

Trees of The River

"She shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever [she] does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

Psalm 1:3-5 (NKJV)

Far, far away in a land called Matunda lived two trees. One tree was called Mengi and the other Ukosefu. Each was diligent in their attempts to please the Great Gardener. Every morning and every evening Mengi would stretch her roots deep into the soil searching for access to the river they called, "Maji Milele." Every morning and every evening she would drink of Maji Milele's waters and feel the nutrients flow through her roots as the liquid moistened the soil around her trunk. Ascending into her branches she could feel the muscles of her stems strengthening and the crisp but soft nature of her leaves greening.

The Fruit of Jealousy

This made Ukosefu very bitter. The Great Gardener told her and Mengi to dip their roots in the Maji Milele every morning and every evening, but there was no joy in that for her. Ukosefu wanted to be different. She wanted to stand out. She decided that she would stretch her roots down further into the soil, rather than over into the river. Everyone knows that there's water in the soil as well, and so she would get her's from a source other than the river. Surely the Great Gardener would be pleased with her initiative and creativity.

As Ukosefu reached further down she only became more frustrated and bitter. Her leaves did not grow strong like Mengi's. Rather than possessing a crisp and soft nature her leaves had a crunch and hard nature to them. She quickly became jealous of Mengi complaining, "The Great Gardener is showering Mengi with special treatment. There's no way she could grow that quickly from simply drinking of the Maji Milele." In her frustration she remained stubborn and refused to drink of the same water source as Mengi, regardless of the fact that the Great Gardener directed so.

Comparison Kills

The full moon passed and it was time for the Great Gardener to collect his harvest. The trunk of Mengi was so large and the span of her branches so wide that she could be seen from anywhere in Matunda. When The Great Gardener stepped close to Mengi her leaves were a bright green and next to every leaf was a large, ripe fruit yellow in color with blushes of pink on its cheeks. Smooth and without indentation the Great Gardener knew of her ripeness just by the smell of her fruit. The Great Gardner could smell the fruit of Mengi from miles away.

The same was not so for Ukosefu. Her leaves were brown, burnt in color, and there was no fruit anywhere on her branches. Her trunk was narrow and it seemed as though her branches had not grown since the planting season. The wind would blow and the fruit of Mengi would decorate Matunda as ornaments. But when the wind blew on Ukosefu her leaves crumbled. The wind would blow

and the trunk of Mengi would stand firm, unmovable. But when the wind blew on the trunk of Ukosefu it would bend and sway in whatever direction the wind drove.

The Word of God is Life

Ukosefu desired to stand out, and she did just that. For in Matunda, she was the only tree that did not bear fruit in season. But she was also the only tree to not drink of the river Maji Milele. And it was because of her stubbornness that she would be the only tree of Matunda to wither and die. This saddened the Great Gardener, for he could not understand how a tree that was positioned so close to her source of life could wither and die. He could not understand how this tree of the river could die of thirst.

Many of us are like Ukosefu. We have easy access to the river of God's word and yet we seek life and strength from every other source we can find. We plug into people, our jobs, our passions, everything but God through prayer and devotion. But what we have to accept is that nothing on this Earth can feed us, fill us, strengthen us, or grow us like spending time in prayer and Bible Study. It is only when we're planted in the life giving waters of God's word that we can bear the fruit of the Spirit. May we drink from the river of God's Word and live.

Read & Study: Psalm 1, Psalm 92:12-14, Jer. 17:7-8, John 4:13,14; 14:6; 15:1-8

When was the last time you sipped the words of Jesus Christ the living water?

You have been placed in close proximity to the source that is your everlasting life. Don't wither and die spiritually because you refuse to let Him flow through you to work in you.

Prevailing Meekness

The Gospel According to Paul: Meekness Prevails Under Provocation. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Monday, May 28, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 05.28.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

All Power

Someone once said that meekness is power under control. Who had more power to control than Jesus Christ did? Can you imagine being the all-powerful King of the universe, and clothing yourself in dependent human flesh? Although Jesus created all things, He did not consider Himself so holy that He could not assume flesh in order to save us from eternal death. It was because of the meekness of Christ that we are able to live with God eternally.

