

HELEN SANDERS

3-2-2021

FAITH AND PATIENCE

It was September of 2017. We had been given a hurricane warning in our area. I had lived through previous hurricanes and knew the damage they could do. Sure enough, Irma came through the center of Florida going up the entire peninsula. With it brought much destruction. People had lost their roofs, and blue tarps covering the damage, were seen everywhere. Many had no insurance to fix the damage this hurricane had caused and even those with insurance found it did not cover the replacement cost. It disrupted lives, destroyed homes, and brought despair to many.

The morning after the hurricane I went outside to assess the damage. It had taken out our swimming pool screened cage. It brought no damage to our home, but there were limbs of trees down in our yard and lots of water everywhere. In our side yard we had planted a mango tree and an avocado tree. Both of these trees were bent over to the ground with their roots exposed. My husband had spent so much time tenderly maintaining these trees that my heart was broken. It looked like all his hard work and effort was lost.

Instead of pulling them up and discarding them, he patiently pulled them back up and tied them off so they could "re-root" themselves. The mango tree had produced in previous years, and even though it had taken this hit, it brought in a crop in the year following the hurricane.

The avocado tree had never produced. I had grown it from an avocado pit and was so pleased to see it grow. It was about 4 foot tall when the hurricane laid it to the ground. The tying off of the tree worked. It grew and grew. It is about 12-15 feet tall now. Yet that isn't the end of the story. This month it is full of blossoms. It will have a bumper crop of avocado fruit this year.

As I looked at this tree today, and took some pictures, I thought how often we give up on God's promises before they come to fruition. We expect things to happen before they do, and we just give up on them. If we had discarded that poor little tree laying on the ground, we would never have seen what it is today. Many times, God gives us a vision, but it doesn't happen right away. We often get tired of waiting and question whether we really heard from God or not. This is the time that our spiritual roots must go deeper. This is the time that we are to tie ourselves to the promises and stand on them. It is not the time to let go. Often, during the process in this growth season we need others to support us. That should never be looked at as "weakness". We need each other!

The body of Christ has been bruised in 2020. Many doors have been shut. Many churches lost members to covid19. Yet this is not the time to "quit". This is the time to come together, support each other and let God do what is necessary to bring "his plan" to fruition. Don't give up my friend on what God has promised you. Hebrews tells us in v. 12 ***"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."*** We may have great faith, but it takes patience with faith to bring fruit!