

### ***Lessons from the Mesquite Tree***

*“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled” (Hebrews 12:15).*

Our Lord Jesus used many agricultural illustrations to teach the truths of the Kingdom of God. For example, you have the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-9), the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30), the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13: 31-32), the Parable of the Seed Growing (Mark 4:26-29), and Jesus referred to Himself as the True Vine (John 15:1-5). Through each of these, Jesus’ original hearers and followers were able to see by faith the Kingdom of God more clearly in everyday life. Here in Central Texas, we are all familiar with the mesquite tree; some like it, yet most especially if you are in the ranching industry, tend to hate it. This past week, I had a fellow shepherd of souls remind me of the spiritual truths that can be learned and applied through the mesquite tree. Here are some of those insights:

First off, the mesquite tree is an invasive species that tends to out compete and hurt the surrounding native plants. This is not good for ranchers, because if their pasture is full of mesquites, their native grass production is going to decrease and therefore effect the overall performance of their cattle operation. Mesquite trees have a very powerful root system. A mature mesquite tree’s tap roots can root downwards to 100 feet or more. Where they have the ability to take in up to 20 gallons of water per day. In the same way, when we allow an invasive species into the soil of our heart, the effects on our spiritual growth can be damaging...

When dealing with mesquite trees and trying to keep them under control. You must keep in mind that it’s going to be hard work. Whether you are spraying, grubbing, or just praying, they will all disappear. Mesquite tree management is a continual process... And in the same way, managing the soil of our hearts in the gospel is hard, continual, but most certainly rewarding work. If left alone and poorly managed like the mesquite tree, the “root of bitterness”, sinful habit, or seed of dissention planted by satan can quickly spread and overtake the entire pasture. In our Christian life, we must keep the sprayers of Sendero, Remedy, and diesel filled and close by actively attacking the sin that so easily trips us up, and the wickedness that has sprung up in our hearts. Because the truth is, if we sit passively, we will soon look up and be like a rancher whose pasture is overtaken by mesquite shrubs, bushes, trees, or whatever you prefer to call them.

And so dear Christian, does your pasture need some tender loving management from the One who owns the cattle on a thousand hills? (Psalm 50:10). Is there a mesquite tree taking root, that if not managed rightly can turn into 100 mesquite trees that will, in return, bring harm upon the good plants? Through prayer, dependance upon the Lord, the power of the Holy Spirit, humble surrender, and a continual hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, start removing those mesquite trees from the Lord’s vineyard (or in this case His pasture). For the yield of grace, growth, and godliness will most certainly be worth the labor!

Respect the Blood,  
Dalton Mathis