

Peter Kirkham - Trees of Righteousness

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The topic is announced for this hour is Trees of Righteousness. This is a fairly simple illustrative lesson that I have kept in mind over the years and would like to share with you. The first time I gave this discourse was almost 30 years ago and we trust that it is just as applicable today. This lesson is mostly reprint and Scripture quotes. God's word and our pastor's words are so important to us.

The discourse is based on reprint 5557 Trees of Righteousness, which I will quote from many times during this hour.

The study or science of trees is called Dendrology. Dendra in the Greek means trees. The Bible mentions many types of trees. Trees in the Bible are generally used as a symbol of men, either in their individual or collective capacity. Some examples of trees used as symbols are the olive tree representing the Abrahamic covenant the fig tree a symbol of Israel, Israel under the old Law covenant and Israel under the new law covenant the vine tree as a symbol of a covenant an individual covenant, a covenant of sacrifice two olive trees, Old and New Testament.

For this hour we will be considering trees of righteousness, illustrations of different aspects of trees and how the symbol of a tree represents how a true Christian is to grow or not to grow. We will discuss the symbols contained in a tree, the roots, the ground, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the fruits.

Let us turn to Isaiah, chapter 61, verse 1 to 3, the theme text for this hour. I will paraphrase as I read these Scriptures. The Spirit, the Holy Spirit of the Lord God, is upon me the Christ head and body, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings, ransom, restitution, and resurrection unto the meek for those willing and able to hear. He hath sent me to bind with grace and truth up the brokenhearted from sin and degradation to proclaim liberty. The antitypical jubilee setting one Free to the captives, captives of sin, death in the grave, and the opening the removal of death through resurrection of the prison John 5:28 29 to them that are bound in death to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, Isaiah 52:7 and the day of vengeance, Isaiah 63:4 of our God to comfort all that mourn the majority of mankind at the end of the time of trouble to appoint to promise unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty of the resurrection, divine truth for ashes of death, human creeds and ideas, the oil of joy, the message of grace, God's Spirit for mourning the garment of praise, God's precious promises for the Spirit of heaviness disappointments, sorrows, troubles of the present time, that they might be called heaven trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

Luke 4:18 and 19 the Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

John 5:28 29 Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth they that have done good unto a resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto a resurrection of judgment, the day of vengeance Isaiah, chapter 52, verse 7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion thy God reigneth.

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Isaiah, chapter 63, verse 4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

Yes, to be a part of the kingdom blessings we must become trees of righteousness. The seed which the Lord has planted in us must grow into a mature strong in him tree. So for the rest of the hour we will consider trees, and the lesson in them for us, and what part trees have in the blessing of mankind that the symbol of a tree may become a lesson for us in our walks with the Lord. Let us turn to Colossians, chapter 2, verses 6 through 8.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

From reprint 5557 Apostle Paul gives us the picture of a tree, the root of which goes downward, and the trunk of which reaches upward to obtain that nourishment which will give it strength and stability. As the roots of a tree push themselves downward and imbibe the nutriment of the soil, while at the same time the trunk and the branches reach up into the atmosphere, to obtain through the leaves the necessary elements of growth, so the mentality of the Christian takes hold of the great and precious promises of the word of God, while at the same time he is building character through his heart appreciation of these promises in connection with the experiences of life. The roots of faith push down deep into the knowledge of the divine plan, while the tree of character grows higher and higher, developing and maturing the rich fruits of the Holy Spirit. For instruction is a form of construction.

While the Christian is thus growing up in character, likeness to our Redeemer and his roots of faith are reaching deep down into the deep things of the word of God. He is becoming established, settled. A tree that is well rooted in the earth is hard to uproot. It has a wonderful strength, a wonderful hold upon the earth, and requires years to die out. So it is with the Christian whose faith has been properly established.

He should be so fixed, so established in the promises of God's word, that no wind of doctrine could overturn his faith.

