

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen
(Old Testament)

Genesis 11:4-5, 8

The Tree Stand

And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built... So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.

I remember trying to use my first 'portable' tree stand. It was a very light unit. Metal flanges were bolted on the back edge so the platform could dig into the tree. A metal angle was positioned around the tree and fastened to each side of the main frame. Elastic cords were attached to the top of the seat through which my feet were cinched while climbing.

The process of hoisting myself up went something like this: Place feet into the flimsy elastic bands. Reach up high and hug tree. Bend knees to draw seat up. Jam flanges firmly into tree. Loosen hold and stand up. Reach up high and hug tree. Bend knees to draw seat up. Jam flanges a little less firmly into tree. Loosen hold and stand up. Reach up high and hug tree. Bend knees to draw seat up. Jam flanges lightly but confidently into tree. Loosen hold... quickly grab tree and hold on for dear life as platform falls 10 feet to the ground. Shiny down while face acts like a rudder in the tree bark. Repeat, this time jamming the metal flanges firmly into the tree with each advance. Remove splinters.

Outdoorsmen have a fascination with stands and hunting towers, don't we? Most points of elevation – hill top or tree top – are really to our advantage if they are safely and strategically utilized. Generally speaking, we're careful with the construction and placement of the lookout, or in the choosing of a natural promontory. Stands are stealthy, sneaky, and subtle, but certainly not evil.

That wasn't the case with the people in the land of Shinar, that geographic area conquered by Nimrod (Genesis 10:10). Here they were, speaking to each other with one voice about building a city and a tower that would reach to the heavens. It was all about them. You can almost hear them say, "Look what I can do." Yet their greatest fear of being scattered came to pass when God came down.

Somewhere in the hearts of the ancient people of Babel they determined that works could get them to heaven. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. And somewhere in the hearts of people today, works still seems to be the preferred way to gain access to a heavenly home. Again, wrong, wrong, wrong.

When people hear their own voices and heed their own understanding of spiritual matters, certain condemnation awaits, now or in the future. God cannot be ignored. God cannot be minimized. God cannot be reached, at least by human achievements or works. Spiritual matters can only be understood by having a personal relationship with Him. Cities, towers, and great lands are men's mere distractions.

That personal relationship comes from knowing God's Son, Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord. It comes because of the choice He made in His tree stand. His hands couldn't let go of the tree He clutched for you and me. His feet couldn't slip out of the fasteners that held Him aloft. The bark of His tree stand dug into His butchered body, left debris in His mangled flesh. There was no beauty in the scenery before Him, no lesser way to get this done. He chose this horrible tree stand, the Cross. Thrust toward the heavens and stained with His blood, it was the only way to save people from their unity of purpose, their sins.

Every intent of the thoughts of men's hearts is evil continually (Genesis 6:5). It's in our history, in our blood, to be sinners. That kind of stand will surely fall, like a cheap platform from a mighty oak.

But the Cross never, never, never fails.

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Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Genesis 11:4-5, 8

The Tree Stand

HOOK

1. What is the highest you've climbed into a tree for the purpose of hunting? What kind of tree?

2. You are 12 feet high in a tree stand. How would you aim at a deer? Use anatomy to explain.

3. Describe how you would build a permanent tree stand. Include safety features.

LINE

Spiritual matters can only be understood by having a personal relationship with God. That comes from knowing His Son, Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord. It comes because of the choice Jesus made in His tree stand. His hands couldn't let go of the tree He clutched for you and me. His feet couldn't slip out of the fasteners that held Him aloft. The bark of His tree stand dug into His butchered body, left debris in His mangled flesh. There was no beauty in the scenery before Him, no lesser way to get this done. He chose this horrible tree stand, the Cross. Thrust toward the heavens and stained with His blood, it was the only way to save people from their unity of purpose, their sins.

Every intent of the thoughts of men's hearts is evil continually (Genesis 6:5). It's in our history, in our blood, to be sinners. That kind of stand will surely fall, like a cheap platform from a mighty oak.

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How does the world speak with one voice today? What does the world fear from the Christian community?

Why did Jesus choose the Cross? Explain your answer by discussing the significance of the Cross. Also tell how you've observed the way the world looks upon the Cross.

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: Cross works relationship with Jesus