When the violent, bloodthirsty mob shouted for Jesus' death at Calvary, He demonstrated the ultimate lesson in meekness. As He said earlier, He could have called twelve legions of angels to destroy His enemies if He wanted to. Within the corridors of His mind existed the power to obliterate this entire planet. With one thought, He could have destroyed His adversaries, and would have been justified. Our Lord decided that the salvation of souls was far

more important than relieving Himself from the burden of ridicule, and death. He truly fettered His power and exhibited self-control.

How to Prevail When Provoked

Jesus is our example. We must look to Him for guidance, and trust Him to keep us under control, especially when we are provoked, and could easily prevail over our enemies. Jesus loves to teach meekness. Do we love to learn? I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

Source And Legacy Of Understanding

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Sunday, February 15, 2015

Based Upon Acts 17

What is the basis of your belief system? Is it based upon historically held thoughts? Is it what your grandparents passed on? Do community organizers in your area inform your worldview? How about television preachers? Are they your source of understanding?

I come from a body of believers who, as of June 2013 recorded almost 18 million members, worldwide. We believe in the Bible as our only rule and guide to life. We embrace the blessing of salvation through Christ alone, the loving care of God the Father, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in each of our lives. There are many truths we hold dearly in these last days that knit us together in unity such as: Jesus, who is well acquainted with the feelings of our infirmities, ever lives in a most holy ministry to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and to seal us in that state before He comes. We believe that our deceased loved ones are resting in the grave, awaiting the resurrection, and not floating around, disembodied either in torment, or having to watch the events of earth unfold as they are supposed to be in paradise. We believe that Jesus is able to keep us from falling, no matter how many years we cherished our darling sins, once we live in submission to Him. We look forward to the day that we, with the faithful ones of them, will hear the blast of Jesus' trumpet, and we will be caught up to meet Him in the air. We believe that our Father has preserved a special appointment on the seventh day of every week for us to come aside and culminate all of our worship experiences from the week, on the only day He has called holy, as a sign of His power to deliver all who trust Him, from sin. We believe that one day the enemy of us all will ultimately be destroyed, with all of his sympathizers, and sin will never show its ugly head again. We believe that God will finally have the satisfaction of welcoming countless people who rest their faith in Him, from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people into His presence, nevermore to depart. I could go on-and-on about the precious truths we love, but why do so many of us believe?

Our theme chapter highlights a small group of Bereans who distinguished themselves in Christian history for one reason—they did not center their beliefs upon the words of people. They heard the teachings of God from the apostles, and searched the Scriptures to see whether those things were so. They were only satisfied when they knew that the foundation of their hope was Christ in His Holy Word. That is our lesson for today. No matter how your legacy of understanding has been passed on to you, always revel in the

privilege you have to search the Scriptures for yourself in the power of the Holy Spirit, and hold fast to that which is found there, and steadfastly refuse that which is not. In this we find safety and assurance as we await our Master's return.

When Jesus Prays

Day 1

Read Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 5:16.

Have you ever been so disturbed or drained by problems that you needed a break? If so, how did you deal with it? How did Jesus respond to such chaos? In the verses listed above, we note that Jesus spent time by Himself, on a mountain, at the seaside, or in a garden to restore His soul. He understood the importance of letting God lead Him to green pastures, places where He could be nourished.

Day 2

In Matthew 14:23-34 after Jesus finished praying, He saved Peter from drowning, and taught every one of His disciples about faith. In Mark 1:35-45 after Jesus finished praying, He preached the gospel, cast out demons, and healed a man of leprosy.