Instruction is a form of construction. Being grounded and established in the truth is to have an upward growing effect on our character. Instruction is a form of construction. What are we making? A tree of righteousness?

A pillar in the temple of God, if we are faithful. Revelation chapter 3, verses 11 and 12. Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou hast, that let that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will.

I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.

What a promise. But notice the warning. We must lay down strong roots, roots that grab onto and never let go of the truth, and we must keep growing. We see here that the roots of this tree are roots of faith.

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The tree of the trunk of this tree is our character, which should become stronger and stronger, higher and higher, more and more Christlike. We are to remember whose tree this is, for we have promised to give it to our Lord, that his will may be done in us.

The ground is the truth, God's word. It is established in love.

First Timothy, chapter three, verse 15. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. We are to be tied to the truth so strongly that it can never be separated from us. A long while ago we had a beautiful blue spruce tree in our front yard. It outgrew its spot and we had to have it cut down.

We decided to remove the stump ourselves. We dug down and cut all the roots that we could find that the stump wouldn't budge. We dug deeper and found that the tree had a taproot that grew straight down. So it should be with us. We are to have a strong individual anchor to the truth that can never be removed.

Faith that anchors us in times of storm, showing our love of God by studying and obeying his commandments, being cemented to that which is good and right bonded.

Hebrews 6:19 which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.

Ephesians, chapter 3, verses 14 through 19 for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with the might of his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Our hearts are like roots they must be grounded and rooted in faith and love. Agape Love what is the ground made of God's love and the word of God? The qualifications to enter the narrow way requires good ground, a good and honest heart, as found in Luke 8:15 but that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Pastor mentions in the sixth volume that we must attain the fourth quarter mark of love, and not only attain it, but practice it, establish it through trials and testing. Pastor recommends that we attain it as soon as we can. Let us not be discouraged if we have not attained it, but resolve to try harder to be established, deeply rooted in truth and love.

A TV program I watched long ago said that when a strong tree is blown by the wind, the fibers of the tree twist and become stronger and stronger by it. This is what happens to a strong tree when it is tried and tested. Because it is well grounded and good ground, it will withstand the storm and become stronger by it. In order for our tree to grow properly, we must stay under the care and keeping of the husbandman. If pride enters in and we start thinking that we know what is best for ourselves, we may find ourselves following our fleshly desires.

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If we find ourselves leaning this way, we must go back to the throne of God in prayer and ask for forgiveness and for strength to overcome our fleshly weaknesses. A Christian without prayer is like a tree without leave it will die. Only the Lord can properly guide our growth. We must constantly remain under his care and keeping to be the strongest tree that only he can make us. I quote again from reprint 5557 quote as a tree does not breathe the same elements at all times, and as it is not always flooded with sunshine, but needs also the rains and storms for its development, so the Child of God needs varied experiences and sometimes change of environment to best develop all the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The great husbandman knows just what experiences and surroundings each one of his trees needs. How much sunshine, how much rain, how much cold, and how much heat, how much pruning, and he will supply just what is best adapted to each case. He knows how to vary the conditions and environments, etc. Without disturbing the process of rooting and upbuilding but developing it.

This we do not know how to accomplish on our own, but would bring upon ourselves spiritual disaster. So we need to keep ourselves continually under the care of the skillful husbandman and earnestly cooperate with him that we may grow and become strong and immovable, firmly established.

The depth and the spread of the roots of a tree are shown by the vigor and the fruitage of the tree. A tree that is not deeply and firmly grounded can neither bring forth rich, luscious fruit nor furnish cool, refreshing shade to man. Depth of root is absolutely essential. So the Christian's faith must be deeply grounded in Christ, and thus shall we also grow up into him, learning more and more what is the divine will as expressed in him.

The rooting process is unseen, and can be judged only by its outward manifestations. When there is luxuriant foliage, there is good rooting, but the growth must not stop there fruit must be born, and so the spiritual life of the Child of God will manifest itself more and more its likeness to Christ. To vary the figure, the Christian will not only be a branch in the vine, but will bear rich clusters of fruit, which should become more choice in quality and size year by year.

