

MY PASTOR, MY DAD, THE PALM TREE

Leslie Cowan Kemp, August 2013

I heard a sermon the other day. The preacher was talking about the body of Christ and how we are all “rooted and grounded” like trees in this body. He drew a verbal picture describing types of trees and their root systems. As you may know, most trees have root systems that branch out way deeper than the branches you see above ground. These trees if seen from the underground view would appear so much bigger than what you see above ground. This root system enables them to withstand the storms that come. To keep them standing against the extremes of nature, of this world.

The preacher focused on two types of trees. They were Palm trees and redwood trees. He told of how palm trees roots grow so far down into the soil that some have been known to go a mile down into the earth. This root system on a palm tree enables the palm to stand alone on the shore during extreme storms such as hurricanes and tornadoes. To remain standing and not be uprooted.

The preacher continued painting a verbal picture by comparing the palm to the redwood tree. I didn't know this, but the redwood tree has a very short, small root system, only going about 3 feet into the earth. He explained how you only find redwood trees in great clusters called “forest”. Redwoods need one another to remain standing. You see, he said the little roots of the redwood tree going down only 3 feet intertwine with the other redwood trees growing next to them until they produce a strong root system combined with one another, not on their own. The roots intertwined with one another enable the trees to stand against the storms as a unit. It has been discovered within the redwood forest a single dead redwood tree still standing among the live redwoods. The dead tree remains standing due to the root system of the other trees intertwined and not letting the tree fall.

I pictured the body of Christ. The many faces and maturity levels of all the “trees” of men and women within this body. Oh, how we need one another in this body to remain strong against the storms of life. The attacks of the enemy.

I then pictured my own home church. I saw my father, the pastor, his face. His life. His steadfastness, patience, endurance and kindness in the face of much trouble. It then occurred to me very clearly...He is a palm tree! His roots have been grounded and established so far below the earth that he has been able to stand in all the years of troubles and trials. God did this in him! God did this to him! My father surrendered to the Lord in all his ways and the Lord knew where he would be planted. So the God who knows the beginning from the end reached out and planted a palm tree right here...in this church...in this family...in this area.

O, that the Lord would open the eyes of the flock to see what an amazing testimony of this one palm tree in this sometimes dry, sometimes stormy hurricane area!

I thank you Lord Jesus for planting me in this “forest” right here. This body, this church. I thank you Lord for using my dad, my pastor, to bring Your Word, Your knowledge to my life. Help me to be so rooted and grounded. Amen!