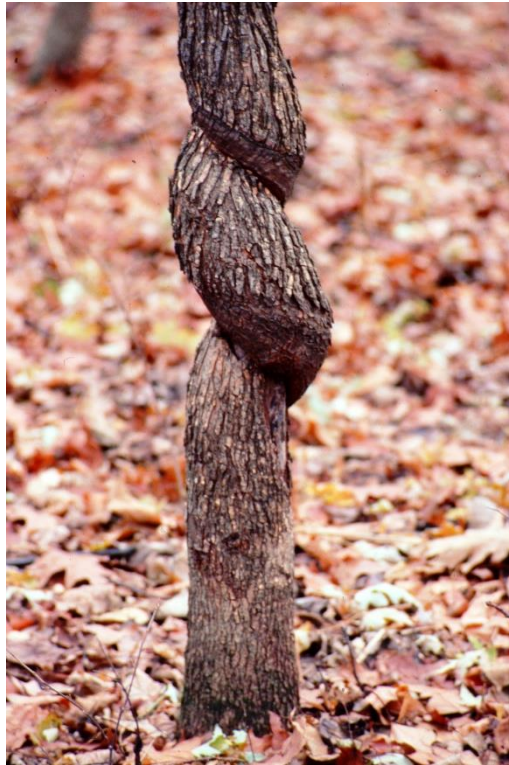


# *Blessings Remembered*

*God's Word, various images and occasional history as presented on this devotional website page will hopefully prompt memories of many personal blessings from God in your lives. May you always trust in God's promised blessings, past, present, future and for all eternity.*

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8*

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**"What is twisted cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted"(Ecclesiastes 1:15 NIV).**

Early in the life of this tree, some sort of vine wound its way tightly around the trunk. As the tree grew, it became distorted, filling out around the vine, leaving a permanent scar in the twisted shape of the vine which threatened to choke it.

If we could take a photograph of our spiritual nature, we would see a similar twist or distortion caused by our sinful disobedience to God. Just as the vine held the tree in a deadly chokehold, so sin holds us in its deadly grip. Sin chokes the life out of us; sin distorts our views and twists our behavior; sin leaves us life-less and without God.

The words quoted above from Ecclesiastes, tell us the tragic effect that sin has upon our lives. We are no more able to straighten-out the distortion that sin brings upon us, than the tree in the photograph could straighten itself. The power to straighten lives, lies only in God.

As well as having the power, the Good News is that, God also has the desire to straighten our "sin twisted" lives. Long ago, God promised that He would bring His answer, His plan, to make us straight with Him, once again. That promise has come to us in Jesus Christ. In Jesus, God declared that; "Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth" (Luke 3 : 5 NIV).

In Jesus, God levels the way, He smooths and straightens the twists and crooked turns of our lives, so that we might come directly to Him, to receive His forgiveness, life and strength. The book of Proverbs tells us this of the Lord; "In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6 NIV). We acknowledge the Lord Jesus through faith in His suffering, death and resurrection from the dead. God gives us faith in Jesus, in order to make us straight again - and to keep us straight with Him.

Through faith, we receive the power of God, power given by the Holy Spirit, through God's Word, and Baptism and the Lord's Supper. By His Word, God has promised "I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths" (Proverbs 4:11 NIV). Faith keeps us in the knowledge of God's precious promises, knowledge of which God says; "... a man of understanding keeps a straight course" (Proverbs 15:21 NIV).

As our lives (and this world) are constantly twisted and turned by the deadly chokehold of sin, we have God's promise, for Jesus' sake, to straighten things according to His gracious, loving will in Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus, we may be confident that God has provided a straight, sure road for life with Him. In Jesus, we gladly take to heart the words of prayer found in Psalms and Proverbs. "Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness...make straight your way before me." "Teach me your way, O LORD, lead me in a straight path..." (Psalm 5:8 and 27:11 NIV).

15 What is crooked cannot be made straight,  
and what is lacking cannot be counted.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ec 1:15.

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.  
5 Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall become straight,  
and the rough places shall become level ways,  
6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Lk 3:4–6. Quote from Isaiah 40

3 A voice cries:  
“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
4 Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.  
5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Is 40:3–5.

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.  
6 In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Pr 3:5–6.

11 I have taught you the way of wisdom;  
I have led you in the paths of uprightness.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Pr  
4:11.

21 Folly is a joy to him who lacks sense,  
but a man of understanding walks straight ahead.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Pr  
15:21.

8 Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness  
because of my enemies;  
make your way straight before me.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps  
5:8.

4 Make me to know your ways, O Lord;  
teach me your paths.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps  
25:4.

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O Lord,  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my enemies.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 27:11.