



The Seed **by Joe Sixpack**

A successful businessman was growing old and knew it was time to choose a successor to take over his business. He didn't trust his children or any of the members of his board to take over, so he decided to try something different.

The elder gentleman called together all his junior executives to meet with him. He said, "It's time for me to choose a new CEO for my company, as I wish to retire and enjoy some of the fruits of my labor. I've decided to choose one of you to take my place." The young executives were shocked, but the boss continued, "I'm going to give each one of you a seed today...a very special seed. I want you to plant it, water it, nurture it. Then one year from today you will all come back to me with what you've grown from that seed. Then I'll judge the plants you bring to me, and the winner will be the new CEO."

A humble man named Jim was among the young executives. Like the others, he received a seed, and, like the others, he was excited about the possibility that he could be the next company CEO. He went home and told his wife, who helped him plant the seed in a pot with soil and compost. Every day, Jim would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks, some of the other executives began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were starting to sprout.

Jim kept checking his seed, but nothing grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by. Still nothing grew.

Six months went by, and still nothing grew in Jim's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else talked about their tree saplings and tall plants, but Jim had nothing. He didn't say anything to his colleagues, however, but rather just continued to water and fertilize his seed. He so very much wanted his seed to grow into something...anything.

Jim was discouraged. He told his wife he wasn't going to take an empty pot back to the boss's office, but she asked him to be honest about what happened. Jim was sick about it, as it was going to be the most embarrassing moment of his life, but he knew his wife was right.

When the year ended, everyone was called to the old businessman's office with their plants, and Jim showed up with his barren pot. He was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other executives. They were beautiful—plants of every description, in all shapes and sizes. When Jim put his dead pot on the floor, many of his colleagues laughed at him...and a few even felt sorry for him.

When the CEO arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted his young executives. Jim just tried to hide in the back of the room. The CEO spotted Jim with his empty pot, and merely smiled at him. The old man said, "My, what tremendous plants you have all grown! Today one of you will be appointed the new CEO."

As the excited executives began to settle down, the old executive ordered Jim to come forward with his pot. Jim was terrified. He thought, "The CEO knows I'm a failure. He's probably going to fire me."

When Jim reached the front of the room, the CEO asked him what had happened to his seed. Jim told him the story...and about how he had obviously failed.

The elder CEO told everyone except Jim to sit down. He looked hard into Jim's eyes for a moment, then surveyed the room full of other executives. Then he said, "Behold your next Chief Executive Officer. His name is...Jim!" Jim couldn't believe it! He couldn't even grow his seed, yet here he was being named the new CEO.

The other executives began to grumble, asking how Jim could be the new CEO when he couldn't grow anything from his seed. The old man replied, "One year ago today, I gave everyone in this room a seed and told you to take the seed home, plant it, water it, grow it, then bring it back to me today. But I gave all of you boiled seeds. The seeds were dead—it wasn't possible for them to grow. All of you, except Jim, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found the seed wouldn't grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. But among you, Jim was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is your new Chief Executive Officer!"

Jim demonstrates to us what it is to be a true man and Christian, while the others have shown us how the world generally thinks these days. The other executives justified their deceit to be able to get the CEO position—the modern thinking that the end justifies the means. Only Jim had the courage to do the right thing. While the others thought they would get the new job on the basis of their deceit, only Jim was willing to sacrifice the possibility of promotion to remain faithful to his conscience.

It's easy for us to do the right thing when there is nothing to lose, but it's an altogether different matter when there is something at stake. We convince ourselves that God will understand if we compromise His laws to avoid shame, embarrassment, or loss. But that couldn't be further from the truth. Compromise is the language of cowardice, and it's a sign of being lukewarm for our holy and ancient faith. "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you from my mouth." (Revelation 3:15-16)

Christianity in general, and Catholicism in particular, is under attack throughout the world today—under attack like never before in history. There have been more martyrs during the second decade of the twenty-first century than throughout the first three centuries of the ten great Roman persecutions combined. Sooner or later, all of us will face a time when we will have to choose between God's way or the way of the world...like the Christian clerk in Kentucky who chose jail rather than violate her conscience and displease God...or like the martyrs from the first century to today who gave their lives rather than offend God.

None of us expects death to come for us anytime soon, but death is no respecter of persons. Whether you believe martyrdom is possible is merely a matter of opinion. What isn't a matter of opinion is that death will visit us all, and we will very likely never know the time or place when it comes. Death could come from a lingering illness, or as suddenly as an auto accident. It could even come through nothing at all, as it did for my thirty-eight year old son who was seemingly in excellent health but simply failed to wake up one morning. We must be ready at every moment of every day to stand before Almighty God in judgment for the things we have done or failed to do in this life. The only way to do this is to know our faith, live our faith, and have frequent recourse to the sacrament of Penance. Don't believe the world and its lies. Society and culture may change, but God and His laws never change. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) We know this because this is What We Believe...Why We Believe It.

Would you like to learn more? Check out JoeSixpackAnswers.com.