In Mark 6:46-56 the Bible says that after Jesus prayed, He crossed the lake, and people ran throughout that whole region, carrying the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

I'm sure that during those solitary times Jesus laid His entire heart before the Father in prayer, and because of this, God strengthened Him. I am sure He prayed for the people He would minister to, and for His disciples' faith. It becomes evident that had Jesus not taken the time to get away and spend time in prayer, His ministry would have looked much different.

Day 3

As Jesus entered Bethany all eyes were fixed on Him. Honestly, it was because He was the only one who was capable of preventing the tragedy. Lazarus, His friend, died, and Jesus did not intervene. When He did arrive, His prayer started off oddly. He thanked God for hearing Him, but failed to mention Lazarus or His family members. The purpose of His prayer was to thank God for the death of Lazarus because it was an opportunity for the family to come to understand Him more clearly.

Take a moment to examine your own situation that is way beyond your control. Is it possible that Jesus is now offering a prayer of thanks for this seemingly impossible situation in order that He may receive the glory for what He will or will not do? Find a song that is custom made for your testimony that can be credited only to God doing something amazing for you.

Day 4

Read John 11.

In Mary's mind death was the end. Her understanding of what happens when people die and her understanding of the resurrection at the end of the world was so strong that she probably had not considered asking Jesus to raise Lazarus. With a limited understanding of God, our faith limits the extent of our prayer. This, however, does not limit our God. Do not be dismayed. God has your best interest at heart even when your best interest is indiscernible

to you.

Day 5

Read John 17.

The final prayers of Jesus are astounding. Though He was soon to be crucified, He prayed for those whom God had given Him. Understand that we are special to Jesus. And though we do not know how to pray or for what to pray, our Brother prays with pinpoint accuracy. If we were aware of the many unforeseen blessings, we would never cease praising Him. Post something simple for which you are thankful.

Day 6

Read John 17.

We gather from the other Gospels that while Jesus prayed, His disciples did not. They were fast asleep and unaware of the danger to come in just a few hours. By the time we realize it is time to pray, it is often too late to prevent an unavoidable pain. Have you ever taken a second to think that maybe things were not as bad as they could have been because Jesus prayed for us before we drove into that storm with blinders on? The next time you find yourself caught off guard by Satan, take a moment and thank Jesus for praying the right prayer on your behalf.

Day 7

Read Luke 22:31, 32.

Tension in the room was so thick that I imagine you could see it in the clenched fist of Peter. You could feel it blowing out of the flared nostrils of Judas. You could sense it in the shifty eyes of James. Jesus knew to pray for His disciples because of His foresight, and He was also keenly aware that Satan had demanded to test them. The Greek word for "you" in verse 31 indicates a plural, so He was not speaking just about Peter, but about all of them. He did not beg for him to overcome temptation; instead, He begged for Peter's faith not to fail.

WARNING: this may cause you to shout hallelujah repeatedly. Sometimes God allows you to fall prey to temptation because His chief concern is your faith, not your record.

Day 8 Read Luke 22:31.

I invite you to Google a song by Laura Story entitled "Blessings," and let us know what that song brings to your mind about the prayer that Jesus prayed.

Day 9

Read Luke 22:32.

Is there any significance to the fact that Jesus Himself is praying? Do you believe that He prays for you? What does that mean? Go to <http://crazylovebook.com/videos.html> and watch the video entitled The Awe Factor of God and let us know how this affects your thinking about the reality that Jesus prays for you.

We have already noted the significance of that for which Jesus did not pray. But look at what He did pray for—faith. Why is it so important to Him? In your personal walk with God and in your reading of His Holy Word, have you found any texts or experienced something that shows why faith is so important to God? We would love to know what God has shown you about faith.

Day 10

In His prayer Jesus implicitly revealed that there is a difference between following Him and being "converted." Is it possible that our prayers, like those of Jesus in this passage, could focus on the faith of people, rather

than their convenience, comfort, or conversion? Many people can testify to the fact that their conversion followed a supposed downfall. Will you prayerfully consider sharing with us a time that you “fell” and actually found yourself closer to God afterward?