This can only be accomplished by the giving up of the will of the flesh.

The husbandman will bring forth fruit in us if we are looking to do his will.

John 15:1 5 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except that it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

O, that is a precious promise when we ask aright. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.

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James 5:7 8 Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain or harvest.

Be ye also patient. Establish your hearts for the Persia presence of the Lord draweth night.

Matthew chapter 7, verses 16 through 20 he shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Reprint 557. Again, if we are to be judges of the world in the next age, how shall we be fitted for this position if we do not learn now how to take the proper viewpoint, the Lord's viewpoint, in our estimates of the brethren, if our love and our esteem for them is gauged by trifles, yea, by matters even unworthy of notice in the eyes of the Lord, are we developing the qualities of character which will fit us to be judges of the incoming age? How are we growing up into Christ in all things? Let us judge ourselves rigidly along these lines, that we may indeed become like the Master and win his final approval. The apostle urges that we become established in the faith.

This term refers to the faith which was once delivered to the saints, the one faith. This is to hold at all costs. Satan will attempt to divert our minds into other channels, to draw our attention to some new thing. But the plan of God, the truth of God as revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord is but one. It is given us for our instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

2 Timothy, chapter 3, verse 17. It is not the truth of geometry, or trigonometry, or geology, or astronomy, or any other science, that we are to be diligent to study, and be grounded and built up in but God's word. John, chapter 17, verse 17. These other truths are very well in their way, but we have little time to study these. Now we shall have all eternity in which to learn all the wonders of creation.

But now we are to apply ourselves especially to the mastery of spiritual truth, the deep things of the mystery of God revealed to his saints for a specific purpose.

Strive for the one truth based in the word of God. John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. Jude, Chapter one, Verse three. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Earnestly content to the mark, deep roots, strong drunk.

We are not to be like fine maples, which often grow back toward the earth, but we are to grow heavenward, looking towards the things to come. Matthew, chapter 21, verse 19, and when I saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereof but leaves only, and said unto it, let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever rather to the age from the diagloth representing the Jewish nation, cursed during the gospel age, and presently the fig tree withered away.

Luke, chapter three, verse nine, and now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees. Every tree therefore, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. If a tree has no

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fruit, it can never be harvested. Leaves often represent professions or teachings.

Professions without real work to bear fruit results in a useless tree. We must work at it to produce more fruits of the spirit. Now we will look at some more causes of spiritual decay.

A new tree that sends out roots in all different directions, that looks into theories that are not in the Bible, that spends too much time learning other things besides. The truth will have a shallow diseased root system that and a weak trunk character that can be blown about with every wind of error, and when a big storm comes, the tree may be toppled and lose their life forever.

Many years ago we had planted an Italian prune tree in our front yard. It was growing wonderful, wonderfully and we were looking forward to harvesting the fruit, but all of a sudden it shriveled up and died. When we dug up the tree, we found that the roots had been eaten away.

Once we have found the truth, there is no reason to search other pastures, I.e. other ideas or more knowledge along scriptural truth lines.

If we do, we are letting root weevils eat away at our roots. We must have discipline in all matters of our lives. We must not allow the flesh to rule our thoughts and actions. Doing this is like a tree that does not grow properly and in the proper direction. It becomes scraggly and weak.

We must stay with the source that brought the truth to us, the word of God in the writings of the seventh messenger, Pastor Russell, who we are told is the master over all his goods. Straying from them is tempting the Lord. For an example, a young apple tree says to an old apple tree, shouldn't you be more flexible? The young tree likes to bend in the wind and not bring forth fruit, while the old tree just gets stronger and stronger and brings forth more fruit year by year. I've heard one young in understanding in the truth say that the brethren in their ecclesia were inflexible, only saw things one way were bigoted.

This brings up the question, is an established Christian a bigot?

