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THE ROOT AND THE REACH



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The Root and the Reach

Pando – the Trembling Giant in Utah

Pando looks like a forest of separate trees, but it is actually one living organism connected by a massive root system under the soil. It covers about 106 acre and has survived for a very long time because the life is not merely in what we see above the ground. The life is in the root system below the ground.

General Sherman Sequoia

It is one of the largest trees in the world, yet its roots are only about 6 to 12 feet deep. But those roots reach outward up to 300 feet and intertwine with other trees. The tree stands because it is connected.

Today we honor our associate pastors. This is not about me. This is not about our founding pastors. Today we honor the pastors who have labored with us, who have served faithfully, and who bear much fruit according to John 15:5. They are visible branches, but the reason they bear fruit is that they have been rooted in Christ. This month our theme has been evangelism. Evangelism is not first a program or a stage production. Evangelism is the overflow of a life that is deeply rooted in Jesus. A tree that is rooted will eventually reproduce. A church that is rooted in Christ will eventually reach people with the Good News.

1. The Hidden Root Determines the Visible Fruit

Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT) *And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. ⁷Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.*

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (ESV) *Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. ⁸He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.*

John 15:5 (NLT) *Yes, I am the vine. You are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV) *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

John the Baptist. He was not the center of the story. He said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” That is a deeply rooted man. He knew who he was not. He knew who Jesus was. His root was not in popularity. His root was not in crowds. His root was in the purpose of God. That is why he could rejoice when people left him to follow Jesus.

Mary, the mother of Jesus. When the events around her were confusing and painful, Scripture says she treasured these things in her heart. That is hidden root work. She did not understand everything, but she kept holding the Word of God inside her. The hidden root gave her stability before she ever saw the full plan.

This week I want to ask you to pray for your pastors in a specific way. Do not only pray that they preach well. Pray that their roots stay deep in Jesus. Pray that they do not become strangers to the secret place. Pray that they remain tender before the Lord. Pray that they are not merely fruitful in public but faithful in private. For your own life, choose one hidden practice this week and keep it hidden. Spend time in the Word when no one sees. Pray in your closet. Confess sin quickly. Sit before the Lord without needing to post about it. Deep roots are not impressive to watch, but they determine everything.

2. Deep Roots Create Stability When the Winds Blow

Ephesians 3:16-17 (NLT) *I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.*

Psalms 1:3 (ESV) *He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*

Ephesians 4:14-15 (ESV) *So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.*

Isaiah 26:3 (ESV) *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.*

Apostle Paul. He faced shipwrecks. He faced beatings. He faced imprisonment. He faced betrayal. Yet he wrote, “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed. Perplexed, but not driven to despair.” That is not natural toughness. That is a root system. Paul’s roots had gone down into the love of God, and the winds of suffering could not uproot his joy or his mission.

Job. He lost his wealth. He lost his children. He lost his health. His friends gave him bad theology. His wife told him to curse God and die. But Job said, “Though he slay me, I will hope in him.” Job did not have all the answers. He had a root. His root was not in circumstances. His root was in God.

So what does this mean for us? It means that stability is not the absence of storms. Stability is the presence of deep roots. If you want to remain steadfast and unmovable when changes come, you cannot isolate yourself. The General Sherman tree stands partly because its roots intertwine with other trees. God has given us one another for that reason. Join a ministry group. Start coming for Bible Study on Wednesday nights. Stay connected to the body of Christ. Do not try to be a solitary tree in a storm. Build for yourselves a rhythm of kingdom life that will hold you when your feelings are loud. Read the Bible even when you do not feel inspired. Pray even when your prayers feel weak. Worship even when your heart is heavy. Keep showing up. Keep obeying. Keep forgiving. Keep serving. Those ordinary acts are root builders. When the wind comes, you will discover that God has been strengthening you all along.

3. Rooted People Produce a Harvest of Evangelism

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV) *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Acts 1:8 (ESV) *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Romans 10:14-15 (ESV) *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’*

Psalms 96:3 (ESV) *Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!*

Samaritan woman at the well John 4. She met Jesus at a well, and her life was exposed and healed by truth. What did she do? She left her water jar and went into the town. She told everyone, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did.” Many Samaritans believed because of her testimony. She was not a trained preacher. She was a rooted witness. She had encountered the Root of Jesse, and her encounter became evangelism.

Andrew John 1. The first thing Andrew did after meeting Jesus was find his brother Simon Peter and bring him to Jesus. Andrew did not preach a long sermon. He brought one person to Jesus. That is evangelism. A rooted life reaches out to the person in front of it.

This means that evangelism is not only for the pastors on the stage. It is for every branch in the vine. This month I want to ask you to do something very practical. Write down the name of one person in your life who does not know Jesus. A coworker. A neighbor. A family member. A friend. Pray for that person by name every day this month. Ask God to give you eyes to see them with compassion. Ask God to give you courage to speak when the moment comes. Ask God to give you a testimony that is rooted in what Jesus has done for you. Then take one step. Invite them to church. Share a meal. Tell them part of your story. Offer to pray for them. You do not have to be perfect or clever. You have to be rooted. Rooted people produce a harvest, and the harvest begins with one person at a time.

We have talked today about roots and fruit. We have said that the hidden root determines the visible fruit. We have said that deep roots create stability when the winds blow. We have said that rooted people produce a harvest of evangelism. Now I want to show you how the offering fits into that same picture, not as a duty to check off but as a window into your heart.

Matthew 6:21 (ESV) *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV) *Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*