds its government on Biblical principles, it is a mighty power for good to its inhabitants.

We see in Protestant nations that built their constitutions on the Bible and resisted Catholicism, that they prospered and became desirable nations—such as Britain, which resulted in Canada, USA, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand and all have prospered, so much that many from other nations want to move to these countries.

But as with Jesus, the will of God may be for us to give up our rights freely in order to serve the Father in ways that will make an eternal impact of God's kingdom. This process of giving them up may be difficult and uncomfortable, reaching the conditions of a crucible. This will be more pronounced particularly in a country that chooses to change from its Protestant values to atheistic, socialist, communist values – and values are changing right before our eyes in these so-called Protestant countries – and the speed is increasing at an alarming rate.

So a little earlier in Philippians chapter 2, we read "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." —Philippians 2:2-5

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." —Romans 12:1,2

If we allow the mind of Christ to be in us, it will transform our old minds into the new mind of Christ. And as we allow that transformation to take place – and that it be a genuine, permanent change of heart, we will willingly - and want to present our bodies a living sacrifice to our God. It is not unreasonable - it is our reasonable service.

I mean consider what He has given for us, what He has accomplished for us; surely it is our reasonable service to give everything back to Him to be used for a reasonable, holy and acceptable service.

*"I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." - John 6:38*  
*Love for God, zeal for His glory, and love for fallen humanity, brought Jesus to earth to suffer and to die. This was the controlling power of His life. This principle He bids us adopt."*

—Desire of Ages, p330





*“Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing.”*

—*Desire of Ages*, p. 330



We often hear people asking, “What does God want me to do?” Well, do they have a connection with heaven each morning! One has to engage with God every day, then get up off their knees and engage in their work, to do their best at their skills – but still be engaged in prayer with heaven. That’s what it means to pray without ceasing. He will lead the honest soul who wants to do right – and then does it! Leave it up to Him what you are to do. If you are faithful in your daily duties, He will guide your future.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” —Galatians 5:22,23

This is the consequences of making wise choices as to who we will give our allegiance to. “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” —Galatians 5:24,25

So a fair question for us today is to ask the same as many others ask: “What is God’s will for me – for you? What should we expect if we do give ourselves for holy exploits?”

The Great Controversy quotes Romans 12:1 and then adds; “In the time of ancient Israel every offering brought as a sacrifice to God was carefully examined.

“If any defect was discovered in the animal presented, it was refused; for God had commanded that the offering be ‘without blemish.’ So Christians are bidden to present their bodies, ‘a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.’ In order to do this, all their powers must be preserved in the best possible condition. Every practice that weakens physical or mental strength unfits man for the service of his Creator.

“And will God be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer? Said Christ: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.’ Those who do love God with all the heart will desire to give Him the best service of their life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will.” —Great Controversy, p.473

## Our Willingness

Are we willing to listen?

Are we willing to want to hear?

Are we willing to want to adhere to the message?

Are we willing to want to obey the divine directions?

“That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.” —1 Samuel 3:4-10

We read here Samuel was a ready listener – willing to serve.

What about another who was ready to listen and serve?

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.” —Isaiah 6:1,8

As both of these men were ready and willing to respond to the call, God used them in a mighty way. We still have their writings for our admonition today..



What about another who was not open to listen, but became ready to listen and serve?

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." —Acts 9:1-6

Samuel, Isaiah were ready to immediately give themselves, as prophets and servants of the people of Israel. Paul was also a very fervent Pharisee in his day, but ignorant of God's plan for humanity. But on one of his errands for the church, he heard the voice of the Lord and there had a spectacular conversion experience. Did all three of these men obey the voice and the call? Yes, they did in all cases.

But there is another case of listening and obeying the voice also calling, but does get a bit closer to home for us and every one us have to make a decision to answer, or to ignore.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." —Revelation 3:20,22

Have there been times when you have been convicted through the voice and promptings of the Holy Spirit to visit someone, pass a book on to someone, even drop a book at what we may think is some random place?

If we do die to our own preferences, and give of ourselves for the benefit of others, there does come a feeling of accomplishment for the Lord. We feel complete and even rewarded, even if there are not visible returns. But often if we don't act on that prompting, it can bother our minds for some time — yes, even a sense of guilt.

A personal experience I had myself many years ago, was when travelling in the North Island of New Zealand. We were driving on a rural road and came up behind a herd of cattle on the road, being driven along the road from one paddock to another. We worked our way through all those cattle, but something in me was pestering that I needed to go back and give a book to the drover on the horse bringing up the rear.

I stifled the voice in my head and continued right through those cows - and it was a big herd. When I achieved my goal to press on, it got the better of me. So I turned around, went back through all the cows again, went past the drover on the horse, turned around and came up behind him again, leaned out the window and told him I needed to give him this book - the National Sunday Law.

He accepted it. I told him to enjoy and left him to it, then made my way back through all those cows again! But I have to say, I felt better the second time I achieved breaking out the front of the herd than I did the first time.

Whether he ever read it or not, I don't know. Perhaps heaven will reveal that, but I felt I had done my duty. That would most probably go for many of us when we get a prompting to minister out in whatever way we are called to do.

Every one of us have callings and prompting for ministry. Not all are called to do the same work for God, but whatever the calling, let the grain sprout in you, to bring new life to someone else. Yes, die to self and there will be much fruit from our labours.

To be continued...

*Doug Hestey*

*"You are never alone. If you will listen to the voice that now speaks to you, if you will respond without delay to the knocking at the door of your heart, 'Come in, Lord Jesus, that I may sup with Thee, and Thee with me,' the heavenly Guest will enter."*

—Adventist Home, p.350





## Health

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## In the Office

Our mission to see the gospel spread like the Leaves of Autumn is continually before us and this is achieved using many methods.

