

Storm Survivors

Not long ago, our area was blasted with an ice storm. The rain came, the winds blew, the temperature dropped and that rain changed to ice. That ice blew and pelted the ground and everything in its path. The trees, especially, took a hit; a hard one; and literally. Every tree regardless of age, size and species was affected. The ice, literally, engulfed them. The freezing temperature, along with the lack of constant sunshine, caused the trees to remain frozen for a few days. Interestingly enough, if you remember, the trees though, were actually - beautiful. They created a breathtaking picture of a crystal sparkle and shining shimmer. When the sun did shine, those trees reflected that light and actually looked as if they were dripping with diamonds. It was a breathtaking sight to behold. The unfortunate side to this beautiful picture, was the fact that due to the strength of the wind in the storm, and the weight of the ice on their branches, some of those trees were damaged. Some of those damages were severe, and some trees were even destroyed. As time passed and the ice remained, those beautiful icy trees began to sag and buckle under the weight of their heavy burden. The truth of the matter is that even the healthiest of trees may experience damage in the storm. Weak and diseased trees are especially vulnerable. Trees that have branches which are fine or cracked are a target for injury, as are trees which have broad or imbalanced crowns. During a storm though, any tree can be damaged. Trees experience wounds and according to scientists they feel pain. The good news is that with the proper care from the Tree Specialist (known as an Arborist), the tree, although wounded and possibly scarred - will survive the storm.

Storms. Merriam Webster defines a storm as: a disturbed or an agitated state: a violent commotion: a tumultuous outburst. Obviously, there are the weather-related storms. And then there are life-related storms. Sickness/cancer. Job loss/money problems. Family/marriage/children concerns.

A pandemic. And on and on. Like those trees - the storm blows in and we are engulfed. We sag and buckle under the weight of our burden. We are vulnerable. Depending on the nature of the storm, we may become weak, wounded, feel pain and become scarred. We experience damage and feel as though we've been destroyed. Life storms affect all people - no one is exempt. They wreak havoc and inflict damage. The Psalmist understood this: *"Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in You my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by."* One thing we can count on is that in life, we will encounter storms according to John 16:33 and 2 Corinthians 8-9. The good news is that according to Psalm 46:1-2, God goes through the storms with us. Even better is the news that God delivers us through them. But the very best news of all is that if we seek the proper care from our Specialist - Jesus Christ - He makes all things new!! 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* Jesus Christ can restore what the storm has destroyed. When we accept Him as Savior, he not only removes the old - but he makes us new!! Newness sparkles and shines. We reflect the Son and shine so that others can see Jesus in us. As we determine in our hearts to reflect Jesus so others may see Him in our lives, let's consider some advice from the tree: Stay grounded (in Christ), Dig your roots deep (Jeremiah 17:8), Go out on a limb (or branch-John 15:5), Take in as much water as you can (Living Water John 4:14). May we be the men and women who delight in the law of the Lord and in his law and meditate day and night. And we shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water... Psalm 1:2-3A.

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God bless,

The Christian Center Staff