

Rotten Roots

A medium-sized wind storm came through our area a few weeks ago, leaving a surprising number of downed and damaged trees in its wake. Some only suffered the loss of a few branches or a top broken off partway up the trunk: survivable setbacks. But others had blown over completely. Those trees were dead and had not even left a stump behind to nurture the seedlings of the next generation.

What made the difference between the two outcomes – survivable and fatal? A closer examination revealed that nearly all the fallen trees had rotten roots. They may have looked fine above ground, but they didn't have a secure footing. The advanced state of decay at the base meant they simply weren't strong enough to withstand a storm. Jesus said:

"I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed, and its destruction was complete." (Luke 6:47-49)

Not one of us gets through life without facing at least a few storms – physical, emotional, or spiritual – and we will undoubtedly sustain some injury from each one. But will the damage result in complete destruction or survivable setbacks that may make us stronger in the end? That's the important question. The answer depends on how healthy our roots are.

On what is your foundation laid? On the things of this world, which lead only to decay and death? Or on the solid rock of Jesus, who gives life and health and strength? Perhaps, like the house without a foundation (and the whitewashed tombs Jesus spoke of in Matthew 23:27), everything looks fine on the outside, but there is rot and corruption below.

Let us dig down deep into the Word of God, standing firm in Jesus and putting into practice all he teaches us. Then he will enable us to weather the storms. Not only that, but when we pass from this life, we will leave a nurturing stump behind – a spiritual legacy for others to grow on.

Therefore as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, established in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. (Col. 2:7)

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