It is encouraging to see the material continuing to go out. Over the last 90 days we have supplied 13,000 products through 964 orders. Over 400 of those orders were placed via our website and over 225 were visitors in store. Over 600 items were sent out in response to requests for our free offers advertised through social media during March, April and May. We published 14 videos on Youtube and made 33 social media posts during this time. We also have had 17 different signs on our new digital sign since starting in late April. What can you do to scatter truth?

## Projects

**Blue Bible Project:** These Bibles are continuing to go out in bulk. A third printing is currently being planned although this will not include supplies for New Zealand. We have approximately 7500 still in stock here. To keep these Bibles very economical we are aiming to raise \$50,000 to subsidise them when purchased in bulk. We have now raised over half of this amount and thank those who have given to make this project viable. Be in touch if you would like to get Bibles for sharing or can help fund them for others to get out.



**Funding Progress** Raised so far: \$31,088.37

*\$19,910 to raise*

**Treasures of Truth Production:** We are currently finishing a project of making a video version of Christ's Object Lessons. The Treasures of Truth series has an introduction to each parable and the reading of the chapter. This series has been released to our YouTube Channel each week. This series will also be created for broadcast and available for Firstlight TV. You can subscribe to our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/autumnleavesnz](http://www.youtube.com/autumnleavesnz)



**Building Project:** Wow - look at that little red portion left on the funding bar below. Since we last reported in April we have raised over half of the remaining needed. Almost \$25,000 was added to the fund. A large portion of this was from an estate that had given a portion to the work of Autumn Leaves and we decided to use it to reduce this fund. A little was from a return on a donated investment and the rest were generous donations. Our aim is to raise the remaining \$16,387.24 and be able to close this fund by the end of the year. Thank you to all who have contributed to this amazing asset that allows the work to progress efficiently.



**Funding Progress**

*\$16.4k to raise* Raised so far \$1,573,182.76



## Events



An exceptional opportunity has arisen to support a missionary endeavour to Fiji. Over the past few years, Christian Berdahl has focused on the underprivileged in the Fijian Islands and he has organised and run Medical Missionary projects, where doctors, surgeons, dentists, nurses, nutritionists dedicate and donate a week of their time to attend to the immediate needs of as many people as they can with the time available. This is also coupled with evangelistic programs. Many of the team will be Americans, but there is at least one dentist and nurse from New Zealand going to support the project.

Doug & Angela are going, at their own expense, to support this project and also connect with previous contacts from past projects we have done in Fiji. This will include meetings on Sabbath August 15 at Mokani Church, north of Suva. Then from Monday August 17 to Friday August 21 working with the American team with health information and care of the mind and body, prayer for any that need it. Sabbath, August 22, we will all join together for a high Sabbath, before all heading back to our various homelands.

Along with this we want to use this opportunity to have printed material to give to people as we talk and pray for them.

Plans are to print the Newstart booklet in both English and Fijian. Also another booklet on health from the Bible - basically a Bible Study on health, in both English and Fijian. The Fijian translation of these booklets is currently under way.

We are also aiming to purchase Bibles to give to those who will benefit from one during the mission week. Price for Fijian Bibles from the Bible Society in Fiji is \$36.00NZD for a whole Bible and there are 20 to a case. If we can get a good number of cases, we will get a discount of 10% bulk rate. Again, we will purchase as many as funds allow for.

We are aiming to raise funds for the printing of these booklets and sourcing Bibles. We will print and purchase as many as we are able to with the raises funds. If you would like to contribute to the fund you can deposit into our account (see back page) or use the donate link on our website. Please also keep this event in our prayers.

**North Island trip:** Due to the Fiji Missionary project in August, we will be moving our North Island trip to a bit later in the year, most probably November, as the year has now filled up. More information to follow.

**Australian Spring Camps:** Camps are again for Neville, NSW, 8-11 October. Sabbath meetings, Cooranbong, NSW, 17 October. Tahlee, NSW, 22-25 October. Lastly Mt Tamborine, Queensland, 28 October - 3 November.

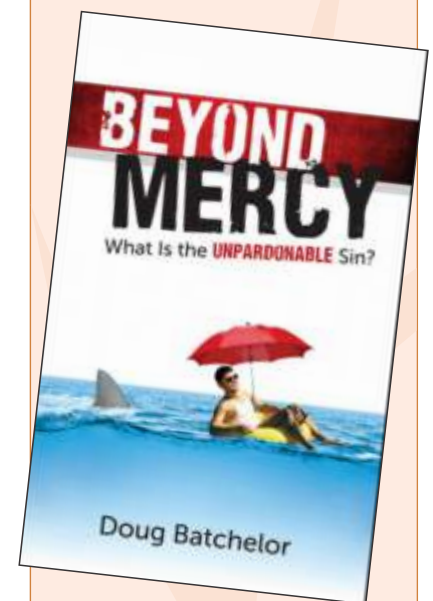
**North Island Summer Camp:** Plans are being laid now to secure speakers for our next camp season in New Zealand, 2027. Dates pending for Rotorua, North Island are Tuesday, January 19 - Sunday January 24, with the South Island convention on Thursday January 28 - Sunday January 31.



# Beyond Mercy

What is the Unpardonable Sin?

DOUG BATCHELOR



One of the most confusing and debated teachings of the Bible is the unpardonable sin.

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**Autumn Leaves NZ Ltd**  
PO Box 654  
Rangiora 7440  
New Zealand

28 Southbrook Road, Rangiora 7440

[office@autumnleaves.co.nz](mailto:office@autumnleaves.co.nz)

**Phone** 03 313 7762  
(from overseas) +64 3 313 7762

[www.autumnleaves.co.nz](http://www.autumnleaves.co.nz)

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