

The Infilling Word

Like A Tree



Did you know that we can be like a tree? It's true. The most helpful question to ask, however, is "what does it mean to be like a tree?" If you grew up in church as I did, you probably heard the song that talked about being like a tree planted by the water and the declaration of "I shall not be moved!" Right? But, there is more to being "like a tree" than being stable.

Psalms 1 gives wonderful insight into the idea of being like a tree and the result we can have by being so. Let's look, shall we?

**1 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.**

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The Psalmist tells us that the secret to being like a tree lies in delighting "in the law of the Lord." Of course, he was talking about the law that Moses received from God in the mountain during the time of Exodus. Today, we would also be looking into the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." What do these "laws" do? They give us instruction and direction in the ways of God -- they teach God's way of being and doing right.

What does it mean to "delight" in the law? It means that we find the law of God to be valuable and something to be passionately sought after. We so eagerly desire the word of God that we meditate, or ponder, it night and day. We keep it on our mind and in our heart. It is something that we chase after.

What we do not do is noted in verse 1. We do not ask the ungodly for advice or for a plan to guide us in living our lives. We do not establish a course of action or we do not act and behave like those who do not know God. And, last but not least, we do not inhabit the dwelling place of those who disdain and hold the things of God in contempt. No, we do the exact opposite.

Jesus spoke very clearly about the ramifications of delighting in the Word of God. They are found in John 15:4-8; "4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 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. 6 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. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Did you get that? If we delight in the law of God - if we abide in Jesus and His word abides in us - then He becomes the one we go to for advice, for direction, for a plan for our life. We make the commitment to act and behave like Him, seeking His ways of being and doing right. We honor and respect God and His word, giving it first place in our hearts.

When we do that, things happen! The first thing that happens is that we get planted. We get rooted and grounded in God, His love, and His word. When that happens, the river of the "water of life" has direct access to nourish, correct, and abundantly supply everything that we need to prosper. We are empowered to bring forth fruit. We are provided with everything we need to stay strong and vibrantly alive. We are enabled to prosper in all the areas of our life. And, to top it all off, we have the great privilege to "ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

In Psalms 37:35-36, we are told about the type of "tree" that the wicked become; you know, those who do not seek to do according to God's ways of being and doing right. They become a "bay tree" - a tree that rises out of its own soil, i.e. a "self-made" person. Their end is not good - definitely not to be envied. They are destroyed; if sought for, they cannot be found. Verse 38 declares that the end of the wicked will be "cut off". There is nothing as horrific as being separated, or cut off, from the Lord God!

Let's just face it, when we stay close to God, He can hear us when we pray (as an old Southern Gospel song declared). There is nothing that can separate us from Him or His love. He knows the way that we take, because we are going His way. When we stay in "God's hands", then we are secure and protected - empowered and prospered. And, like our Lord, we give glory to the Father.

Yes, there is a challenge to "delighting" ourselves in the Lord and His word. Yes, there is a challenge to walking according to God's ways of being and doing right. Yes, it takes determination to stay in the presence of God. But, the commitment to delight ourselves in the Word of God, following His ways and taking our place in His presence, gives opportunity for an adventure in a life of prosperity and privilege.

Believe that God is God and believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Then, spread your "roots" down and shoot your "branches" up. You got this! You are standing on the foundation that never fails, bringing forth fruit that never fails and giving glory to the God who never fails! It just doesn't get any better than this!

Scriptural Support:

Romans 8:2; Joshua 1:5-9; Matthew 6:33; Psalms 37:4-6, 18-19, 23-24, 35-38; Romans 8:31-39; Deuteronomy 28:8, 12; Hebrews 11:6;

REDEMPTION

The Second "R" of the New Covenant

We have been looking at the six "R's" of the New Covenant that God made available through the blood of Jesus. The first "R" was Remission; and, how wonderful a gift it is - to know that we have forgiveness and remission of our sins.

The second "R" of the New Covenant is redemption. A subject that absolutely excites me to the tip of my toes! Why? Because it underlines, capitalizes, and emphasizes Satan's defeat in our lives - that's why!!

Colossians 1:12-14 declares, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins . . ."



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Before we go any further, let me acknowledge that I am separating six aspects of something that exists as a whole – the new covenant. In many of the scriptures that speak of one aspect of the covenant, other aspects are identified as well. So it is in the scriptures just quoted; however, I would like to focus on redemption.

