

Get Planted: In a Community

John 12:20-26

If you have your Bibles this morning, open to John chapter 12. We're going to look at verses 20 and 26 this morning. We're going to take a small break from our study of Romans, where we've been studying verse by verse, and over the next 4 weeks we're going to talk about getting planted. Then starting Mother's Day through Father's Day, we're going to speak again on the family and we're going to bring God's Word into some sensitive areas regarding the life of the family. So if you don't mind, we're going to take a small break from our study of Romans and look at these 2 very, very important subjects in the life of our church. I believe with all of my heart, this week my clay soil, if it stays as dry and gets as warm as they say it's going to this week, is finally going to dry out. And I'm going to be able to get the tractor and the tiller into my garden and get the soil just right. This morning as I passed my garden coming to church, I begin to think about fresh corn on the cob, fresh green bean... wow! I love corn on the cob! But here's what I realize, there will be no corn on the cob in the freezer this fall unless I get the corn in the ground. There will be no beans on the table this summer, fresh beans, unless I get the beans in the ground first. So this week, one of my priorities is going to be planting. This morning as we turn to John chapter 12, Jesus used an illustration right out of our gardens, right off of our farms, to illustrate not only a physical principle, but to illustrate a great spiritual truth. Now remember, according to John, it's Passion Week. Jesus has already come into Jerusalem on the back of that donkey and He knows in a few days, He's going to hang on a cross. With that in mind, he says these words, (listen to what John 12 says) "now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks (this

is the feast of Passover). So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Phillip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Phillip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him." It's Passover. At the Passover, there were some God fearing Gentiles who come to celebrate this Jewish feast. We don't know exactly when these Gentiles heard the news of Jesus and possibly of Him being the Messiah, but they wanted to check Him out for themselves. So they found one of His disciples by the name of Phillip. They came to Phillip and said to Phillip and said, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus". Phillip immediately goes and finds Andrew and tells Andrew what's going on; Gentiles now want to see the Jewish Messiah. Andrew, every time he's recorded in Scripture, is always bringing somebody to Jesus. Would that not be neat? Wouldn't it be neat if on our epitaph, on our funeral marker, we were known as a person who was always bringing people to Jesus? Now Phillip didn't know what to do with these Gentiles, so he goes to Andrew, but Andrew knew what to do with these Gentiles, and that's bring them to Jesus. So he comes to Jesus with these Gentiles and Jesus makes a statement. Now remember what I've already said, (making sure you're listening) it's Passion Week. In a few days, Jesus is going to be hanging on a cross; He knows that. He's been preparing His whole life for this hour, as a matter of fact in John's gospel, several times people try to push the hand of Jesus and Jesus will say, "My hour has not yet come". Now look what He says, "Andrew, Phillip, the hour has come". Now here's what I expect Him to say, I expect Him to say this, "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be crucified", amen? That's not what He says. Do you hear what He said? He said "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified". Do you see what Jesus did? He looked past the process of death to His resurrection and ascension to the Father's right

hand side, and that's exactly what a farmer does. I promise you there is no farmer; there is no gardener here who just gardens for the sake of gardening. You take the time in the spring to work the soil, you buy your seed, you fertilize your garden, you hoe all summer, and you spray your fruits and your vegetables, why? It's because you look forward to harvest time. You look forward to fresh produce from your own garden, and that's what Jesus did. Jesus looked past His hour of His death because He knew there would be a resurrection and what He's teaching us is this; everything He's going to go through in laying down His life is going to be worth it, why? It's because there is going to be a bountiful harvest, not only among Jews but among Gentiles as well, and all nations will be drawn to Him when He lifts Himself up on that cross...wow. Are you getting it? You see here's the principle, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it falls into the ground and dies, guess what? It bears much fruit.

Now I've got to do a time out here and bring something to your attention. Notice that before Jesus taught this truth, He said "truly, truly" (ESV) and if you still read the KJV, (and I like the KJV) it says "verily, verily". What Jesus really said in the Greek language is this, "ah-men, ah-men". Now there was a time in the Baptist church when Baptist knew what the word amen meant, amen? Sometimes I get aggravated at some of you Baptists, your forefathers taught you to say amen, every once in a while. I mean when the preacher was really preaching something good and you believed what he was saying, you would say amen! That let everybody know, hey if you've been dozing off, you just missed something! And so that when somebody hollered out amen, the guy who woke up said, "what did I just miss", and you got to tell him. Now see in the Bible, when Jesus said "amen, amen"; amen comes from the Hebrew word *aman*, which means let it be so, let it be true. That's why the ESV translates this word, "truly, truly". That doesn't mean that what Jesus has been saying wasn't true, and now He's going to say something true, but this was an expression to get our attention. In the 8 o'clock service, we have a higher percentage of

