The Giving Tree
Jesus and Unconditional Love
The Story of the Giving Tree

Once there was a tree....
and she loved a little boy.
And everyday the boy would come
and he would gather her leaves
and make them into crowns
and play king of the forest.
He would climb up her trunk
and swing from her branches
and eat apples.
And they would play hide-and-go-seek.
And when he was tired,
he would sleep in her shade.
And the boy loved the tree....
very much.
And the tree was happy.
The Story of the Giving Tree

But time went by.
And the boy grew older.
And the tree was often alone.
Then one day the boy came to the tree
and the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and
climb up my trunk and swing from my
branches and eat apples and play in my
shade and be happy."
"I am too big to climb and play" said the boy.
"I want to buy things and have fun.
I want some money?"

"I'm sorry," said the tree, "but I
have no money.
I have only leaves and apples.
Take my apples, Boy, and sell them in
the city. Then you will have money and
you will be happy."
And so the boy climbed up the
tree and gathered her apples
and carried them away.
And the tree was happy.
But the boy stayed away for a long time....
and the tree was sad.
And then one day the boy came back
and the tree shook with joy
and she said, "Come, Boy, climb up my trunk
and swing from my branches and be happy."
"I am too busy to climb trees," said the boy.
"I want a house to keep me warm," he said.
"I want a wife and I want children,
and so I need a house.
Can you give me a house?"

"I have no house," said the tree.
"The forest is my house,
but you may cut off
my branches and build a
house. Then you will be happy."
And so the boy cut off her branches
and carried them away
to build his house.
And the tree was happy.
The Story of the Giving Tree

But the boy stayed away for a long time. And when he came back, the tree was so happy she could hardly speak. "Come, Boy," she whispered, "come and play." "I am too old and sad to play," said the boy. "I want a boat that will take me far away from here. Can you give me a boat?"

"Cut down my trunk and make a boat," said the tree. "Then you can sail away... and be happy." And so the boy cut down her trunk and made a boat and sailed away. And the tree was happy... but not really.
The Story of the Giving Tree

And after a long time
the boy came back again.
"I am sorry, Boy,"
said the tree," but I have nothing
left to give you -
My apples are gone."
"My teeth are too weak
for apples," said the boy.
"My branches are gone,"
said the tree. "You
cannot swing on them - 
"I am too old to swing
on branches," said the boy.
"My trunk is gone, " said the tree.
"You cannot climb - 
"I am too tired to climb" said the boy.
"I am sorry," sighed the tree.
"I wish that I could give you something....
but I have nothing left.
I am just an old stump.
I am sorry...."
"I don’t need very much now," said the boy.
"just a quiet place to sit and rest.
I am very tired." 
"Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much as she could,
"well, an old stump is good for sitting and resting
Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest."
And the boy did.
And the tree was happy.
He Emptied Himself

You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had,

who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross!

(Philippians 2:5-8 NET)
What’s it About?

‣ Did Christ die on the cross to make better men and women with better morals?

‣ Or was it to pour out His Spirit on us to make us new creatures, convicting us to love him and each other?
The Staggering Mind-blowing Truth

God loves you for who you are… not for who you should be.

He would rather die than live without you.

Do you believe that God loves you unconditionally?
Or do we actually believe...

- God is feeling the same about you as you feel about yourself?
- If so, you believe in a god of your own creation. Not the loving Father who gave His Son to rid you of your guilt.
- Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

(Romans 8:35 NET)
Realizing God’s Love

If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God resides in him and he in God. And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has in us. God is love, and the one who resides in love resides in God, and God resides in him. By this a love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because just as Jesus is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears punishment has not been perfected in love. We love because he loved us first.

(1 John 4:15-19 NET)
Realizing God’s Love

- When we were unable to help ourselves, at the right time, Christ died for us, although we were living against God. Very few people will die to save the life of someone else. Although perhaps for a good person someone might possibly die. But God shows his great love for us in this way: Christ died for us while we were still sinners. So through Christ we will surely be saved from God's anger, because we have been made right with God by the blood of Christ's death. While we were God's enemies, he made us his friends through the death of his Son. Surely, now that we are his friends, he will save us through his Son's life. And not only that, but now we are also very happy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we are now God's friends again. (Romans 5:6-11 NCV)
Who is Jesus Saving Anyway?

- Jesus heard this and said to them, "It is not the healthy people who need a doctor, but the sick. I did not come to invite good people but to invite sinners.” (Mark 2:17 NCV)

- Lord, let me speak so I may praise you. You are not pleased by sacrifices, or I would give them. You don't want burnt offerings. The sacrifice God wants is a broken spirit. God, you will not reject a heart that is broken and sorry for sin. (Psalms 51:15-17 NCV)
Who is Jesus Saving Anyway?

‣ The broken

‣ We know that the law is spiritual, but I am not spiritual since sin rules me as if I were its slave. I do not understand the things I do. I do not do what I want to do, and I do the things I hate. And if I do not want to do the hated things I do, that means I agree that the law is good. But I am not really the one who is doing these hated things; it is sin living in me that does them. Yes, I know that nothing good lives in me-- I mean nothing good lives in the part of me that is earthly and sinful. I want to do the things that are good, but I do not do them. I do not do the good things I want to do, but I do the bad things I do not want to do. So if I do things I do not want to do, then I am not the one doing them. It is sin living in me that does those things.

So I have learned this rule: When I want to do good, evil is there with me. In my mind, I am happy with God’s law. But I see another law working in my body, which makes war against the law that my mind accepts. That other law working in my body is the law of sin, and it makes me its prisoner. What a miserable man I am! Who will save me from this body that brings me death? I thank God for saving me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So in my mind I am a slave to God’s law, but in my sinful self I am a slave to the law of sin.
(Romans 7:14-25 NCV)
Jesus knows you’re a sinner

‣ Every single sin is known
‣ But he loves you anyway.
‣ Do you trust in that?
‣ That… is a saving faith.
His love is reaching

He takes our sins upon himself

He carries our burdens

He comforts

Even though we put him on the cross

He loves us
So what is Jesus saying to you today?

- I’m sick of your unkept promises, your broken resolutions, all your false starts, your hypocrisy?

- I’m sick of all your failures to be good, your lying, your cheating, your busybody idle chatter, and your angry words?

- Or is he saying, I love you. Thank you for choosing to love me, because I loved you first, even if you are broken. I have been waiting so long for you to know that I am here especially for when you fall.
The Prodigal Son

And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

The Giving Tree is the True story of your life

“Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest.
And the boy did.
And the tree was happy.”

"Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Accept my teachings and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit, and you will find rest for your lives. The burden that I ask you to accept is easy; the load I give you to carry is light.

(Matthew 11:28-30 NCV)
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