

THE HEALING TREE

by Pastor Tom Hooper

It is Sunday, March 26th, 2000 at 2:00 in the morning. Though I know that the Bible describes two trees which were found in the midst of the garden of Eden, one the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and one the tree of life, our God has just brought to my mind an image of a third tree, which I will refer to as the Healing Tree. It is, of course, my prayer that we will understand all there is to know about this tree as I try to describe the image given to me, but first let's look at the other two trees.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 3:1-20)

God had provided everything that the original Mother and Father of mankind would ever need, and all the Creator asked was that they not eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden (Genesis 2:17 & 3:1-5). The parents of the whole human race brought the curse of sin on the earth by their disobedience. Yes, I guess they just wanted to do their own thing (sound familiar?). So I hope you can see the reason we are plagued by sin and all the horror it brings, and why man has had to suffer from history past to this present day. Of all the damage disobedience has caused, the worst part of that sin curse that the Tree of Knowledge brought was death!! Both spiritual and physical death, separation from God! How sad.

The Tree of Life (Genesis 2:9, 3:24; Rev. 22:1-2)

Now let's look at the other tree which was in the midst of the garden, called the Tree of Life (eternal life). Yes, if you or I eat of the fruit of this tree we shall not die but shall live forever in the presence of God. You see, we are sealed to God when we accept the fruit of this tree. This tree is the Tree of Life and when you take the free gift of its fruit you receive life eternal. My dear friend, this tree is a type of Christ, an illustration as it were of Jesus and His saving power to all who will trust in Him and partake of His gift! Yes, this tree stands today available to anyone who would say to God, "I am sorry for my disobedience to You, Lord. Forgive me. Yes, I will accept Jesus Christ, the "tree of life" as my Savior and the eternal life You promised in I John 5:13. Thank you, Lord!"

The Healing Tree

Now on to that special tree that our Father has allowed me to see. As we will see in the description, this tree is similar to a combination of the other two trees previously described. The big difference is the Healing Tree grows out of, and gains purpose and strength from the other two trees. Most often times, the fruit of this tree takes a long time to mature, and as it grows up it requires a lot of pruning and shaping by the Tree Grower. It is a sad situation, but not everyone will desire this tree or the fruit it will produce if handled properly. It takes time to mature and grow strong. When we look at its make-up, we will notice that the Healing Tree is like the oak in that its grain is closely knit, sometimes quite beautiful, and always strong. In lumber terms it is referred to as being clear grained, meaning no knots or imperfections, just beauty and strength. Now the branches of this tree seem to be always reaching toward the heavens, as if to gain strength and sustenance. It seems that the Healing Tree grows where needed the most, that it can aid and comfort broken branches and battered fruit that fall from the tree first described (we could also call it the tree of disobedience and confusion).

Now the second tree described earlier, the Tree of Life, always seems to be overshadowing and protecting the Healing Tree, preserving it as it grows to full maturity. Sometimes man comes along and cuts down a magnificent tree, just to fashion

something that he thinks is necessary. So it was almost 2000 years ago, when a tree was hewn down, put to death, that man could fashion a tool that would be sure to bring shame and death, along with a lot of pain. The sad part is that man fashioned this tool in order for shame, pain and death to be administered to other men. So was the fashioning of the cross: invented by the Persians, and perfected by the Romans, to bring a slow, agonizing death. We are reminded in Galatians 3:13 that "Cursed is everyone that hangs upon a tree." It also states that Christ Jesus "became a curse for us", so that He could redeem us from the death we deserved, brought about by our disobedience.

Yes, friend, the Bible states that God came in the person of Jesus Christ (I Timothy 3:16) for the express purpose of bearing the sins of the world. Outside the city gates, yes at the city dump as it were, at a place called Calvary. That's right, Emmanuel (interpreted, "God with us") came to earth to bear the sins of the world in His body that day. They nailed Him to that Tree, what a lonely, agonizing death that had to be, our Savior laid down His life at Calvary, truly a glorious gift given just for you and for me.

My dear friend, might I just share, our Savior was not content to just leave it there. On the third day, He came forth bodily from the tomb, yes raised up alive from the dead, demonstrating victory over Satan, sin and death. Yes, He was raised for our justification (Romans 4:25, I Peter 3:18). Oh, what a powerful Savior we have in Jesus! For those who know Him personally, every day should be Resurrection Sunday!

Oh, blessed friends, I would ask you once again to look back to the cross of Calvary. Imagine seeing it standing upright, the base as roots planted deep, the crossbar reaching out like arms or branches. Would you embrace the Healing Tree? You know it was planted there just for you and me.

In Matthew 16:24, Jesus calls to His disciples (are you one?). Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." Could it possibly be that if you take up your cross that together you will become a Healing Tree? Reaching out to others who are now in misery?

Love in Christ Jesus,

Pastor Tom