

Oak Grove Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dr. Bart Roush & Rev. Mary Koon
Outdoor Worship at Moir Park
August 14, 2022

Bart Roush
8-14-22 Meditation
Oak Grove Presbyterian Church
Jeremiah 17:7-8

“Happy are those who trust in the LORD, who rely on the LORD. They will be like trees planted by the streams, whose roots reach down to the water. They won’t fear drought when it comes; their leaves will remain green. They won’t be stressed in the time of drought or fail to bear fruit.”

Larger trees are firmly planted in the ground and have strong roots. They are nourished. All trees need sustenance – they need light, they need water. Those trees that are nourished grow strong, they bear fruit.

Jeremiah uses the image of a tree to talk about a faithful life. He mentions that those trees without nourishment will wither – but those faithful in God will be like a tree planted next to a stream. The water of the stream provides the source of life to the roots of the tree

When a tree is strong, when it is rooted – it can withstand a lot. Wind and storms may come, but it does not budge. The strong tree gives shelter to birds and squirrels. In the fall, they gleam with beautiful leaves colored with yellows, oranges, reds, browns, and golds. Its branches provide shade for anyone looking for relief from the sun. Strong trees are consistent - every year, they provide fruit or seed. Every new spring season, they sprout new leaves.

Throughout the Old Testament, strong and firm are those that are deeply rooted and connected to God – following in the ways of God, bearing fruit. Those faithful are reminded again and again of their foundation – the thing that nurtures their roots – the source of their life – a gracious and saving God.

“They are like trees planted by streams of water.”

Sometimes, with all that we face in life – the drought of anxiety, the winds of uncertainty, the storm and crash of all the chaos of life, it can be difficult to remember that we are rooted in God. It is good to take some time and as the Psalmist says, “Be still and know that I am God.”

I want us all to take a few moments and do this together. I invite you to get as comfortable as possible, and if you wish, you can close your eyes.

Take a breath and let it out. Again.

Now, in your imagination, see a tree. Maybe it's an oak. Maybe an evergreen. An apple tree or a willow. As you see the tree, move closer to it. What color are its leaves? Does it have fruit?

As you move close to the tree, notice you hear water. There is a stream next to the tree. As you look closer, you can see how the roots of the tree have grown near the bank of the stream and how they draw life from the water up into the tree.

Sit next to the tree. Maybe dip your feet into the water. Feel the breeze. Hear the birds. Let the leaves shade you.

As you sit, feel yourself being restored, replenished.

- Ask yourself, what is it that gives you life?
- What is it that helps you grow?
- What is it that makes you fruitful?

“Happy are those who trust in the LORD, who rely on the LORD.
They will be like trees planted by the streams.”

Take a moment and thank God for the ways you are sustained, the ways you have been and can be fruitful.

Amen