

Simple...Yet Profound

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Simple...yet profound. This was my experience on a recent Sunday evening as I walked the church property taking pictures. The camera snapped away as I captured our church building, the newly decorated cross draped with Fall colored leaves, the magnificent Pusch Ridge Mountains gleaming in the setting sun and the steeple cross posed high overhead, representing who we follow and all that we believe in. The scene before me was familiar, safe, comforting, a sight I had seen many times through the years. I was looking at my church home. So, you can imagine my surprise, as suddenly I was staring at something I had never seen before. On the north side of the parking lot was a beautiful mature saguaro cactus standing tall and strong in all of its majesty. Right next to it grew an equally aging gorgeous green palo verde tree. What made this scene so amazing is that the cactus was growing side by side and up and through the center of the tree's canopy. It was as if the tree's green branches were protecting and sheltering the cactus from harm...yet they were both thriving and seemed in harmony with one another. It was as if they were almost one. As I stared at this pair of desert beings I was no longer looking at two of God's plant species. Somehow before me what I saw was God our Father as the tree and me his child as the cactus. Him holding, covering,

protecting...me safe, reliant, and grateful. Clearly separate, yet completely intertwined. As I stepped closer, the detail came into view. Low toward the base of the cactus, damage left a gaping hole in the once beautiful untouched skin. The hole was my sin...representing the destruction that sin created and the scars it leaves behind. Further up the prickly stalk 2 round small holes had been pecked in by a bird enemy looking to nest. In this I saw God's enemy who pecks away at me wanting to destroy God's child and make the home his own. But the holes were small and healed up. God is WAY more powerful than any foe. As my eyes continued to travel upward, I lost sight of the cactus and could only see the large canopy of the strong and stable tree. No longer was the cactus the focal point, it was hidden by the branches. Only the great large tree commanded my attention now. And so it was when I surrendered my life to my heavenly Father and died to myself, died to sin. Now He is who matters. Now He is the focus. Now He is the reason I live, and can live. The cactus still faces the elements, it still is subject to a pesky woodpecker wanting a new hole, but how interesting that the cactus is untouched and unmarked beginning where the trees loving arms begin to enfold it. It is the same with me: I still live in this world and am still subject to all of the beauty and heartache that comes with this life. But now with God as my shelter, it is not me they will see first. It is Him. It is not me and my wishes that matter most now, it is Him and His will that I seek. As I stared at God's creation and took it all in, one last thing was so evident . It took many, many years for the tree and the cactus to become intertwined. Yet, all of those years the tree

was patiently waiting, allowing the cactus to grow side by side. Allowing her the freedom to choose. The tree knew that the day would come when the cactus would be ready to have His Almighty complete protection. and while God so patiently waited for the cactus to surrender, He still provided the cactus His shade. So simple, yet so profound. It is amazing what lies right in front of us, yet can so easily go unnoticed. Sometimes that which is so familiar and comfortable becomes a blindfold to something we need to see.

What is going unnoticed in your world today? Slow down, pay attention, ask God to show you something new--something simple, something profound.



"He Who Dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest
in the shadow of the Almighty." -- Psalm 91:1