Redemption! The Father bought us with the precious blood of His "dear Son" and brought us out from under the dominion of the enemy and sin. Then, if that wasn't enough, He carried us into the "kingdom" of the Anointed One. We now have a place out from under the power or control of darkness and have been placed under the authority of the King of kings and Lord of lords. We are no longer in obscurity, but are now manifest – no longer in darkness, but now in light. The Father, through the blood of Jesus, took the cover off man to reveal the truth of who we are – sons of God in Christ Jesus. "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.*" (1 John 3:2)

Now I've done it!! I've skipped from the second "R" to the fourth, so let's go back just a little. Remission is where the blood of Jesus paid the penalty for our sin; redemption is where the blood of Jesus paid the price for our deliverance from the kingdom of darkness. By faith, we can stomp our feet and toss our curls and tell the devil to get out of our lives. It is simple, but not always so easy. We first submit to God, **and then** stand against the devil. James 4:7 states that the devil "will flee from you!" What does that mean? It means he will run away. Another definition is to escape. I kind of like this idea. I like the thought that the devil runs away in haste from a dangerous situation – he escapes. We often speak of escaping from the enemy's devices or attacks; however, I like to think of the tables being turned on the devil and him being so afraid of us – as we are in Jesus – that he runs away in defeat.

Another aspect of redemption that I would like to point out is that it is eternal, based on the blood of Jesus and not on the blood of bulls and goats. (Hebrews 9:11-12) That word "eternal" speaks of being perpetual or endless, based on the very *nature* of the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus never ceases to speak of redemption.

In Genesis 4, we find the story of Cain and Abel. This is a familiar story to many people because it is the first murder that is recorded in the Bible. I remember that verse 10 caught my attention as a young person and helped me understand that "blood" is very important and very powerful – even the blood of a human. That verse states, "*And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*"

Did you know that blood has a voice? I didn't until I was old enough to read that verse and grasp the attention that God pays to blood. God told Cain that the blood of Abel "cried" unto Him. The word "crieth" means to shriek or by implication to proclaim. In other words, the "voice" of blood is not quiet, weak, or easily silenced. Oh, no. Blood makes a lot of noise and gets quite a bit of attention.

Think of this: if the blood of Abel was loud and got the attention of God, how much more do you suppose the precious blood of Jesus is loud and gets the attention of the Father? Jesus' precious blood loudly and unceasingly proclaims the truth of our redemption – the price has been paid once and for all time. "*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*" (Hebrews 9:24-27)

Not only did the blood put away our sin and redeem us, but it is eternal. It never ceases to pay the price, it never ceases to obtain the prize, it never ceases to proclaim release, and it never can be corrupted. The blood of Jesus is not liable to decay, like the blood of bulls, goats, or mortal man. The precious blood of Jesus is incorruptible. Nothing can water it down or cause it to be ineffective. A tremendous song-writer once stated in song, "It will never lose its power!" What a truth! It will never lose its strength, its power or its efficacy. I don't know about you, but knowing that makes me want to get a little loud myself!!!!

The blood of Jesus got so much attention from God that the third and the fourth aspect of the new covenant showed right up: righteousness and reconciliation. Therefore, next issue, let's look at the third "R" which stands for Righteousness.

Hindrances to Faith: Hopelessness



It is shocking to find out how subtly the enemy can mess up your hope. Years ago, God told me to line up John 10:10 with 1 Corinthians 13:13 and what an eye opener it was! Let's look at it, shall we?

The Lord told us in John 10:10, "*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*" I read that scripture and thought that I completely understood it until He told me to put it with 1 Corinthians 13:13 which states, "*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*"

The light can really come on when you line these up like He told me to:

The thief comes to steal your faith . . .

The thief comes to kill your hope . . .

The thief comes to destroy your love . . .

I am not saying that these are the only things that the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy, but I have come to realize that these two scriptures taken together can identify many of the works of Satan. Be very clear, he is a thief. What does that mean? He means to cause you loss. It may be by stealing or killing or destroying; all cause loss.

Just to begin with, let's look at what Jesus was telling us in just the one word "thief." He said that the only reason the enemy comes is to steal, or filch. To filch means to steal slyly and in small amounts. Okay, so he slyly, furtively, or secretly steals small amounts of things from you. That's interesting. Consider how many times you've suddenly become aware that the enemy is at hand and you wondered how you missed his attack for so long. It happens because he has been secretly active for a long time and has stayed under your radar by taking from you in small amounts.

