

June Pastor's Note: Not Too Shady

At the beginning of Scripture, in the book of Genesis, we're told of a garden called Eden with many trees (Genesis 2:9). At the end of Scripture, in the last chapter of Revelation, we're told of a tree of life looming large in the heavenly realms (Revelation 22:2). And in the middle of all this, at the center of our Bibles, we find the book of Psalms, which opens with the image of a tree, and how those who delight in God and God's words will be like a firmly rooted tree, yielding fruit in season and displaying leaves that don't wither (Psalm 1:1-3).

Thus, in the opening, middle, and end of our Bibles is this imagery of trees, the roots of which, I believe, weave their way all throughout Scripture and our lives. Trees are something we are always seeing, whether it's out our windows, on our drives, or during our walks. As Jesus used common things in his parables and teachings to his followers, so God gave us the imagery of something familiar in Scripture that generations would see and relate to: trees. Not to mention, Jesus, as a carpenter, would be very familiar with wood. And from cradle to cross, the Savior of the world was found either surrounded by or suspended on wood, which, for us, would mean the splintering off of our sin once and for all, so that we might be rooted and reconciled to God, protected from anything that might try to uproot us in the future, standing strong in our new natures and identity in Christ.

For the month of June, we're going to be surrounded by trees, for we will be worshipping outside (so long as it's not raining!) before going indoors again for the hotter months of July and August. Although we won't be solely focused on trees for our next sermon series, which will be titled "Sheltered," during the month of June we'll be highlighting special stories in Scripture that are all connected to trees or shade in some way and/or the idea of being sheltered. Whether it's the story of the three visitors that arrive at Abraham's doorstep and are provided literal and figurative shade, the story of Gideon who was called by an angel of the LORD sitting in the shade, the story of the disciple whom Jesus saw under the fig tree, or the story of grumpy Jonah who had a thing or two to say when God took away his shade, we hope you're as excited as our worship team is! Also, during our 9:30am Sunday services, we'll invite our children to hear a special children's message, as we learn about a different tree each week and what that tree has to teach us. And June will be a month jam-packed with special things, for we'll be having a Sunday Funday after service on June 13th and Graduation Sunday on June 20th. It's an exciting season and we hope you can join us for all that's ahead!

Just as the big branches and leaves of a tree provide shade and shelter from the heat of the day, so too are we covered by God and given a cool place to sit, no matter how hot the literal or figurative weather of our lives may be. As you join us for all that we have in store for the month ahead, I pray that you would feel sheltered by God, protected from that which would seek to uproot you, and find a cool place in the shade to rest. For it is often in the midst of the shade that God encounters us, or from the shade that God calls us. I also pray that you, like the trees in the soil around you, would firmly root yourself in the God beneath, above, and around you, the God who gives more life, shade, and protection than even the tallest and most firmly rooted trees.

Grounded in Christ,
Pastor Donald