



We want to encourage you in the journey
. . . with biblical wisdom for *your* heart.

1-866-48-BIBLE • wisdomonline.org

Taught by a Forest of Trees

In Living Color, Part 7

Selected Scripture

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

Trees give us a reminder of who God is. They are intricately created and carry out some magnificent responsibilities on earth. Trees show us the importance of the older believers taking care of the younger. Throughout Scripture, we see the tree of pride through the sin of Adam and Eve, the tree of pardon through the crucifixion of Christ, and the tree of promise through the hope we have of an eternity in Heaven with God.

Discussion Points:

The tree of pride is the example of sin entering the world.

- How does our culture view sin?
- Do we (Christians) take sin seriously enough?
- How do we love others well (those living in sin) without compromising on God's Word?

Trees give us an example of the older believers caring for the younger in the church.

- We often take for granted the wisdom that the older saints in the church offer. How well does the church today reach all ages?
- How important is discipleship in a person's life?
- Is discipleship a part of your life?

We run the race with perseverance because of our living Hope, Jesus. He is leading us on our walk to eternal life with Him.

- What are some promises of Heaven that you are looking forward to?
- Do you ever feel like you are running in circles? How does the hope we have in Jesus encourage you?

Discussion Guide Cont.

Gospel Connection:

God uses magnificent trees to proclaim to us His truth. They point to our need for Jesus, the redemption we have through Him, and the promised hope of our future with Him. God created intricate and massive trees and also created us. Not only did He create us, He made a way for us to live with Him. Romans 5:8 tells us that God shows His love for us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God is sovereign over all. Even though sin entered the world, He still provided a way for us to reconcile to Him. What a gracious God we serve!

Practical Implications:

Think: Is discipleship a part of your life? Do you look for opportunities to encourage others and appreciate when others look to encourage you?

Pray: Ask God to remind you of the purpose you have in Christ. Ask him for opportunities to be a blessing to others.

Do: Live by the Word of God. Encourage others, and be a light for Christ.

Taught by a Forest of Trees

In Living Color, Part 7

Selected Scripture

There are 7.6 billion people on the planet today – and we get most of our oxygen from the trees that are alive and well.

For most of your childhood, the number of trees alive and well on the planet, has been a point of concern. You were told in school when you were growing up, that we had 400 billion trees alive and well; which is around 60 trees per person. That's not a lot, it seems.

And everyone was further alarmed by the fact that 1 billion trees were being cut down every year, and that number was growing with a growing world population . . . so everyone was put on alert – school children especially – that the planet was in danger and that we're obviously going to run out of trees and – with that – we're going to run out of oxygen.

In 2013, experts working with the School of Forestry and Environmental Sciences at Yale University and decided to launch an aggressive global program that would plant one billion trees.

But they really didn't know what kind of impact that would make, simply because nobody really knew how many trees there actually were. Surprisingly, an accurate count had never before been attempted.

So, with the help of national forest inventories and newly advanced satellite imaging, the team from Yale spent two years studying all the available data, with the help of computerized data processing tweaked for this project – finally, in 2015, they were stunned to discover that there are a little more than 3 trillion living trees on planet earth.

We're not running out of oxygen and we're not running out of trees. In fact, we now know that one average mature tree produces in one year all the oxygen 2 people will inhale in that year.

Now if you're new here today, you might wonder what in the world you've walked in to . . . you've heard of tree huggers – but this pastor is preaching about trees?

Well, yes and no. You happened to have walked into our study of the marvels of God's creative genius. And I've been prayerfully selecting different aspects and elements of creation that ultimately highlight the glory of God as our Creator and Redeemer.

Today I've decided to explore with you something so common that we might easily miss it – the average, ordinary tree. I want to give you three thoughts that will outline and guide our study today.

Number one – let's start with the beginning – first of all;

Trees are miracles of God's creation

In Genesis chapter 1, the Bible records for us what only God was an eyewitness to – how that on the third day of the creation week, God spoke into existence vegetation, plants and trees.

The Bible says; Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit . . ."

