

"The tree gives the little boy her apples to pick and her branches to climb. The boy and the tree love each other and are happy in their life together. As the boy grows older, however, his interest in the tree becomes less. The tree is very lonely until one day the boy returns as a young man. The tree offers her apples and branches, but the boy claims that he is too old to climb and play. He is more interested in money.

'Can't you give me some money?' he asks the tree.

The tree has not money, but she does have apples. Why doesn't the boy pick the apples and sell them then he will be happy. The boy does this and the tree is happy. But then the boy stays away an even longer time and the tree is sad.

Years later the boy returns. The tree is overwhelmed with joy as she invite the boy to swing from her branches. But the boy is too busy to play. What he really wants is his own family and a house to keep him warm.

Can the tree give him a house? No, but the boy can cut her branches and build a house with them, suggests the tree; then he will be happy. The boy does this and the tree is happy.

Many years pass before the boy, now middle-aged returns. The tree, overjoyed, invites the boy to play. But now the boy is too old to play. all he wants is a boat which will take him far away. 'Can you give me a boat?' the tree invites the boy to cut down her trunk and make a boat so he can be happy. The boy does this, and the tree is happy--but not really, for now only a bare stump remains.

When, years late, the boy returns, he is hunched-over, old man. The tree apologizes for having nothing to offer any longer, no more apples to eat or branches to climb, only an old stump.

But the old man says his teeth are too weak for apples, and he is too old to climb. All he needs is a quiet place to sit and rest for he is very tired.

'Well,' says the tree, straightening herself up as much as she can, 'an old stump is good for sitting and resting. Come, boy sit down, sit down and rest.' And the boy does. The tree is very happy."

A nice story isn't it? That was truly a giving tree. It gave and gave and even when it only had a stump left, it still gave, a place of rest and quiet. What a concept, a giving tree. But that apple tree is not the only giving tree, I can think of another tree, another tree which gave of itself, gave body and blood , gave love and mercy, gave forgiveness and compassion, gave acquittal and freedom, yes the tree of Calvary the cross of Christ was another giving tree, And that tree still gives through the body and blood which were shed upon it, for the body and blood of Christ still gives, it keeps on giving day in and day out to those who want to receive new life, a renewed life a forgiven and cleansed life.

Have you really let the greatest love story ever told, ever witnessed, ever conceived be really felt in your life? Have you come face to face with the cross of Christ and there experienced his giving love for you?

Come to the cross of Christ, come!!

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Come and rest in the arms of Christ on the cross and receive the peaceful rest.