

Title: FIVE MEN AND FIVE TREES

Text: Mark 8:22-26

Intro: Only Mark's Gospel records this story. This particular miracle of healing is unique since it is the only miracle Jesus did which happened gradually. Usually Jesus' healings happened suddenly and completely. In this miracle, however, the blind man's vision was restored in two stages. During the first stage, while his sight was yet blurred, he looked around and supposed that he saw *"men as trees, walking"* (v.24). How he perceived men as walking trees is indeed strange. Interestingly, we find some men in the Bible who are connected with trees. **There is –**

1. A Sinful Man Behind A Tree – Adam (Gen. 3:6-8). First Eve took the forbidden fruit and ate it. Then she took some to her husband and he also ate it. Both of them disobeyed the Lord, but observe how Eve was deceived but Adam sinned willfully with full awareness (**I Tim. 2:14**). This is why Paul puts the responsibility to Adam, not Eve, as the one who brought sin and death into the human race (**Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:22**).

2. A Sincere Man Under A Tree – Nathanael (John 1:45-51). Jesus, having supernatural knowledge, called Nathanael *"an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."* Nathanael was puzzled as to how Jesus knew about him. Jesus said He knew exactly what Nathanael was doing under the fig tree even before Philip came up to him. Observe that the Lord knows the details of a person's life (**Psa. 139:1-4** cf. **Matt. 10:30**). Such supernatural knowledge moved Nathanael to confess Jesus as Messiah – *"the Son of God"* and *"the King of Israel."*

Jesus revealed to Nathanael a greater cause for belief. From **vv.50- 51**, it can be concluded that Nathanael was meditating on Jacob's life under the fig tree; on the incident in **Gen. 28:12** where Jacob saw the angels of God going up and down a ladder that reached heaven. But Jesus said that Nathanael would see the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man – Jesus, replacing the ladder which was God's link with earth!

3. A Seeking Man Up A Tree – Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). Zacchaeus was rich and influential, but also a despised publican (or tax collector for Rome). He knew he was a sinner. When Jesus came to Jericho, Zacchaeus wanted to get a glimpse of Him but could not because he was short. He ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree where, like a child, he waited for Jesus to pass by (**Luke 18:17**). Jesus already knew Zacchaeus and everything about him. He called the tax man to come down immediately for Jesus wanted to stay at his house. This was more than Zacchaeus had hoped for, so he joyfully welcomed Jesus in his home.

Many murmured because Jesus went to be the guest of a known sinner. Zacchaeus stood up and voluntarily announced that he would give half of what he owned to the poor and repay fourfold all he had abused. He publicly wanted the people to know that his encounter with Jesus had changed his life. Jesus' words, *"This day is salvation come to this*

house” (v.9) did not imply that giving to the poor and compensating damages had saved Zacchaeus, but that his good deeds proved the reality of his repentance and salvation. That was indeed the very mission of Jesus – *“to seek and to save that which was lost”* (v.10). Zacchaeus was a lost rich man who was found and saved by Jesus (Cf. **Luke 18:25**).

4. A Saviour Man On A Tree – Christ (Gal. 3:13). This is a partial quote from **Deut. 21:23**. All men are sinners in that they have broken God’s law. Paul declares that there is hope for all who have broken the law and are therefore under its curse. That hope is not in religion but in Christ who had redeemed us from the curse of the law. But how did Christ redeem man? The answer is by Him *“being made a curse for us.”*

This is a clear declaration of substitutionary redemption whereby Christ took the penalty of all guilty lawbreakers on Himself. Thus the **“curse of the law”** was transferred from sinners to Christ (**I Peter 3:18**). The quotation from **Deut. 21:23** refers to the Old Testament times when condemned criminals were executed (normally by stoning) and then displayed on a stake or post to show God’s divine rejection. When Christ was crucified, it was evidence that He had come under the curse of God and bore our sins in his own body on the tree of the cross (**I Pet. 2:24**).

5. A Saved Man Like A Tree – the Christian (Psa. 1:1-3). Psalm 1 describes the saved man as a blessed man who leads a spotless and prosperous life – one that is in accord with God’s word and contrasted with the ungodly who shall perish. In v.1, the saved man *“walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”* One who is not tarnished by this evil influence is considered *“blessed,”* That is, he is right with God and enjoys peace and joy from that relationship.

In v.2, we see that the saved man is not influenced by evil people but by his meditation of God’s word. Such meditation involves serious reading and study which are not weariness but rather a *“delight”* to him.

That is why in v.3 the saved man is compared to a fruitful tree. All who take their delight in living by God’s Word are rewarded with prosperity. Under the image of a fruitful tree, the psalmist declared that whatever the righteous do will prosper. Two qualifications need to be noted. First, the fruit (prosperity) is produced in its season. Second, what the righteous man does will be controlled by the law of God. So if a man meditates on God’s Word, his actions will be godly, and his God-controlled activities will prosper – that is, come in God’s perfect time and will (**Psa. 92:12-14**).

Conclusion: We have seen some interesting connections of men with trees. The most remarkable is that of Jesus who hanged and died on the tree of the cross to pay for our sins. If you have not yet truly repented of your sins and personally trusted Christ as Lord and Saviour, now is the time! You can be saved today and be a blessed man. You can be just like a fruitful tree that is planted beside a river – ever fresh and prosperous!