Genesis 1:11

Again, as we've already discovered in this series, the language of this creative act shows God commanding into existence a fully mature system, with trees already bearing fruit – a fully developed creation, which would have been necessary for Adam and Eve – also created fully mature – to have something to eat.

Of course, evolutionists continue to make much of the fact that the world looks old and therefore, the biblical account is either wrong, or God is deceiving us.

Well, the world looks old, as does the universe, because it had to in order to offer the benefits of everything from starlight to fruit trees.

And God isn't deceiving us because He's telling us up front what happened – in this Creation account – that He created everything mature and flourishing, in order to immediately benefit a fully-developed creation.

It's actually brilliant and perfectly logical that God would create plants and trees to produce oxygen and food and then 3 days later create the animal kingdom and the human race.

Imagine – here's this forest of trees – suddenly spoken into existence – and each tree a marvelous miracle. We know that each tree is without any external or internal skeleton to provide their support and strength; however, we now know that inside that tree are cells – and each cell has a robust cell wall – trillions of cells walls which give that tree its strength. The tree is created in a superior rounded fashion which allows for it to bend in the wind in all directions yet support the crown of branches and leaves with maximum strength. We've copied the same idea for telephone poles, by the way.

These trillions of cell walls make up the wood of the tree. But where did wood originally come from? ⁱ

Botanists estimate there are at least 60,000 tree species in the world, but one evolutionist at the University of Hawaii said, "We know next to nothing about how trees got here."

And what's even more interesting is that fossil evidence reveals dinosaurs wandered among the oak, willow and magnolia trees. In fact, one evolutionary report stated that new research shows that the genome of spruces, pines and fir trees show they've hardly changed at all since the days of the dinosaurs. ⁱⁱ

These trees should have died out millions of years ago – or evolved into different species of trees – or evolved into 2-story homes with a backyard fence.

One particular tree, evolutionists had nicknamed the dinosaur age tree, the Wollemi

Pine tree – was discovered alive and well in Australia in 1994.

Still, the evolutionary propaganda declares that the Wollemi Pine tree "displays no evolutionary changes over the past 200 million years." ⁱⁱⁱ I wonder if that's because trees aren't evolving.

One rather transparent botanist admitted, in one study I read from – and I quote – "(The origin of wood) – that is, the first steps of wood evolution are unknown."

We don't know how . . . we don't know where and when the first tree came to be.

Yes we do! We've been given an eyewitness account that God created trees by His verbal and creative command. And you know, the more we discover about the average tree out in your backyard or along the street, the more incredible is the miracle of their creation.

The tree is an amazing factory where the work never stops. A vascular system in the tree made up of tube-like systems draws water by the gallons from the roots to the leaves and then sends food, crafted by the leaves, back down to the roots.

God designed most living things to breathe oxygen and expel carbon dioxide as a waste product. But plants and primarily trees, absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and breathe out oxygen.

By the way, it's important to remember that forests aren't human; trees aren't alive in the same sense that the Bible refers to animals and humans – as having *nephesh* – the Hebrew word – for conscious life, or self-consciousness (Genesis 1:24-25).

Trees don't have *nephesh* – self-conscious life. When you chop down a tree, you're not murdering a self-conscious life.

The evolutionist however, by losing the order of God's created priority – which has the human being at the top – made in the image of God with will and self-determination and a moral code and an immortal soul – but the Creator deniers end up attributing to a tree the same kind of life as a human – in fact, trees are not

only given the same right to life as you, they are even given mystical powers.

We call it tree hugging, and I've witnessed it for myself – I'll never forget traveling to one country and arriving at a beautiful park with old trees and there were people literally surrounding trees, embracing them – supposedly drawing strength and insight and direction from those trees.

I was standing at the cashier's line two weeks ago and my eye caught the lines in a community newspaper – so I picked it up and read – that people who want to find their perfect sweetheart don't need help by friends or the internet. Instead, they can write a letter to an oak tree in Germany called, translated into English, The Bridegroom's Oak.

