

The Story Of The Tree

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon beautifully illustrates the relationship between a branch and a tree, symbolizing our connection to God. It emphasizes the importance of staying connected to the 'chief branch,' Jesus, to bear spiritual fruit and find true purpose and hope. The story highlights God's infinite love and justice, showcasing how through Jesus, even the most hopeless and rebellious can find redemption and prosperity.

Scripture: Psalms 68:6, Isaiah 11:1, John 15:5, Galatians 5:22, Romans 6:23, 1 John 3:2, John 15:4, Colossians 2:7, Romans 8:17, Revelation 22:20

Description

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Transcript

Psalm 68 verse 6, God makes a home for the lonely. He leads out the prisoners into prosperity. I wanted to tell a little story to explain how the Lord has made this verse come alive to me.

Even the children can see it. I got a few pictures to make it easier. I want to tell you the story about the tree.

This was the only tree that existed at one point. It was magnificent and perfect. Its leaves were always green.

It bore fruit all the time. It was both shade and comfort, as well as pleasure and joy. Then God made this branch.

This branch was different from all the oceans that you see in the background and all the rest of the beautiful earth he created. He created this branch with a different purpose. God breathed on this branch so that it was made in the same likeness as that tree.

And what was God's purpose from the branch? Its purpose was very different from the purpose that for the rest of creation. He wanted this branch to be fully connected to the tree. But this branch had other ideas.

It had huge visions. It wanted to be planted by itself. It wanted to build cities.

It wanted to be self-made. It wanted to do whatever it wanted. It had great visions to build towers that reached to the heavens.

This branch wanted to have its own kingdom and its own glory. Because of the branch's selfish ambition and pride, the branch became an utter failure. And the branch failed because it tried to do something it was not designed to do.

The branch was not supposed to stand by itself. The branch had meaning and purpose and a hope and a future only if it was connected to the tree. So the branch became dry.

It became useless in what it had been created for. It still existed but it had no meaning. And here's what was even worse.

The branch could do nothing to fix the situation. The problem had no solution. God saw that and loved this branch that had no hope.

So he stepped in because there was no solution that the branch could think of. God sent a branch from heaven. A branch that came from heaven itself.

The branch was fully God but this branch was also fully man from the stem of Jesse. So this branch could choose whether to stay connected to the tree or be just like all the other branches. And it started out just like a small little branch, just like a tender shoot.

But this branch was also different from all other branches because it always stayed connected to the tree. So it had no delight in its own desires and ambitions. His only desire was to fear the Lord.

He did not do things based on what he felt or what he saw or what he heard. Instead he sought to be righteous and faithful as he was never disconnected from the tree, not even once. And the branch kept growing and grew strong.

The grace of God was upon this branch and it grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. And the branch also bore perfect fruit. It bore the perfect fruit of the spirit of grace rested on him so that you could not distinguish between the branch and the tree.

That's how connected the branch and the tree were. And so this branch proved that it was possible to always stay connected to the tree. Now that's a beautiful story and a magnificent story.

That could be the end of a beautiful story of how a branch lived a perfect life. But it gets even more beautiful because there was still a question and the question didn't need to be asked or didn't need to be answered, but God chose to ask it as well as to answer it. What about all the other branches that were stuck because of their own faults, their own sin? Was there any hope for them? And the answer that God and the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit said was yes.

But what could God do to this branch? That's what we had to think about. God is full of love and infinite love. Now, I mean, you know, my children say that the biggest number in the world is Googleplex.

Well, God's love is much more than Googleplex love. I think that's maybe the biggest number that can be defined. But God's love is infinite.

Infinite means you cannot even count it. So that's how much God loved this branch. But God was also full of justice.

So God had to make sure that the justice of God against all of this disobedience of this branch had to be punished. So this branch had to somehow resolve the justice of God. So the only way was for this branch that had been perfectly connected to the tree to take the full punishment of God's justice and anger against sin.

That branch had to face the full justice of God. And that's exactly what happened to this most beautiful branch. It was stripped of all of its fruit.

It was stripped naked of all of its beauty. And it was cut off from the tree that had provided all of its nourishment for all eternity. And this branch that had never tasted even the slightest sin became cursed.

And the father cut off this holy perfect branch. And this branch became a curse. And that was the deepest sadness that this branch became a curse.

But it was for a purpose. This branch that was rejected and crushed by man was raised by the Holy Spirit. And he was raised and exalted and became the chief branch.

So that every lifeless and hopeless branch that wanted to have a purpose now had a chance. Every branch that saw its own hopelessness that knew that it was created to bring glory to the tree could now be grafted into the tree through the chief branch. God gave us life again in the chief branch when we were dead in sin.

God made a home for these lonely, hopeless branches that were you and me. He made room for us in that stump that was the crushed holy branch. And so that he could give us a home and a future and a hope.

And so now the rest of us branches can live and be at rest if we are grafted and connected to this branch, this holy chief branch. If we make our home in this chief branch, we can have life. And not only that, we can also bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit like the chief branch did.

He can lead us, those of us who are prisoners of our sin, into a life of prosperity, of rich spiritual fruitfulness, so that our lives can abound and overflow with love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and gentleness and faith and self-control. But there's also a warning in that verse in Psalm 88, 68 verse 6. The rebellious will remain in a parched land. The rebellious can feel that they're not tied down to anything.

They think they are free, but they remain fruitless. They do not taste of God's infinite love and rest in peace. We know that not all branches want to choose this narrow way.

God never forces us into this life. He gives us a choice and says we can choose to be connected and dependent on the branch or independent. So every branch can choose to fully surrender, which means that this branch must be tied down.

It can feel restricted. It cannot feel anymore whatever it wants to feel. It now must surrender all of its feelings to feel what the holy branch that it's tied to feels.

And it surrenders to the branch and allows itself to be grafted into that tree. It may not feel free at first, but that is true freedom. And over time, it'll know it's worth it.

So it stops worrying about its own discomfort or the pain of being tied in. It begins to worry about the pain that comes from sin. And it gives up all desires for glory.

It only wants to see what can make the tree and the branch look good. And this is what the branch can also do. It can also bear fruit from one level of glory to another, from faith to faith, from one level of dependence to another level of dependence.

But there's a final warning even for such a dependent branch. It's not the story of the dependent branch. It's the story of the tree.

It's not the story of the redeemed branch that now flourishes. It is a story of the tree. It'll always be the story of the tree.

So it'll always be the story of the tree and about the crushed branch that became the chief branch. The tree and the chief branch will be the subject of all our songs. The tree and the chief branch will be the focus of all of our prayers, all of our ambitions, all of our desires.

And the tree and the chief branch will be our blessed hope that we will see the tree and see the chief branch and be just like him when we see him just as he is. So let us crush all of our ambitions to dust and let us stay increasingly tied and intertwined into the chief branch. Let us find our home.

Let us find our repose in the tree and the chief branch. Then when the chief branch appears one day to remove all sin, that's going to happen very, very soon. We will have the eternal glorious fruit that we will be able to offer him for his eternal pleasure and his eternal satisfaction.

May that be true in our lives. May we find our home in him for all of us lonely branches that have no hope. May we find the spiritual prosperity that those of us who have been imprisoned in sin can find out.

Let us reject all rebellion because the only future of that is a dried land. Let us seek to bear fruit that can be something that we can feed him with, that we can offer to him for his satisfaction and joy and pleasure.

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