people who've lived longer than other people, and some of us who are older remember before satellite TV and cable TV. Do you remember when you only had 3 channels in Western KY; 3, 6 and 12? But if you wanted to get all 3 of those channels good, you had to send your wife on top of the house and she had to turn the antenna, do you remember that? We had an antenna that picked up better if I would stand on the roof of our trailer and hold onto the wire and the antenna. I don't know why it worked that way. I can't tell you how many times we changed the channel, or not changed the channel because we knew somebody was going to have to go outside and they were going to have to turn the pole! Now if you're an old-timer and you understand that illustration, here's what Jesus was saying; fix your antenna on me now! I don't want this to be fuzzy! Now if you don't remember turning the antenna by your hand, then here's what He was saying to you; set your DVR! Push that save button on the computer, because what I'm fixing to say to you, you don't want to miss it or ever forget it!

Unless a grain of wheat gets planted in the ground and it literally dies, so to speak, it'll always remain as one kernel of grain. But if it is willing to die, if it's willing to be planted, if it's willing to come in contact with the soil, and the moisture of the soil, and the temperature of the soil when it converges on that kernel of grain, that outer shell begins to break and soften. And as that outer shell softens and cracks, all of a sudden new life begins to emerge. Life that can never emerge in that plant unless it gets planted; when that new life emerges, it will produce much, much fruit. I don't live on the side of the county where many people live, and our side of the county is the poor side of the county in every respect, but I love being an east-sider. I can't tell you how much I love having a Dexter address, even though people say can anything good come out of Dexter. With the grace of our God, the answer is yes, amen! But here's what I've had several times, I can't tell you how many times I've went out to the field and I've shucked back an ear of corn, knowing that this ear of corn I hold in my hand started out as one kernel. And when that ear begins to

mature, we farmers do something, we look past planting to the harvest and we begin to count 1st, grains around. And even as an east-sider, in a good year, we can get 16-18 kernels around a cob; that's good! But once you've done that, you begin to count them in the length of that ear. Now just for simple mathematics, let's imagine I've got an ear that's got 16 kernels around and 40 long. Do you know how many kernels I've got? It's 640, and I started with 1! Now can I ask you guys a question? If you could take a dollar and make an investment and be guaranteed a 640% return, how many of you'd be in? You see, Jesus knew as these Gentiles were coming to Him, that it was God's plan not just to draw Jews to Him, but to draw Gentiles too. And when He looked down the road at the harvest that was going to happen in the world, He said it's just like a grain of wheat. Before there can be a harvest, guess what's there's got to be? There's got to be a death. And He's telling about His death! But watch this, He then goes on to make application, not only to Him, but to His followers.

You see, you would have never been saved if Jesus hadn't been willing to get planted. You would never be connected to God if Jesus Christ was not willing to pay the price of getting planted. And do you know what He says for those who follow Him? We've got to get planted too. There will never be a spiritual harvest in our life, we will never reproduce and bear fruit for God unless we're willing to get planted. Over the next 4 Sunday's, here at Hardin, we're going to ask you to get planted. This morning we're going to talk about getting planted in a community. Next Sunday we're going to talk about getting planted in a ministry, and then the following Sunday we're going to talk about get planted in a life. And then we're going to conclude this series by talking about, get planted in the word of God...why? It's because just as it was God's will for Christ to die to bring you into the family, it's also God's will for us who follow Christ to die, so that God can produce in us, spiritual fruit. Listen to what Jesus said and this is not the 1st time He said this, He spoke this on many occasions. Do you know how here at Hardin we say, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing"? For those of you in the city, the main thing is to keep the main