It's a 500-year-old tree in a German forest that evidently has the ability to bring people together . . . all you need to do is write a letter describing yourself – and postal carriers will deliver your letter to that tree – if you can believe it, that tree has its own registered address. And letters arrive daily, from around the world. And people claim that they met the love of their life after they wrote this tree. That tree must have special powers after all.

Well, it doesn't have special powers . . . in fact, it doesn't have the ability to read your letter.

The Apostle Paul writes that when the Creator is rejected, nature is elevated in His place so that nature is now sovereign. Well, that's really another sermon.

All that kind of nonsense aside, the tree remains one of God's marvelous demonstrations of His original creative design. And the more they are discovering about trees, the more marvelous God's creative design happens to be.

For instance, certain trees have a defense system against being overeaten by producing chemicals that make their leaves taste bad.

They've even discovered that as a hungry insect salivates on certain elm trees, the trees chemically reproduce the saliva and emit that chemical into the air, and the odor alerts predators who like to eat that particular insect

and the smell prompts them to come flying in and eat the invading insect.

Research is discovering so much below ground as well. The old view was that trees competed in a life-and-death struggle for limited light and resources, but current research is finding out that trees are assisting each other.

For instance, when a young sapling springs up in the shade of a thick forest, older trees share nutrients through their roots with the sapling.

God has designed the older trees to assist the younger trees – and there's a spiritual lesson in that, by the way.

Researchers have discovered as well that older trees even change their root structure to open up space for the roots of a younger tree.

Networks of electrical impulses are constantly passing through nerve like cells from root tip to root tip – broadcasting everything from drought conditions to predator attacks.

A forest of trees is more sophisticated than the world-wide-web – one author said, it is the wood-wide-web.^{iv}

Trees are miracles of God's creation. Secondly,

Trees are metaphors of godly believers

Just as we've observed, older believers are to teach younger believers – older women teaching younger women (Titus 2); older men teaching younger men (2 Timothy 2).

Time after time, the authors of scripture refer to trees as illustrations of godly believers. Those who trust in the Lord and delight in His word are compared to firmly planted trees (Psalm 1).

Jeremiah the prophet declared – as did the Psalmist David – Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Jeremiah says – study a tree . . . and then observe that the best parts of the life of that tree are analogous to the best parts of the believer’s life when he is anchored – rooted – in relationship with the Lord.

Security, stability, strength, productivity, growth, perseverance, able to withstand adversity, remaining fruitful and faithful . . . These are some of the characteristics of a believer who is tree-like – rooted in the confidence of the character of God.

Trees are miracles of God’s creation. Trees are metaphors of godly believers and finally,

Trees are messengers of gospel warnings and promises

On one occasion a fig tree that wasn’t bearing any fruit was used by Christ to communicate by way of illustration the fruitlessness of that current generation of Jews. The nation Israel was empty spiritually and Jesus pronounced judgment on them (*Matthew 21:19*)

One of the fearful effects of judgment that will fall on the human race after the rapture of the Church, during that period of time known as the Tribulation, involves trees.

Trees are going to be around throughout all of human history – to the very end – you don’t need to worry if we’ll ever run out of them.

We know that because during the Tribulation period, we’re told in the Book of Revelation at chapter 8, that as God pours out His wrath on earth, one of the things that He will do is bombard earth with hail and fire so that one third of all the trees on the planet are destroyed.

Near the end of the Tribulation, the Bible informs us that hailstones will rain down on earth, John the Apostle writes, each hailstone weighing around 100 pounds.

By the way, the largest hailstones recorded in recent history weighed in at 2 pounds and that hailstorm killed nearly 100 people. Imagine 100 pound hailstones.

Earthquakes will accompany these horrific firestorms and hailstorms.

Mankind has worshipped Mother Nature, defying Creator God and elevating nature above everything. And it’s as if God says, “Okay, you want Mother Nature . . . well, I’ll give you Mother Nature.”

Imagine 1 trillion trees destroyed in a matter of days.

Imagine, as God wipes out one third of the trees on the planet, the reduction of oxygen in much of the world, and a resulting difficulty in breathing may be a very real part of the horrific conditions on earth as the wrath of God is unleashed during the 7-year tribulation.