We answer with a resounding no. The steadfast of those long in the truth may appear to some in the world and evidently to some in the Bible student movement, as well as being bigoted, a character well rooted and grounded in truth is not a bigot, but one rooted in error is. One might, however, say that we are bigoted towards the truth. This is a good thing. More from reprint 5557 the few who will pass safely through this crucial trial without loss are those only who have become established in the truth of God, rooted and grounded and and built up into Christ.

The difference between a strong and steadfast Christian and a bigot is that one is established in truth and the other is established in error. The fire of this day will continue to burn and to manifest the great difference between the two classes. Until all have been tested and tried and found worthy or unworthy, one must be established to survive the fire of the day.

In a program on Yosemite I once watched, they were saying how they were not getting new growth within the large sequoia trees in the park. By studying the trees, they found the only way to get new growth to start up was to burn the land below them. The sequoia trees have a very thick bark, and their branches are up very high so that the fires don't affect them. The fires clear away the underbrush and provide nutrients to the soil. The heat from the fire causes the cones of the tree to be triggered to release their seed, so that after the fire new seed falls to the fresh, nutrient rich ground to grow new sequoia trees.

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Let us be ready in times of trouble to sow our seed. Let us grow heavenward, so that the time of trouble and hour of temptation do not cause us harm. Reprint 3215 Quote Peter felt the force of Paul's wise and earnest counsel, and with emphasis re echoed the same to give heed to such seducing doctrines contrary to the doctrine which we have already received from the Lord and the apostles, argues a lack of faith in those doctrines. Such a one is not established in the faith, and indeed there are those and such is the general sentiment among the teachers of false doctrine who think that it is not either necessary or advisable to be established in the faith. To be established as a bigot is the idea they advance.

And so it is, if one is so unfair in mind as to accept and tenaciously hold that which he has never proved, either by sound logic or Bible authority. But he is not an unreasoning bigot who in simple faith, on the authority of God, accepts the word of God, and such, and only such as do so, are established in the truth. The difference between a strong and steadfast Christian and a bigot is that the one is established in the truth, while the other is established in error. The former knows the truth, and the truth has made him free from all doubts and misgivings, and from all desire to delve into the muddy pool of human speculations. To all such, Paul says, as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith as ye have been taught by us, the apostles abounding therein with thanksgiving.

But beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Colossians, chapter 2, verses 6 through 8 yes, we must examine ourselves if we are to GROW properly reprint 5557 importance of self Scrutiny the apostle's words in our text lead each child of God back to a time when he first made his own consecration. Under what conditions did we come into Christ? We recall that it required much humility on our part to acknowledge that we were Sinners utterly unable to save ourselves. Some seem to forget the way in which they started.

They started with faith and humility and meekness, and with a desire to be truly built up into the Master's likeness. They seem by degrees to lose sight of this, and begin to grow in another direction than straight upward into the fullness of Christ. They like to make some show before the world. They come to neglect the first principles of Christian development while still talking about the doctrines or making up doctrines of their own. As gradually these get away from the doctrines and the Spirit of Christ, the apostle puts us on guard against these dangers.

Are you sure that you ever really received Christ? Are you sure that you ever actually made a full consecration to God and became a new creature? You should know this. If you did, then make sure that you are progressing in his likeness. Without careful scrutiny you might think you are progressing when you are not.

The narrow way remains narrow into the end of the journey. A mere profession of faith and a certain round of observances are not sufficient. Remember that we are to confess the Lord by our looks, by our manner, by all acts and words of Life.

Psalm, chapter 26, verses 1 through 12 A Psalm of David Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity. I have trusted also in the Lord, therefore I shall not slide. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me. Try my reins and my heart, for thy loving kindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with assemblers.

I have hated the congregation of evildoers, and will not sit with the wicked. I will wash mine hands in innocence so will I compass thine altar, O Lord, that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving

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and tell of all thy wondrous works. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth. Gather not my souls with sinners, nor my life with bloody men, in whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity.

Redeem me, and be merciful unto me. My foot standeth in an even place in the congregations will I bless the Lord.

