

## Sermon 3-25

John 12:20-33

John 11 selected verses

And so the players are assembled. And it is all set in motion.  
By the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent the die is cast. It (the Passion) all now comes to pass.

(The sermon presumes that you have read the text. The text is the bulk of the lesson. )

This morning we look at John's account of the seed sewn into the ground – to die and then to grow. I have framed this with verses of John's account of the raising of Lazarus (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday year A), with its conclusion – because of this miracle so many people were believing in Jesus that the Pharisees settled it: Jesus must die. Jesus calls Lazarus out to be set free, and effectively takes Lazarus' place – Jesus is now doomed.

The two passages frame each other. Lazarus is a story in which, Lazarus receives the gift of life and freedom, but at the cost of Jesus' sacrificial love. We receive gifts from God, through Jesus sacrifice, and then we are invited to take up that sacrificial love. Love which gives itself up – to become more. To become what God wants it to be the seed is dropped to the ground and dies to itself – to become the harvest bearing grain.

Next week we will share the sacred Story of God's love, the Passion of God's Christ. Spread across 4 chapters of Mark, Jesus arrival in Jerusalem, his teaching and confrontation with those in power, the trial which they sought, his suffering and death. But on this Sunday it is previewed – a story of love and sacrifice. A story of wondrous love, which is beyond understanding – if the understanding is based on self-interest. This Sunday proclaims clearly faith is about self-sacrifice. This is the story of true love, which we are given and to which we are invited.