

"Like a Tree"

Scripture Lesson:- Psalm I: 1-end.

Text:- Psalm 1: 3. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season!"

Introduction:- Story of the little girls remark to her father who was telling of the woman who at a reception was trying to find out whether he was a pre or post millennialist.

I.

Give text. Trees! What do you see when the word is spoken? Strong oaks, tall pines, soft cottonwoods, shady elms, stately and proud, lining wide avenues; But have you ever noticed the trees that grow high in the mountains? Up near the timber line, at elevations of 11,000 and 12,000 feet are the trees that battle nature's severest storms. Growing out of crevices and stony ground they face howling winds, torrential rains, raging blizzards. Dauntless trees, battling trees; they have to be that kind of trees to live.

Out of their elements, their battle with the elements, they gain a certain strength, toughness, personality. They must battle for their very existence. The long winters are bitter cold; snow comes early and stays late. The winds blow their icy gales over the ranges, fills up the canyons, and dares anything to live. The drifts are more than 100 feet deep until only the tops of the tallest pines can be seen. Yet in that struggle up there, high up the slopes, a strange thing happens to the trees. They seem to develop individual personalities.

Men are a great deal like trees. Some are tall, some are short, some weak, some strong. Some stand firm in the gale. Others go crashing down in the midst of the storm, taking other trees with them. A few men have been like the trees of the timber line- Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah,

Jesus, Luther, Wesley, Otterbein, Albright. Those were all timber goants. The elements were against them; yet in spite of everything they grew strong, and tall and straight for God. There are people in our churches who make us think of trees like that, teachers, leaders, workers who are faithful, true, and dependable on the job. We may know but little of the battles they fight, the constant struggle being made for victory. But the struggle is there; it is present in the life of every person.

II.

During the winter in the Rockies the range storms often come, lasting several days in the high country. Winds of a velocity of over one hundred miles an hour do their best to sweep the rocky surface of the earth clear of every incumbrance.

Every Christian worthy of the name, has arrived where he is because he has proved he can stand strong and straight in the midst of the storm. He can take criticism, lack of appreciation, boredom, monotony, weariness, persecution in his stride, saying with Paul, "None of these things move me." There are times when the range storms break upon all of us. Perhaps the trial is not just for days, but for weeks. But finally, through the will of God the storm abates, and the sun breaks through again. Things either kill the trees or add to their strength. I think it was J. G. Holland who wrote,

God give us men! A time like this demands, strong minds, great hearts, true faith, ready hands; Men whom the lust of office does not kill; men whom the spoils of office cannot buy; men who possess opinions and a will; Men who have honor; men who will not lie; Men who can stand before a demagogue and damn his treacherous flatteries without winking; Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog in public duty and in private thinking.

III.

Out in Kansas some years ago we saw trees that had been killed by a severe drought. The only living ~~ix~~ trees were those that grew close to a stream. No matter what the heat, these trees endured. Their roots were down where they daily met the life giving water. Life is constantly trying to measure the size of your soul, the strength of your determination, the breadth of your vision. To put it in the language of today, it is trying to find out whether you can take it.

Are you a tree or a post? The post is dead. It occupies a position but ~~it~~ is dead. It does not grow. It is beginning to decay. There is no life in ~~it~~. But a tree is a growing thing. It makes progress, it extends branches, it bears fruit and is a blessing.

If you have not stood ~~a~~ straight and tall in this matter of character, thank God there is still another opportunity before you. Roswell McIntyre of the sixth regiment of the N. Y. Calvary. "On condition that R. M. returns to his regiment and serves ~~but~~ his term, making up for lost time, he is hereby pardoned for any supposed desertion heretofore committed, and this paper is his pass to go to his regiment."

He had kept his word. He had gone back to face the enemy and had held true and steady until death. That is what you and I will have to do. If we are ever to be able to face our own souls, we are going to have to get back into battle and try again. We are going to forget yesterday's blunders, failures, and mistakes and ask God to put some iron into our souls.

Conc:- This time we will be like a tree. We'll send the roots down deeper. We will not waver when the storms come. We will not complain when asked ~~ix~~ to endure hardness as a good soldier. And this time, by God's grace, we shall not fail! "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruits in his season." Are you a tree or a post?