

After His Own Kind'

One of the great principles of life on earth is that animals and plants produce 'after their own kind'. In other words, an apple seed will produce an apple tree, a mango seed will produce a mango tree and when a farmer plants wheat, wheat grows in his field. It would be a real problem if wheat was planted and potatoes grew instead.

Even human beings produce other human beings through the reproduction process. This is a principle which God has set in His creation, setting a pattern, an order and a certainty about things on which human beings can depend. There is indeed a whole food chain within our wonderful world on which all creatures rely. For example, our birds require seeds to eat and the right trees to produce the seeds which they can eat. Species become extinct when the plant which provides for their specific need no longer exists. .

It is in many ways a very wonderful thing that seeds do produce after their own kind, and Jesus when He was on the earth made a very wise comment about seeds. "Unless a seed of wheat falls into the ground and dies it does not produce fruit". It is very clear that once a seed produces its 'fruit' it no longer exists, it gives up its own life to produce the next plant. Jesus uses the example of wheat, which is where we get most of our bread from, as one single seed, once it produces its stem, will produce an 'ear' of wheat of many seeds. It is all about multiplication and yet the original seed will no longer exist, it will have 'died'. The seed, in one sense, sacrifices itself, it gives its life for the creation of another life and that life is the same life as was in the original seed. It maintains the species, 'it produces after its own kind'.

I can remember experiments in school with broad bean seeds and what conditions they needed to grow, but when the conditions were right, with the air and water, the seed germinated and up came the plant, down went the roots, but the bean seed just shrivelled away to nothing.

Jesus talked about 'a seed of wheat dying' in the context of His own death. The truth is that when human beings die and 'go into the ground' they do not produce any fruit, unlike the plant seeds which produce wheat or trees and so on. Animals, including human ones of course, have to reproduce while they are alive. It is also true that seeds do not produce any fruit if they don't 'die'. If they remain in the packet, in which they are bought from the garden centre, they just lie dormant until such time as they 'fall into the ground' and germinate and produce 'fruit'.

So we really need to see what Jesus was saying. He is speaking of His own death. Later in the chapter Jesus talks about being 'lifted up'; that is another way of saying that He would be crucified, and Jesus equates His death with that of a seed of wheat falling into the ground. Jesus is speaking of the sacrifice that He was about to make for the whole world through His death on a cross.

So Jesus is 'the seed' who is about to make the ultimate sacrifice. He says "If the seed dies it produces much fruit"; so here is our Lord Jesus taking on a fruit bearing role. God of course only had one Son, our Lord Jesus, so here is God the Father, in a way, sowing the only seed He had to produce the fruit His love for human beings required. So what sort of fruit was Jesus thinking of and what sort of fruit did He produce in His death? Remember each seed produces after its own kind.

There are many things about the Lord Jesus which He reproduces, 'makes after His own kind', but we will consider just 2 of them. Firstly Jesus was a 'life-giving spirit'. The Bible tells us that "In Him was life". When the Bible talks about life in this sense it means eternal life, spiritual life. That is rather than natural life. So Jesus had 'life', it made Him 'spiritually alive' in all that He did. Because of the 'spiritual death' in all human beings, because of sin, God needed to make a new generation of

humans who were spiritually alive. So Jesus was the first of this new generation; being conceived by the Holy Spirit, the spirit in Him gave 'life' to His life. He is described as a 'life-giving spirit'; it was not just natural life but eternal life which operated in our Lord Jesus. It is that life in the spirit which He offered to His Father when He died. Because of this life Jesus was able to live a life unto His Father without sin and lay His own life down when He died and, as we shall see, to take His life up again. So Jesus in His death reproduces 'after His own kind' and produces others with 'life', eternal life, in them. We are told that 'We reap what we sow and those who sow in the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life'. That is exactly what our Lord Jesus did as the principle of sacrifice worked out in His life and, of course, His death.

Secondly, Jesus was the 'Son of God' and as the same principle of 'producing after His own kind' applies; He produces other 'sons of God'. These 'sons of God' are therefore Jesus' spiritual brothers and have, as we have seen, the same eternal life in them as Jesus had. John the apostle in his letter says 'He that has the Son has life'. So out of His death, as the Son of God, Jesus produces 'sons of God' who have eternal life.

The book of Hebrews tells us, *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the **suffering of death**, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, **in bringing many sons unto glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings"*. We have described in this passage Jesus' death for every man, and Him bringing 'many sons to glory'. He brings them to the same glory that He has. He talks of giving His people 'His glory'; it is the glory of being sons of God.