One of the final warnings we’re given about the end of human history is related to the tree.

I couldn’t help but think that the very first warning in all of human history involved a tree, right? We can call it, the tree of pride.

In Genesis 2 we read: The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.

Genesis 2:16-17

And what happened? Eve comes along and takes the initiative in her own independence and pride, following the alluring temptation of Satan to eat from that tree and become as wise as God. And Adam soon followed in his own defiant pride.

Sin entered the world – and Adam and Eve, who would have lived forever in that perfect condition began to die. Cells in their bodies died; attributes in their physical condition began to be affected by age.

This was the tree of pride.

They said, “The knowledge of good and evil will not be withheld from us – we will be as knowledgeable like God!”

God placed that tree there so that Adam and Eve, though innocent and created without a sinful, fallen nature, had a choice to make. Pride or humility – Obedience or defiance.

And imagine, here they are in the Garden of Eden. The Hebrew word for Eden is delight. They are in the Garden of Delight. They can eat from any tree they like . . . but not this one.

So what would their priority be? Fellowship with God – worship of God – obedience to God? They chose self-willed, self-promoting, self-exalting, God-defying, God-denying, God-despising sin. And before they are expelled from that Garden of Delight, they are given a promise of a coming, suffering, Satan-crushing Redeemer.

Another tree is promised in the future. **This is, the tree of pardon.**

Paul writes to the Galatians the gospel which was preached to Abraham, passed down to him from Adam’s record of that day in the garden – a record that would become a part of scripture – **Galatians 3:8** tells us.

And what was that gospel? A few verses later in **Galatians 3**, Paul writes, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree [wood].”

Galatians 3:13

In ancient Judaism, a criminal worthy of death was typically stoned to death and then tied up or hung from a post or tree, where his body would hang until sunset as a visible statement that he had been rejected by God.

He wasn’t rejected because he was hanging from a tree; he was hanging from a tree as a sign that he was rejected by God.

So Jesus Christ will take our sins and allow Himself to be hung on a tree – literally – wood. And He will be rejected by God the Father. But Jesus will bear that rejection by God the Father so that you and I can be accepted by God the Father.

One tree stands for our pride. One tree stands for our pardon. Another tree stands for our eternal promise. **The tree of promise.**

In **Revelation chapter 21**, there is an orchard of trees, actually, which will adorn the main

boulevard of the Father’s House, on either side of the river of life which cascades down as a waterfall from the throne of God.

It’s interesting that the only vegetation given special mention in Heaven is a tree. It’s called the tree of life. And according to Revelation 22 we read, Then he showed me (John) a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.

Revelation 22:2

It’s interesting that in Heaven, we’re going to have trees and these trees are going to bear fruit. In fact, God is going to alter what we normally experience so that this tree will have twelve kinds or crops of fruit and it will produce a fresh fruit every month.

Which is also interesting because you evidently have months – and time – and eating . . . more on this later as I plan, Lord willing, to spend a session or two on the new heavens and the new earth – the new and eternal creation of God.

So you have yet another tree.

- The first tree witnessed the sin of mankind and the curse of sin on the human race.
- The second tree witnessed the Savior of mankind and the curse borne in His own body on that tree;
- The third tree, is a witness to the splendor of Heaven forever.

The first tree of pride hoped in that second tree of pardon. Have you gone to that second tree? If you have you will enjoy that final tree – the tree of life – which runs alongside the river of life. But you must go first to that tree of pardon – the cross of Jesus Christ.

The foot of His cross touches earth as if to communicate that God came to earth to die for the world

The arms of His cross stretch outward as if to communicate whosoever will may come

The top of His cross points upward as if to
communicate there is a heaven to live in one
day.

But you can't get there unless you come by
faith and trust to the cross of Christ. Have you
come? Will you come today? Today!

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 10/21/2018 by Stephen Davey.

© Copyright 2018 Stephen Davey
All rights reserved.

i Adapted from resources found at [Answers in Genesis.org](http://AnswersinGenesis.org)

ii Ibid

iii Ibid

iv Ibid