Second Corinthians, chapter 13, verses 4.

Actually, we're going to do verses 5, 8, and 9 from the Weymouth verse 5. Test yourselves to discover whether you are true believers. Put your own selves under examination, or do you not know that Jesus Christ is within you, unless you are insincere? Verses 8 and 9 for we have no power against the truth, but only for the furtherance of the truth, and it is a joy to us when we are powerless but you are strong. This we also pray for the perfecting of your characters.

Only by scrutinizing ourselves may we become strong, tall, straight trees again. Reprint 5557 only by continual scrutiny of ourselves and the light of God's word can we make real progress in the narrow way in which our Master walked. Truth is to become brighter and fuller and more luminous as we go forward onward. To this end we must keep close to the Word and in line with his program. The Lord will not accept little underdeveloped sprouts for the kingdom, but he wants those that have grown and matured strong, sturdy trees of righteousness.

God's word alone will up, build, delve into the promises of God more and more. As you do this, the roots of faith will drop the nutriment and send it out into your life, and you will grow just as a tree grows, because nourished dead, thus alone will you become established in the faith and not in your imaginings, nor the imaginings of others. Our faith is to grow stronger and more vigorous day by day. It is not to be of faith in ourselves or in anything apart from the Lord.

Faith is what we started with in the beginning, and we shall need it in increasing measure as we go on in our upward way. Faith in God and in his sure Word, all that we know as children of the Lord, has come to us through the channel of Jesus, his holy apostles, and the prophets of old, and we are to continue feeding at this same table with thanksgiving. We are not to feel a spirit of bondage and say unto ourselves, I would like to ramble outside. I do not like to confine myself merely to what the Bible teaches. I would like more liberty.

This disposition is not the spirit of a true Son of God. Such sentiments encouraged would lead to utter spiritual disaster. All such temptations, if they come, must be promptly and positively resisted. Our spirit should be one of deepest gratitude and thankfulness that we have been granted this glorious divine revelation. Following thus in the Lord's way, we find the only true joy, and can make the only true progress.

If ye do these things, ye shall never fall for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

A strong tree is an example to others. It can provide shelter, a place of rest. Trees that stand together help break up the wind. They weather the storms more easily. Do not forsake the gathering together in a different Example.

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Have you ever seen new trees grow up out of a fallen tree? These are called nurse trees. We not only have a cloud of witnesses, examples in the Bible, but we have brethren we have known that are now beyond the veil and those still with us that have been wonderful examples to help us grow.

Now I would like to turn our thoughts to what it means to be of the little flock that blesses the world of mankind.

Revelation 22:1 5.

Paraphrased.

And he showed me a pure river of water, a great supply of truth, of life, restitution, blessings. Water brings life clear as crystal pure proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. The new Jerusalem. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was there the tree of life. The saints restoring what was lost in the garden, which bare 12 manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month.

And the leaves of the tree were for the healing restitution of the nations, and there shall be no more curse on man or earth, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, all will know him, and his name shall be in their foreheads sealed.

And there shall be no light night there, there only joy in the morning, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun. For the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever.

Running out of time. Here.

Now we mentioned just a bit of speculation, an idea and possibility from a Discourse by Brother W. A. Baker. The Bible begins with trees in the second chapter of Genesis and ends with trees in Revelation 22. On each bank, 72,000 trees, which bear 12 fruits every month, i.e.

12 months. If we have 12 fruits for 12 months, we get 144, or 144 each year for 1000 years. 144,000. If we have 144,000 trees of righteousness, squaring 144,000, we get 20,736,000,000, which possibly may be the ultimate number both Jew and Gentile restored. When the olive tree, the Abrahamic covenant, has finished its promised work, speculation ended.

Notice the similarities of Revelation, chapter 22, verses 1 to 3, to Ezekiel, chapter 47, verses 1 to 12. In Ezekiel 47 we have a picture of someone measuring a thousand cubits, and each time the depth of the river changes, ankles, knees, loins, and then so deep one could not pass over verses 7, 9 and 12. Now, when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on one side and on the other, and it shall come to pass that everything that liveth which moveth whithersoever the rivers come shall live.