The second revelation that comes from the word "thief" is that Satan does his stealing without having the right to do it, the authority to do it, and definitely without the permission to do it – and it doesn't matter that he doesn't. He goes ahead and takes what doesn't belong to him anyway!

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He is sly! My favorite dictionary is the Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary and I particularly like its definition of sly: artfully dexterous in doing things secretly and cunningly able to evade notice or detection. Now doesn't that just sound like the devil?! He is very skillful at what he does and he knows how to keep a low profile. Of course he is! He has been doing this to mankind since the Garden of Eden. (And I'm not being funny!)

When I was growing up, we sang a little chorus in Children's Church and it went like this:

**"The devil is a sly ole fox; if I could catch him, I'd put him in a box.
Lock the box and throw away the key for all the tricks he's played on me."**

I don't know how many Sundays I sang that song growing up, nor do I know how many times I have thought about that warningly, informative little song. He is sly and he plays tricks. I don't know about you, but I wish I had been a little more alert and determined to catch him before his tricks caused me to lose something. He always comes with the express purpose to take something from you.

Now, let's get down to putting all this together.

Satan comes secretly and cunningly to take away your faith, little by little. He acts in many ways to do this. It can be anything from not having a strong enough foundation yet for what you are requesting from God or to having a fellow Christian express doubt in what you are believing for. He will sustain an attack on your faith in subtle ways by coming at you from several directions at once. None of the attacks may appear to be large or give him great victory; but, he isn't really after the things that seem to be the focus of the attacks, like your money, health, etc. He is actually after your faith. If he can steal your faith, he can steal your victory – in anything and everything!

The enemy also comes to "kill your hope." That word "kill" can properly mean to breathe hard. I would like to make a joke here, but the reality is that it is no joke. It seems to me that when I experience the loss of hope about something, I feel I can't breathe. Have you ever felt that way? It appears that one loss follows another loss, follows another loss . . . and you just can't find a place to stop and catch your breath. That's the work of the devil! Satan wants to deprive your hope of its very life, the breath of life, also known as the Spirit of God!

This just doesn't happen to Christians. "Mankind" came from the breath of God. Genesis 2:7 declares, *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* As believers, we are given the wonderful privilege of knowing and understanding that we are a spirit (like God), we have a mind, and we live in a body.

Unbelievers cannot comprehend the fullness of that because their spirits have not been re-born. However, it doesn't change the origin of their "life".

So, whenever it seems that you are having a difficult time "breathing," wake up. The enemy is out to "kill" your earnest expectation of good. He wants your hope, which is a cherished gift, as a sacrifice to himself; and, on top of that, he gives you nothing in return.

The loss of your hope brings no benefit to you and it defeats faith – every time.

As you can tell, there is one more thing that the enemy has come to steal. Look for it in our next newsletter when we talk about the devil and his determination to "destroy" our love. Be blessed!

God Knows You!



Do you know that God knows you intimately? That's right, He knows you – scars, blemishes and every imperfection. The awesome thing about realizing that is to remember that He loved us even before we were saved and had received a "heart" change. His thoughts toward us were wonderful then and they are wonderful toward us now. We are His and He is ours. We are "family!"

I was reading in Psalms the other day and came across words of grace that made my heart leap for joy. Psalms 139 declares that God knew us even before we were fully formed in the womb and had wonderful "thoughts," or plans and purposes for us. This is backed up in Jeremiah 29:11, *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."* And, just in case you think that is just an Old Testament idea, check out Romans 12:2 which declares, *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

The other awesome word that God has given us is His assurance that we are not alone in the fulfilling of these mighty thoughts. No. Philippians 1:6 proclaims, *"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform (finish) it until the day of Jesus Christ."* He is always with us and will complete that which concerns us *"for Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name."* (Psalms 138:2)

These "words" of God lead me to one of my all-time favorite scripture passage, found in Numbers 23:19, *"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good."* He goes on to state that there is no demonic device that can keep God's plan from coming to fruition. What can stop it? We can. We stop it by our unbelief and lack of faith, which shows up in our speech and actions.

