

Articles and Sermons :: A Remarkable Resilience by Alan Martin

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The man described in Psalm 1 is remarkably resilient. Webster defines resilience as: “an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.”

What’s so remarkable about the man in Psalm 1? Simply this, “his leaf does not wither”

Green leaves are not remarkable when one is in the rain forest, dry leaves would be though.

Have we supposed that the man in Psalm 1 never endures drought conditions? What would be remarkable about a tree having green leaves with constant rainfall? Green leaves are common in the wetlands, but they are quite remarkable in the deserts.

But we might think this man is like that tree planted by the streams of water, so we picture a flowing river with a lovely tree nestled beside it. Would green leaves on a tree in this setting be remarkable to us? I think not; perhaps we should look again.

During prolonged drought conditions, surface water begins to evaporate. Prolonged periods without rain will eventually cause streams to become a dry bed. In such conditions we expect to see things that depend upon water suffer. It is not remarkable for the leaves on trees to wither in severe drought conditions, actually it is rather expected. On the other hand, it is quite remarkable to see one tree whose leaves have not withered when all around it stand many trees who have succumbed to the severity of the harsh conditions. That tree is a remarkable tree; it has overcome the drought.

Have we supposed that the man in Psalm 1 must live in the spiritual rain forest with good teaching, good fellowship, good job, good family, and good friends? Would it be remarkable that a man could thrive spiritually in such conditions? When God is blessing, grace is abounding, and the boundary lines have fallen in pleasant places – God is good and I am good! Is that remarkable?

How do we do in the long dry spells? Yes, every man will have them! How do we respond to the “dog days” of summer, when day after day the weather is hot, dry, not a cloud in sight, with no sign of relief on the way? The man whose leaves do not wither in these conditions is a truly remarkable man.

The man who demonstrates this kind of resilience must have a source unseen that the withering trees have not found. Even when the surface water dries up, there is water to be had, but it will lie deeper beneath the surface. This is the secret of the resilient tree; its roots go deep enough to find the hidden water source. We see by its leaves that its roots must be deep, because we see no water yet the leaves are still green.

That’s why the man in Psalm 1 is described as BLESSED! His roots are in God Himself, not the surface conditions of his circumstances. Jeremiah describes this man in this way:

“Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But 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 by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Such men are remarkably resilient. The blessing of the LORD makes men remarkably resilient.