thing the main thing, but for us in the country, it's thang. I promise you you'll never forget that phrase if you come to Hardin. And there are just some little things that we've taught so much here at Hardin that you know. You know that as Christians, we're not sinners saved by grace, we saints who sin, amen? There are just some things that we've taught, if you're a true believer, you know that you're not insecure but you're secure in Christ, eternally. Well, if you study the gospels, Jesus spoke this on more than one occasion. He said, "Whoever loves his life will lose it, and whoever hates his life will keep it for eternal life". Now this is one of those statements that Jesus spoke and you had to say, whoa would you say that again? So I'm going to say that again because somebody's saying would you say that again. "Whoever loves his life will lose it, and whoever hates his life will keep it for eternal life". Jesus contrasts loving yourself, or hating yourself. It sounds like on the humanistic level, that if a person hated themselves, then they wouldn't amount to much and they would lose their life, they would never make it in life, but if you really love yourself, then wow, you're going to make it and you're going to reach your fullest potential. Jesus said it's right opposite of that. He said the guy who loves his life in this life only, is going to lose his life forever. But the guy who rejects his life, hates his life, he'll keep it for eternity. Now let me describe these metaphors because they're Jewish metaphors. To love your life meant this, you live for the benefit of you. I look around at some of you guys who didn't come to Christ until late in life and you are the testimony of people who loved your life, and you lived life for you, amen? And you never really got what you were really looking for. That's why while pursuing your life you had to bring other things into your life to keep you numb about the pain you were really feeling. You see, to love your life means you live for the benefit of you. To hate your life means this, it doesn't mean you stand in front of the mirror and pick your hair color apart, and pick your facial expressions apart, and pick your personality apart and say whoa poor, pitiful me, I'm a nothing; that's not what this means. What this means is you look at your life and you say this life isn't about me, I'm going to live my life for the benefit of others. That's what it means to hate your life. It means you deny

yourself right now, and you realize I will not do what I want to do, I will not live my life to maximize me. I will lay my life down, I will be willing to get planted in the ground, and I will let them bury me for the benefit of other people. That's the attitude that every child of God must have to be a child of God; that attitude doesn't cause you to become a child of God, that attitude reveals you are a child of God. What are we talking about today? We're going to talk about this; we're going to talk about you as a child of God getting planted so that you can maximize your yield potential.

You don't have to live on a farm, or have a garden to notice that in the spring time of the year, television people who sell agriculture products bombard farmers and gardeners with their products. Everything in the year 2010 is about maximizing your yield, controlling weeds, getting the most out of your seed, the most out of your spray, the most out of your fertilizer...why? It's so that you can have maximum yield potential. It is so tight on the farm now, that if a farmer does not maximize his yield, his inputs, what he's put in the crop will be higher than what he gets out of the crop. And if he keeps doing that he's not going to stay on the farm very long. I want to share with you what I believe is an important principle in your life as a Christian if you want to maximize your effectiveness for God. Now if you don't, just turn me off, just let this be all about you, and start thinking about what you're going to do this afternoon. But let me challenge you; Jesus Christ did not walk on this earth as a solitary, individual person, have you ever noticed that? When He stepped into those waters and identified Himself as the Jewish Messiah, what's the 1st thing He did? He joined Himself to a community, amen? He chose 12 people and He got connected to those 12 people, and He taught them how to love, and He taught them how to forgive, and He encouraged them, He disciplined them, He rebuked them, He helped them bear their burdens, and they were supposed to help Him bear His. I want to say this to you, God has designed you and I to get planted in a community. You say but Bro Ricky I attend Hardin Baptist Church; that's the problem. If I were to pass a piece of paper this morning that asked this question, do you attend

Hardin, or are you planted at Hardin, what would you say? You see attendance is about you, attendance is about what I get when I go there. And how many of you, honestly, are attending Hardin Baptist Church for what you get? And if we can be like Wal-Mart and put the consumer 1st, (which is you) we'll keep you because you're here for you. I want to burst your bubble; we are not here for you, we are not here for any one of you who is a Christian. We are here for Him, and we are here for them who are not here yet, amen? You see I want you to ask yourself this morning, as a Christian, as a grain of corn, beans, whatever you want to be, a pea, a watermelon, a melon, I don't care; are you still in the little sac, or are you in the soil? Are you in a sac still, all of you just like you've always been, or are you in the soil? You've had God open up a row, you got planted in the dirt, (in a church) you've been planted in a small Adult Bible Fellowship, you have your children planted in a Sunday school class, and somebody came along and they covered you up. You have put down roots, you are connected, and you are drawing nutrients from others as you immerse yourself in the Word of God, as you immerse yourself in a spiritual climate. In a sac, you'll look in the mirror every day and you'll still retain everything you've always had, but when you get in the soil and they put the dirt over you, here's what happens. That outer shell that was you, it begins to soften and it begins to break, because I'm going to tell you what's going to happen; God's going to bring some people into your life who you will not like, I promise you.