To sum up; Jesus in His death lays down His life, as a seed falling into the ground and dying, to produce 'after His own kind' sons of God with eternal life, who live unto God and will live with Him for ever.

However the truth is even better as we will see as we continue. We read this in Romans chapter 8, *"Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of **his Son**, that He might be the **firstborn among many brethren**"*. We again find those conformed to/shaped like, in a sense made, in the image of His Son. We have seen how Jesus did that through His death by producing 'after His own kind', and those who are brought forth are sons of God, they are Jesus' brethren. We read this in the book of Hebrews, *"For which cause **He** is not ashamed to call them **brethren**."*

But surely it is no good Jesus having brothers if He is not alive to know them? Absolutely right; but the passage we read in Roman 8 says Jesus is the '**firstborn among many brethren**'. Here we find resurrection; God raised Jesus from the dead, so although to produce 'seed after His own kind' involved Jesus death, His resurrection makes Him the firstborn among many brothers, those whom He has produced by His death. We read in Hebrews chapter 1, *"You are my Son, this day have I begotten you"*, speaking of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; the Son, the firstborn from the dead, who was dead and is alive again. Jesus words in the book of the Revelation are, *"I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore"*.

We then read in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the **first fruits** of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the **first fruits**; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming"*

We see that Jesus is the first fruit, the correct translation from the Greek, from His own death. Such is the power of the life in Jesus that even though He died for us and like our seed 'shrivelled away to nothing', yet God raised Him from the dead and He now lives by the power of God. It was not possible that death should hold Jesus as there was no sin in Him. *"The strength of death is sin";* Jesus had no sin and was raised from the dead and He now lives for ever. Romans chapter 6 says this, *"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God."* Jesus is the first fruit, the first man alive from the dead and He dies no more, death has no more authority over Him. Again Jesus produces 'after His own kind', so He produces sons of God over whom death has no more power or authority, and who live unto God. These sons have eternal life; the same life which was in Jesus is in them, as Jesus produces 'after His own kind'.

We further read in Romans chapter 6, *"Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord"*. This is the freedom of the sons of God 'created in Christ Jesus unto good works', those who are God's workmanship brought forth by the death of the Son of God, as Jesus 'produces after His own kind'. John in his gospel tells us, *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (authority) to become the **sons of God**, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, **but of God**."*

Jesus is the first fruit and the first among many brothers, and all those who are His at His coming again will also be raised up with Him. Because of the power of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, God also says to Him, *"Your throne O God is for ever"*. God the Father sets Jesus on His throne to reign for ever and ever. He is the firstborn from the dead 'that in all things He might have the pre-eminence'; to be the head, the chief in all things. *"The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner"*.

Jesus was crucified for us and we are told that 'if we have been planted in the likeness of His death we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection'. So the Christian is already 'raised up together with Him to walk in newness of life', and yet the final glory is *'afterward they that are Christ's at His coming'*. So we have fellowship with Jesus now as His brothers and sisters, as those that, like Him, are alive from the dead. Jesus said, *"He that believes in me has passed from death unto life"*. We will be raised up bodily to be with Him in the day of His return.

To look again and confirm the power of Jesus' death and resurrection, we read in Hebrews chapter 13, *"Now the God of peace, **who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant"***. The blood of Jesus was shed for us in His death and this blood is the basis of the everlasting covenant which He makes with all those who believe on Him. It gives eternal life to all, and we see it is the reason for Jesus' **own** resurrection. He was raised through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

So we have a first fruit from the dead, even our own Lord Jesus. He laid His life down for us as a seed falling into the ground and dying. He produces much fruit, many 'sons of God' with eternal life; they are just like Jesus in nature, they have His own life. Jesus' death was such that it enabled God to raise Him from the dead as the Son of God, the firstborn from among the dead, with all power and authority and therefore become the 'first fruit' from the dead. Jesus is the first born among many, very many, brothers and sisters, and when He comes all who are His will be raised up bodily as 'much fruit' unto God to live in eternal life unto God for ever.

'To as many as received Him, to them He gives the right to be called the sons of God'.

Truly Jesus said, *“Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father”*. Here is the wisdom of the cross of our Lord Jesus, a seed falling into the ground and dying, not remaining alone but bringing forth much fruit, that Jesus might be the first born from the dead among many brothers and sisters, His church for whom He gave Himself. Amen.