

A Tree in the Rock

A WHILE BACK, my family and I took a vacation to Colorado. While hiking in a park, we saw the tree in the photo to the right.

One of the things God designed trees to do is to affect the ground in different ways. Willow trees absorb water in their roots and transpire (release) water through their leaves—large amounts of water. Other trees use their roots to break up the soil. The tree in the photo is actually breaking up the rocks here as well as trapping soil. As the roots grow, they not only hold soil in place, but widen the cracks in the rock, sometimes breaking the rocks! Over the life of a tree, and over generations of trees, soil builds up, and once-barren rock turns into a place of fertility and growth.

This happens often. The basement of my parents' pre-Civil War house has a portion of a wall made of cemented-together fieldstone. Over the years, some walnut trees have run their roots into that foundation, weakening it. We had to replace an entire section of the foundation wall that the roots had begun to destroy. But the trees were simply reaching out with their roots to do what God created them to do, be it transporting water or creating new growing conditions.

I'm reminded of Moses when I think of the tree in the picture. Moses was placed in a rough position between the enslaved Israelites (his people—but he was in the palace), and the Egyptians (he wasn't an Egyptian). His life in those days must have been miserable. The Israelites would have disliked Moses because he lived a life of privilege, and the Egyptians must have viewed him as "the princess' pet," or simply a slave that for some reason lived in the palace. Then Moses spent



Photo by Maggie Lubbers

40 years in the wilderness tending his father-in-law's flocks—a rough life.

But God was preparing Moses for a greater mission. When Moses went back to the palace, the guards recognized him, so he could walk in and see Pharaoh to ask for Israel's freedom. He also knew how to survive in the wilderness, where he would lead the Israelites for many years. During Moses' life, God was preparing him to be a part of God's salvation plan for his people.

God uses each of us to accomplish his mission: to work toward restoration in this fallen world and to bring fertility back to a barren place.

Be like that tree! **B**



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Illustration for The Banner by Anita Barghigiani