

## **“What Is Your Commitment?”**

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*Mark 8:21-26 ...I see men as trees, walking...*

We join our text today in the book of Mark, having the people of Bethsaida bringing unto the Lord a blind man. The Lord Jesus took this blind man out of town, spat on his eyes, and asked him what he saw. The blind man looked up, and said he saw men as trees, walking. The Bible goes on to say that the Lord touched his eyes again and made him look up, and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. The Lord then sent him home and told him not to go into town or tell it in town.

Why would the Lord tell him to go home and not show anyone? If we were to look back up at verse 11 we would see the Pharisees tempting Him, wanting to see a sign. Because of that spirit, the Lord did not give them access to witness this great miracle. But, let us focus on the vision of the blind man. He said he saw men as trees, walking. If all of us could tap into that vision for just a few minutes we would see people all over the world resembling trees. The question that we would have to ask is, what kind of tree are we? Everyone say, “What kind of tree am I?”

*Psalms 1:1-6 ...he shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season...*

What a wonderful tree to be like. Lord, I don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly, or sit in the seat of the scornful, nor stand in the way of sinners, but I delight in You. Then I can be like a tree by the water, always nourished and bringing forth fruit.

But there are other trees, too

*Psalms 137:1-2 ...We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.*

Willow trees are kind of different from other trees; they kind of hang down. Some people call them weeping willows. The harps were meant for praising and blessing God. These people found some willow trees to be around and just hanged their harps there, meaning they left off praising God and joined in with the sadness and the drooping. They say misery loves company; people that just want to complain will find fellowship with others that want to complain. If you try to encourage them or cheer them up, then they don't want to be around you. We've all seen people like this, and, if we're really honest, we've all been people like this. My point here is that we have a choice.

I remember when I was eight years old I was at a friend of my mother's, and there were many beautiful trees she had by her place—but there was the phenomena called the seventeen-year locust that had come, and I noticed that this one big beautiful tree had started wilting. I asked what had happened to it, and she said that the locusts have just about killed it.

If we're not careful, that could be any one of us. Every now and again, it seems like things just gang up on us to the point that it saps the life right out of us. But we do have a remedy.

*Psalms 37:5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.*

If we make our commitment to the Lord and trust in Him, then He brings it to pass.

After spending some time visiting with God about this, I thought, "God, I've got the answer: we need to be more like Jesus. So many things would change if it were so." The Lord had a reply for me; He said, "You first."

*Luke 6:43-45 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit...*

So, again, saints, it is a choice. I can make my commitment to bring forth good fruit or evil.

We are living in a day when things need to be politically correct. Some people said that the Bible offended women, so they wrote a new Bible that was gender neutral. Then some people decided that the Bible was offensive to animals (yeah, to animals!), so they wrote a new Bible that wouldn't offend animals. Then some people decided that references to Hell might offend people, so they wrote a new Bible, and they took out Hell! Then some people decided that the Bible shouldn't offend atheists, so they took out God! You know what they say? It's a Bible for the rest of us. **Why call it a Bible??** If you want to be an atheist, be an atheist; if you want to be a Buddhist, be a Buddhist; if you want to be a Hindu, be a Hindu; or a Muslim, be a Muslim; but don't look at the One who walked on water, opened blinded eyes, and rose from the dead, and then turn around and say, "We're just like you." My question is, where's your fruit? Can you walk on water, heal the blind? Don't try to steal God's glory; he said, "My glory will I not give to another."

And since I'm on the subject, let me just use this scripture from the Word of God; no matter what you call yourself, the Bible says that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

*Philippians 2:10-11 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...*

Brother Tom Hanson, Obie, and myself were going to Denny's a little while ago, when he had mentioned about Jesus being a Nazarene, and how He touched a dead body. No one in Israel was supposed to be touching dead bodies, let alone a Nazarene. All of a sudden I could feel my understanding being opened, and I've held onto it for this very moment. There could be all kinds of diseases you could get from carcasses, and Nazarenes were supposed to keep themselves clean before God. This Nazarene was different from all those that went before Him; this Nazarene was not subject to the finality of death.

When Israel was occupied by the Muslims, they knew the prophecy that He would return from the East, so they bricked up the East gate, and, in case that wasn't enough, they put a graveyard there. They didn't understand who they were dealing with—If they did, they would realize that He could destroy those bricks with his breath, and raise all the dead in that graveyard (He's done it before).

And, by the way, do you know what trees do all their lives? I need some volunteers. I first need some willows; next I need some oak trees (some people got up, and the "oak trees" raised their hands as if to praise God, while the "willows" drooped their heads and let their arms dangle). You might say, "Brother Parrish, I think maybe sometimes I haven't been one of those trees that's tall and erect praising God." My brothers and sisters, the Bible says that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, all things become new (the "willows" straightened up their posture and raised their hands and became "oak trees").

