

“We’re Growing Mighty Oaks”

Growing up in New England I have always loved oak trees – perhaps more than any other species. There is something about them – their stateliness, majesty, sturdiness, or perhaps their sheer magnificence. They remind me of a venerable friend whose faithfulness is as enduring as time!

The Bible speaks quite frequently about trees, from the Garden of Eden in Genesis to the New Jerusalem in Revelation. The oak tree is mentioned in numerous places (depending on the bible translation), and although different than our New England oaks in all likelihood, oak trees in scripture are known for being “great” or “mighty” and were often used as markers for some significant location (i.e. burial places, monuments, etc.). Clearly God intended that the oak tree would be symbolic of significance and faithfulness, a permanent testimony of God’s work in the world and a fitting tribute to his glory.

That is the picture we have in Isaiah as he describes the work of the Savior. Jesus would come into the world to bind up the brokenhearted, to release those held captive by sin, and to transform the hearts of people from the darkness of this world to the light of his glory. His Spirit works in us that we should grow from spiritual infancy into spiritual maturity, and that work is described in Isaiah 61. Speaking of those who are in the process of being transformed by the Lord, Isaiah says, *“They will be called mighty oaks, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.”* (Isaiah 61:3c TNIV)

Paul tells us that those who follow Jesus are being transformed “to become more and more like [Jesus] to reflect his glory even more.” (2Cor.3:18b NLT) As his disciples we are called to become mighty oaks for the glory of the Lord! This does not happen automatically, or through some random work as if by magic. It is the direct result of the intentional efforts of those called to equip the saints until we all attain spiritual maturity (Eph. 4:11-13). Disciples are not born; they are made!

Making disciples for Jesus is challenging, but as we are faithful to Christ’s Great Commission (Mt.28:18-20), we will experience the joy of doing what God has called us to do. With the dawn of a New Year we have the opportunity to be devoted to the task at hand. A new approach to discipling at Oak Hill Bible Church will be implemented in 2011. The systematic method we have used for the past six years is being revamped and a new format with different material will be introduced this year. To further strengthen our walk with Jesus, we will also use a daily Bible reading devotional called WOW-The Big Picture. This online or email resource will help people get into the Word of God on a daily basis (see more information inside). I anticipate launching LIFE (Living In Faith Everyday) groups as part of our intentional effort to make disciples. We’re growing mighty oaks at Oak Hill Bible Church. I sure hope you will be one of them!