

SERVING IN THE COURTS OF GOD

Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.-Gen 15:27

Elim in Hebrew means the mighty ones. The picture of oasis of Elim conjures an image of God taking the children of Israel for a holiday in the beaches. With all the 12 springs representing the 12 tribes of Israel. It was meant to serve them and their flocks with water and prevent disputes among the tribes-The palm trees would provide food for them and their livestock. Elim then, appears to signify a place of refreshment after going through the desert. This verse shows us that sometimes; if not all the time, to get to Elim, we have to go through marah.

But why the 12 and 70?

The 12 would be associated with:

1. The twelve disciples
2. The New Jerusalem which descends out of heaven has 12 gates made of pearl and manned by 12 angels. Each gate is named after the 12 tribes of Israel.
3. There are 12 precious stones which will be used in the foundation of the New Jerusalem. (Rev 21:19-20)
4. The wall of the city had 12 foundations with the 12 names of the apostles on each one. (Rev 21:14)
5. Jesus very first words were spoken at age of 12. (Luke 2:42)
6. The woman with issue of blood had suffered for 12 years. (Luke8:40)
7. There are 12 Minor Prophets in the old testaments.
8. There are 12 historical books in the bible.
9. Solomon had 12 administrators in his kingdom.

The 70 palm trees would mirror:

1. When the Israelites whined about being fed daily with manna by God, reminiscing about the food they used to eat in Egypt. Moses cried to the lord saying “why are you treating me, your servant, so harshly? Did I give birth to these people? I can’t carry the burden of these people alone?” Then the lord said to Moses, “Gather before me **70 men** who are recognized as elders and leaders. They will bear the burden of the people with you, so you will not have to carry it alone. (Num 11:12-17)
2. Jesus called the 12 apostles and sent them out, also choosing 70 disciples and sent them out to preach; heal and cast out demons in his name.

The focus of this post is on service in the courts of God. The palm tree being significant. For this text, we will examine the characteristics of the palm tree in relation to service. Palm trees:

1. Grow straight upwards- the root of the palm tree is not fibrous, so the root is tap root. It searches for water and nutrients and consolidates it in its growth heaven-ward. This

characteristic exemplifies the character of a Christian who is not rooted in the things of this world but focuses on matters of the faith, and serving God.

2. Produce more fruit as it ages- as it ages, it produces more fruit in clusters. More Christians have gone into early retirement, not knowing that serving in God's courts makes them bear new talents. It's only in serving others in the sanctuary that makes them realize other hidden potentials in them. Every Christian has some kind of talent, because in God zero-talent Christians is non-existent. (Galatians 6:9-10)
3. Are evergreen- they are hardy, and their leaves are perennially green. In the desert or through rain, they remain the same because their roots go deeper. The significance of this is that through trusting and learning to lean on God, 'palm Christians' never change. What they manifest outwardly even through the 'barren' times in their lives is the same as the plentiful seasons. They are always functioning in their purpose through all the seasons of their lives because Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.
4. Parts are all useful- there's no useless part of the palm tree. The fruit are used as food; the leaves for roofing, the trunk for roofing beams etc. Every believer has a function through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some are apostles; prophets, teachers, healers, intercessors, some show mercy to the faithful and so on. Everyone has a place in the body of Christ that makes it function and none of these gifts are least. (1 Corinthians 12:27)
5. Cannot be grafted- If a palm tree is grafted, it dies. This means that it's rooted in identity. A true believer cannot serve two masters; God and money. (mat 6:24)
6. Grows very tall with no branches-they grow up to 30 meters high paving way for the undergrowth to also grow. This means that as we serve in the church, we should be concerned about the growth of other believers and not curtailing them. As we attend to function in our God given assignments, we ought to be concerned about the growth of others and not so much about titles and recognition because every assignment and 'assignment carrier' is important.

-He that would be a leader must be a bridge- welsh proverb

7. Shows existence of water- where palm trees grows, there is likely to be water. This means that a true Christian finds his livelihood in Jesus Christ the living water.

The symbolism of the palm tree as relates to the life of a Christian are many, and it calls each of us to service. In the physical it looks like a normal desert tree, but when you look at it with a spiritual eye it is laden with meaning and purpose. It is therefore safe to say that no believer is exempt in serving in the sanctuary in one way or another. As we move into the new sanctuary, there are more responsibilities and opportunities to serve in whatever way the spirit of God has graced each one of us. The permanent sanctuary will require all of us to participate in its smooth running and success and it is incumbent on all of us not just wait to be served. Even as Christ himself taught, he washed his disciples' feet as an act of service.

There's no greater or lesser ability in the house of God. Each has its part in ensuring an environment that fosters growth for all the faithful. For all those not serving in any ministry take up an active role in finding one...or twoor more that you can serve- even as Paul wrote to the church in Corinth- (1 cor15:58)- my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the

lord, for you know that nothing you do for the lord is useless. As you serve in the sanctuary, keep in mind that God is no man's debtor.