The Tale of Three Trees

There is an old story that has been told for many years, about three trees growing on a hillside, each of them with hopes and dreams.

The first tree looked up at the stars and dreamt of being made into a beautiful treasure chest, covered with gold, encrusted with jewels, and containing valuables. The second tree looked at the river flowing out to the sea and dreamt of being made into a strong sailing ship, to travel across the oceans carrying important cargo. The third tree looked down at the village in the valley, bustling with people leading busy lives with no time for God. She didn’t want to be made into anything, she dreamed of growing tall on the hillside, pointing people towards heaven.

One day a woodcutter came to the three trees carrying his axe. The first tree was pleased when he was cut down and taken to a carpenter’s workshop. But instead of being crafted into a treasure chest he was roughly constructed into a feeding trough for animals, covered with dirt and filled with straw. The second tree was delighted when he was taken to a boatyard. But instead of being made into an ocean-going ship he became a small fishing boat, placed on a lake. The third tree was sad when she was cut down. All she wanted was to grow tall and point people to God. She was devastated when she was roughly split into beams, chopped into planks, and dumped in the corner of the wood yard. She felt rejected, abandoned, hopeless.

Time passed, and the trees forgot their dreams.

But then one golden starlit night a young couple came into the stable containing the feeding trough made from the first tree, and said: ‘This manger will be perfect for our new-born baby’. And the first tree realised he was holding the greatest treasure of all.

Years later a tired traveller and his friends got into the boat made from the second tree, and when the wind blew and the waves broke over the boat, the traveller stood up and commanded the storm: ‘Quiet, be still’ and it became perfectly calm. The second tree realised he was carrying the greatest cargo of all, the king of heaven and earth.

Then one Friday morning the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten wood pile. She flinched as she was carried through a jeering crowd. She shuddered as a soldier nailed a man's hands to her. Now she felt worse than ever, ugly, harsh, cruel. But on the Sunday morning, when Jesus rose from dead, the third tree knew that God’s love had changed everything. He’d made the first tree beautiful. He’d made the second tree strong. And whenever anyone thought of the third tree they would be pointed to God.

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