

Reflection for Thursday 19th November 2020 by Revd Gerry Foster

There have been counted 136 verses with reference to trees and wood, across 32 books of the Bible. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is one of two specific trees in the story of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2–3, along with the tree of life. The manger in which Jesus was laid as a baby, the carpentry his Father, Joseph, no doubt taught him, to the tree on which Jesus Christ was crucified, all hold powerful symbolism.

We're learning more and more about the huge significance of trees as part of the ECO System, our natural wellbeing and especially our mental health. This is quite apart from their importance within the whole creation, and the devastating effect on climate and world health and wellbeing, when trees are cut down indiscriminately.



I was struck by these pictures of towering trees, decades old. Look at how there is probably almost as much growth below in the system of roots, as in the branches above. The branches reach up to clasp sun and light. The roots reach down unseen for water and nutrients. The leaves fall and then become compost for adding to those nutrients, which both sustain it and maintain it as a place for many creatures to live themselves. Mankind may have had very little to do with the growth of these particular trees. We are in awe of the One who brought them into being.



We can tell the seasons by the trees' appearance and their colours, with which the Creator decorates them, as though painting from an Artist's palette.



It is good for us to be in wonder. We may not be able to take a commercial flight to a Space Station. We may not be able to go far at all during Lockdown, but God is never in Lockdown. He is continually bidding us use our senses to experience his recreative presence in the world about us.

When I was a child, I wasn't particularly agile, but in our garden there was a tree, just like the one full of blossom above and I climbed it to look over the fence. I was fascinated to look into our nextdoor neighbour's garden. I was intrigued how different it was, especially with its fishpond and their cats which liked to dance round it..... it was so close to ours, but like another world.

Just over the fence....just round the corner....at the turn of the season....there is something to be fascinated by. There is so much going on both higher or lower than our eyes can see, quite apart from trying to gaze into outer space and imagine human beings spending months miles above the earth. There is so much more than can be appreciated from our human understanding.

Let's be encouraged to allow God's awesome recreativity, His presence which holds everything in His hands, including all the times and seasons we are living in and through, to bring the colour of hope and trust into our lives. Let's allow ourselves to be rooted in him:

Jeremiah 17: 7 – 8 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water, that sends out its roots when heat comes"

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