

TACTILE PRAYER | *Autumn Leaves*

Hopefully by now you've been able to find a colourful, DRY fall leaf as Carrie mentioned earlier. If you didn't yet, feel free to PRESS PAUSE on this video right now, take a minute and just run outside and grab one for this experience. You may also want to grab a bowl or plate, because we'll be making a tiny bit of a mess.

I invite you to hold your leaf in your hand right now.

Autumn is absolutely incredible in all of its colourful splendor. But of course, those colours are actually a signal that we are headed for the dead cold of winter. As the season changes, this is the time of year, as someone has said, when the trees are showing us just how beautiful it can be to let dead things go.

We see the beauty as the leaves die and fall from their branches, but that leaves the trees looking dead and bare for the winter. However, we know that this death does not last; it is part of a necessary process to prepare for new life and rebirth in spring. But without death first, there can be no new life.

As Christ-followers, we are not strangers to this idea. In fact, our entire faith is centered on the beautiful power of death, and the belief that death gives way to resurrection. And just as in nature, this is not a one-time story; it is cyclical, a process that repeats over and over again in our lives. In the Bible, Jesus explained,

“Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is, destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal.”

John 12:24-25

Right now, as you hold that fragile leaf in your hand – a symbol of the beauty of death and letting go – I want you to consider for a moment, what in you needs to die today? Maybe it's the plans you've made for your life, relationships that have changed, a false identity or sense of security. Maybe it's an outlook on life (that isn't healthy and isn't helping). A good way to discern how God might guide your thoughts in this moment is to ask: *what is something I'd be terrified to let go of (even though I know it's not good for me)?* Take a moment and invite God to guide your thoughts on this right now.

Now, I want you to imagine the thing in you that needs to die being symbolized by the leaf in your hand. Take a moment now, and crumble that leaf into a bowl or onto a table. As you do, let this simple gesture act as your prayer to God, letting go of whatever it is, letting it crumble and die right before your eyes. And as you feel God piercing through your resistance and self-preservation, invite God to soften your heart to the work of the Spirit, to break you apart and help you see the beauty in letting go. And as you embrace the heart of dying to self, allow yourself to trust in the hope of resurrection.