I don't like to say this, but our lack of faith and unbelief often shows up because we forget that God is always with us. We forget such scriptures as Romans 8:31, *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"* and Hebrews 13:5b, *"for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

Sometimes, we forget that God's love is beyond our "human" understanding. It is not just that He is *"able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."* He is able to do that *"according to the power that worketh in us."* What is that power that works in us that enables Him to do such awesome things? The very Spirit of God who sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts! This is the love of Christ that passes knowledge; this is the love that makes it possible for us to be filled with all His fulness; this is the love of Christ that roots and grounds us in that very same love.

When we know the *"breadth, and length, and depth, and height"* of God's love for us, then we can rest assured that He will do His part in bringing to pass the great plans that He has for us. Don't let the enemy get you to focus on all the times you messed up or missed it. Instead, put your focus back where it belongs – God's love for you and His words of promise, encouragement, and assurance. He **knows** you! He loves you! He is for you and is active on your behalf. He gave His word. And, quite frankly, that settles the matter. He can help clean up any mess and He can help "fill in" where you missed it. You have His love; you have His word. It doesn't get any better than that!!

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Really! – God Knows You!!

Scriptural Supports: Psalms 138, Psalms 139, Jeremiah 29:10-14, Romans 12:1-2, Philippians 1:6, Numbers 23:19-23, Romans 8:25-39, Hebrews 13:5-6, Ephesians 3:16-20



The Gift of God: Jesus



Have you ever really thought about the absolutely awesome gift that God gave us on that wonderful day, so long ago, that we celebrate as Christmas? Now really, as far as I have heard, we don't know the exact day that Jesus was born. We have an approximate time of the year and, as far as I am concerned, that is close enough for me. Why? Because that is not what makes the day so spectacular.

What makes Christmas so marvelous is that Jesus came. Isaiah 9:6 declares, *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."* Then, the Apostle John picks up that same declaration and quotes Jesus stating what we all know and love in John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Now, I know that you know this – even most unbelievers know that Christmas is the celebration of the coming of Jesus. The problem is that many people on the planet don't have a clue as to who Jesus is. In fact, many do not know who God is or why He would give us Jesus. They don't know that God is the creator of all, and that includes us. They have been taught a lie started by the enemy of God and mankind – Satan.

The lie, if it even speaks of a Supreme Being, simply says that God would not be interested in anyone as puny as mankind. His attention would be on other things and not on the affairs of mankind. How about the lie that God is dead? Do any of these sound familiar? Absolutely, but they are all lies. God is interested in us, His attention is on us and He definitely is not dead.

So, what is the truth that makes this event superior to most events known to mankind – at least at this time? It is that God gave us the gift of Jesus. Why would He give His only begotten Son as a gift for us? Because of the *"great love wherewith He loved us!"* For God *"so loved!"*

God underlined the fullness of the love He was demonstrating in Romans 8:32, *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"* There is nothing that God will not give us; there is nothing that can separate us from His love. Just read the rest of Romans 8 and find out how committed God is to us!

However, there is another - simply life-altering - fact that is also contained in that gift of love, which is Jesus. Bear with me while I give you some scriptures to "feast" on. First, God believes in seedtime and harvest. In fact, in Genesis 8:22, the Word states that seedtime and harvest shall not cease. In John chapter 1, we are told that Jesus is the Word made flesh; and then, in Mark 4, Jesus tells the parable about the sower sowing the seed and the seed being the word of God.

In John 12:23-28, Jesus tells his disciples about a corn of wheat that falls into the ground, dies, and then brings forth much fruit – speaking about his soon coming death on the cross. But, why? Why would God give us His only begotten Son just to be tortured and then die a cruel death on a cross? In the natural, it makes no sense. However – remember - God believes in seedtime and harvest!

Hebrews 2:10 testifies, *"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."* That's right! God "sowed" His Son, Jesus, to bring many sons unto glory – unto Himself.

He chose us – mankind – to be fully loved and brought into His family as sons. Romans 8 tells us that we have been adopted and are now heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus. Now, as the saying goes, if that doesn't set you on fire then your wood is wet!!!!

Why is Christmas the most awesome, extraordinary day of the year? It is because it is the day that we recognize, honor, and rejoice in the precious seed that was sown for our adoption into the family of God! It is the time when we acknowledge the coming of the Son of love – the gift of love – the gift of God Himself!

Christmas **is truly** the most wonderful time of the year!!! Come on – let's celebrate the coming of the Anointed One, the Savior of the world! Merry Christmas!

