

"LIFE THROUGH THE LENS"



MANY ARMS

It stood there.! Massive! Dwarfing all around it! Its powerful arms lifted as in homage to its maker! It's age? Who could guess? Although so imposing in size, it seemed to unfold an aura of encompassing welcome and shelter, all supported by one trunk a fraction of the size of the tree and its underground root system.

Some words of Jesus came to mind; "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants. It becomes a tree, so the birds come and perch in its branches". **(Matthew 13:31-32)**. So Jesus uses the illustration of a mustard tree. However, I'm sure if he had been in Australia, Jesus would have told the same story using a "gum tree".

Look at the tree in the photograph, or maybe you have a favourite "old gum" of your own. Just try to imagine how many birds have built their nests in it over the years. How many have sheltered, clinging to the branches as storms threatened to blow them to oblivion?

Sadly, today, unless something is grand, majestic or has a multitude of followers, it is looked down on as not being of value. The first believers and followers of Jesus were few, twelve to be precise. Yet despite faults and failings, the number of Jesus's followers has grown so large the numbers are virtually uncountable. The number of formally recognised followers may have fallen. However, I believe many still believe in Jesus, follow his teachings, and accept his offer of reuniting them with God his Father. Why? Because Jesus and his Father God are personally involved in many different ways; supporting, encouraging, leading to new ways of teaching, but most importantly, doing it all with their special forgiving love.

Joined to Jesus as the trunk who nurtures and supports you by his love, you can be a branch. A branch offering support and safety to someone who may be floundering, blown about by the winds of fear, unkindness, hurts, financial strife, and family breakdown.

By planting the seed of a smile, a kind word, an arm around the shoulder, and a listening, non-judgemental ear, you may cause a whole new tree to grow. We all have the potential to grow entire forests of care across our neighbourhoods, our towns, and our country. It's simple! Stay connected to the nurturing trunk. Listen to Jesus through His Words in the Bible, and especially spend time talking to him about how you might be a sheltering branch. One branch can make a difference for a bird in a storm.

Cheers
Kevin.