

Your Isaiah 61 Encouragement to Persevere Under Trial

Remember the song, “Tall Oaks from Acorns Grow”? It’s a cute children’s song—one I hadn’t thought of in decades ... until I began catching up on long overdue yardwork.

For the past two years, circumstances have caused me to neglect our yard. Shrubs grew wild and leggy. Weeds invaded where flowers should have bloomed. Two years of growth in a state where the growing season is year-round.

The solution to tackling this task is much like the answer to the riddle about how to eat an elephant: one bite at a time. So in recent weeks, I’ve trimmed a bit, weeded a lot, pruned the plants I want to keep and cut out the unwanted vegetation. Even with all that work, I’ve barely made a dent in our abundant Florida growth.

But before discouragement could set in, I realized that in recent days, I’ve been crunching acorns underfoot. And the children’s song came to mind.

We can joke about cliches, but the truth is, the large oak I labored under did indeed start as a tiny acorn. Planted in fertile soil, it simply did what it was created to do: hold its ground and grow.

As I work in the dirt, reflecting on oaks and acorns, I’m reminded that even though it might seem as if my situation is burying me, God is using it to plant me instead.

Still, I need to remember ...

The darkness can be frightening, but His light shines brightest in the dark.

The duration and weight of our circumstances may be painful,

but the combination of time and pressure drives us to the one who is our refuge.

And the sense of loneliness in the face of our trials helps us appreciate the intimacy of our relationship with the one who created us, saved us and indwells us with His Holy Spirit.

Thinking about acorns and oaks also reminds me of the passage in Isaiah 61:1-3 (NIV):

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to preserve those who mourn in Zion, to give to them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.

This prophetic passage pointed to the Messiah—Jesus Christ, the anointed one who would come hundreds of years later to God’s chosen people as their Savior and Lord. It speaks to people who are hurting.

Those who feel buried in dark circumstances.

People in mourning and despair.

People who have been waiting so long that they’ve almost given up hope.

Yet this passage refers to God’s people as “oaks.” Plantings of the Lord for His glory.

Are you feeling discouraged today? In dark despair? Are you convinced your circumstances will bury you because you don’t

have the strength to persevere?

Consider yourself planted instead. And know God does not abandon His children, regardless of their situation. Run to Him when you're lonely. Welcome the light of His presence to dispel the darkness. Trust His perfect timing.

And remember ... oaks from acorns grow. {eo}

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