And there shall be a great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither, for they shall be healed, and everything shall live, whether the river cometh, and by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side shall grow all trees for meat whose leaf shall not fade, Neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed. It shall bring forth new fruit according to to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be meat and the leaf thereof for medicine.

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The Dead Sea is typical of the dead world that will be made alive again. The vision we just considered points out that being made alive in Christ is a process that takes a thousand years to accomplish. As the depth of the waters increase, the provisions from the trees shall never end. Water is a symbol of truth in people. A tree without water will die.

Without the truth we will surely die. We are leaky vessels that must often be filled. Constant daily filling is required if we are to be a tree of righteousness. We are found faithful more than overcomers. We will have the privilege of lifting up and blessing all the nations.

So we see all around us examples of trees and what it is to grow as a Christian should grow. When we look out upon God's creation, whether it be a large cedar, pine, fir, wood, redwood, sequoia, or whatever kind of tree it may be, let us think upon things from above and be strengthened by it.

The majestic fir tree is a symbol of a man with everlasting life.

Look upon a Douglas fir tree. This is what a perfect man is to be like. We can have a part in providing this, if faithful. A review of the symbols from a tree. Roots, faith, the ground, God's word, God's love, the trunk, our characters, the branches.

We are also a branch in a larger tree. The wild branch grafted in. This represents the direction our work goes in. It is a special privilege to be grafted in. Make the most of it believes, teaching or professions.

The fruit manifesting the fruits of the Spirit. If faithful to be trusted with immortality, you will be crowned with glory and honor and immortality for the blessing of the nations. Now we would write like to read some words from C.H. Spurgeon. This is in reprint 1886 quote shoot upward and root downward.

Let me remind you, all ye faithful believers in Christ, that ye are compared to trees. Trees of the Lord's right hand planting. Seek to grow as the tree grows. Pray that this year ye may grow downward, that ye may know more of your own vileness, more of your own nothingness, and so be rooted in humility. Pray that your roots may penetrate below the mere topsoil of truth, into the great rocks which underlie the uppermost stratum, that ye may get a good hold of the doctrines of eternal love, of immutable faithfulness, of complete satisfaction, of union to Christ, of the eternal purpose of God, which ye proposed in Christ Jesus before the world was this will be a growth which will not add to your fame, which will not minister to your vanity, but it will be invaluable in the hour of storm, a growth the value of which no heart can conceive when the hurricane is tearing up the hypocrite.

As you root downward, seek to grow upward. Send out the top shoot of your love towards heaven, as the trees send out their spring shoot and their midsummer shoot and as you see upon the top of the fir the that new green child of spring, the fresh shoot with lift its hand towards the sun, so pant to have more love and greater desires after God, a nearer approach towards him in prayer, a sweeter spirit of adoption, a more intense and intimate fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. This mounting upward will add to your beauty and to your delight. Then pray to grow on either side. Stretch out your branches, let the shadow of your holy influence extend as far as God has given you opportunities, but see to it also that you grow in fruitfulness.

For to increase the bow without adding to the fruit, is to diminish the beauty of the tree. Labor this year by God's grace, to bring forth more fruit unto him than ye ever have done. We would not be as the gleanings of the vintage, when there is only here or there a cluster upon the uppermost bow,

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we would be as the valley of the stor, whose presses burst with new wine.

This is to grow in grace, to root downward, to shoot upward, to extend your influences like far reaching branches, and to bring forth fruit unto the Lord's glory. Unquote.

We would like to close with just a couple scriptures. Psalm chapter 1, verses 1 to 3. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful but his delight is the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in season his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Finally we read again from Isaiah 61:3 to point upon unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the joy of mourning, the garment of praise, or the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. May the Lord add his blessing, forgive anything said amiss.