I don't want any of you to try to guess who, but there are some people in Hardin that I don't like. I'm not talking about the city, I'm talking about the church, and I'm the pastor. I have to pray about that! I promise you, some of you would never be my best friend because you are daylight and dark different from me and we don't have anything in common! But while I may not like you, I love you. Do you understand that? And do you know what I've discovered in learning to love you while I do not like you? God has taken you, and He's done a wonderful work in my life and all of a sudden, I've discovered I'm not the same guy I was 27 years ago when I came

here, and it's because of you. It's because I got planted in a church. You see if you keep me in a sac where everybody is just like me, everybody believes just like me, wow I'll have fun, but there'll be no sacrifice on my part, and I'll always be the same. And that's what most Christians want, they want to live in a sac rather than be willing to let God put them in a church. But let God put them in a small group Bible study, surround them with people who think differently than they do, believe differently than they do, were raised differently than they were, have a different skin color than they have, or have a different outlook politically, and all of a sudden here's what happens, that outer shell begins to break, and a new life, the life of God, begins to emerge in you...wow! The Church was never called to be a subdivision! Society has subdivided itself! We have the city folk, we have the country folk, we have the people who live on the lake, the people who live on the other side of the tracks, we have the people who live in the projects, and we have the people who live in affluent neighborhoods. That may be ok in physical life, but it was never meant to be that way spiritually. In the church of Jesus Christ, there are no subdivisions! There is unity as the body of Christ because the new life of Christ is within us, but there must be the breaking of this outer man and that gets broken real easily in a community that you join yourself to, and will not let yourself be broken from. Another way of saying this is (if you're not from the farm) are you connected? I've told you this 1000 times, you can never come to a worship service at Hardin Baptist Church and get connected, because you can't get connected to the back of somebody's head. You'll always feel like people have their back turned to you because they do! Some of us do not know the name of the person who sits behind us! If the person in front of us that we've worshipped with for 10 years suddenly quit coming, we wouldn't have a clue how to contact them tomorrow, right? You can sit behind somebody, beside somebody, and in front of somebody, and not be connected to them. I'm asking you who you've connected to at Hardin Baptist Church. Who are you loving unconditionally, who are you in a relationship with that when they surprise you and hurt your feelings, you're

going to forgive them? Who are you in such a relationship with here at Hardin that you're helping to bear their burden; you're encouraging them?

That's why starting today, we want you to try to get planted in one of our Adult Bible Fellowships. Boy, we're anticipating real soon, possibly this fall, early winter, early spring next year, having our pre-school children's building finished. So we can take all of those rooms we've given to our children in this building, and give them to the adults so that everyone of you who come to worship could get connected. Not to evaluate a teacher and see if he teaches like Bro Ricky preaches, not to make a decision of is this the best use of my time for me, but is this the best use of my time for God. Not which class can I go to this morning and see if it's good for me, but it's which class would I be good for? Which class could I give something to?

I believe the biggest influencer of the modern Church is television. TV has taught us, it's all about us, amen? We can't even have an hour drama on TV anymore; we've got to have a 30 minute sitcom because our attention span is so short. And they had better catch our attention right off the bat or guess what, we're flipping the channel because I'm a consumer; and do you know what it's taught us in the Church? It's taught us to be spiritual consumers instead of spiritual servants. What can I get, what's in this for me rather than me being in this for the benefit of others? Jesus said if you're going to follow Him, you're going to be where He is. Ultimately you're going to be with Him in eternity, but let me tell you what, you'll be with Him where He is now, and Jesus isn't in a sac. Do you know where He is? He's in the soil. You say now hold it Bro Ricky, He's not dead, that's right! He's not dead, he's alive, seated at the right hand throne of God, but He lives in believers, and can I say this to you? When it comes to sin, He expects you to be clean, but when it comes to community, and ministry, and connectedness, He expects you to get dirty. On the farm we've got an expression; here's how we know when it's time to plant; when we can get "maximum seed to soil contact". There's a time when you can run your planter through the ground and it will cut a v and it will drop the little seed

in there, but because it's so wet it will never push the soil around the seed. Listen to me, if you're in an Adult Bible Fellowship, when you go to your next class after this worship service is over, we're doing our best to lay the trench, and you're going to have some new people in your class this morning hopefully, and here's what you had better do; you had better push dirt all over them, amen? Let me tell you what will happen, I can go to Sunday school class for 10 years, but if I never get dirt pushed in my face and all around me and get smothered, I'll still retain who I've always been, are you listening to me? If you're in an Adult Bible Fellowship this morning, you bury that seed that God's going to give you, and then together let's watch each one of us draw from each other, and grow up into the believer God's designed us to be. And as we grow into the believer God's designed us to be, we'll grow up into the Church He's designed us to be, amen? I want to ask you a serious question, are you in a sac, or are you in the soil? This morning the soil is a community, are you in a community, spiritually, large group and small group? Don't you put your kids in a small group only, without exposing them to the worship service, and don't you put yourself in a worship service only and your kids in Sunday school only, and then you go home; you are not maximizing who you can be for the glory of God. You need large group and small group, amen? Are you connected or are you just attending?