

December 24, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is Christmas Eve as I write this; waiting for you to come and worship. Christmas Eve service is always such a joyous celebration that I am eagerly awaiting your arrival. But while I wait I want to tell you a true story about my hibiscus tree.

I have had this small tree for about 20 years now. Each summer I put it outside for it to enjoy the bright sunshine and natural rain. In the early fall, I bring it in and put it by a window that allows the most light. I had noticed on two different occasions squirrels eating the tree leaves. It was summer and there were a lot of leaves so I shooed the squirrels away and went on with whatever I was doing.

Summer was ending and I was not paying attention to the weather in the fall and left the little tree outside during the first frost. Then we had several days of warm weather again. I heard that a deep frost was coming so I made it my business to bring my little tree in.

My poor little tree had every leaf stripped from its branches by the squirrels; even the bark on the trunk was gnawed terribly. I grieved thinking that I had lost my faithful little friend – funny how we get attached to living things. I brought it in to the warmth of the house and watered it with Miracle Grow. Nothing much happened. I was ready to throw it out – I thought all was lost. I had really messed up.

Then one morning as I was finishing my prayers, I noticed a small bit of green. I had been attentive to watering it regularly – and now - low and behold leaves! Today, I was blessed with two of the brightest, reddest hibiscus flowers I have ever seen the little tree make. They are glorious.

The point to my story is that we often feel something is dead – not worthy of further attention. And often we give up too soon because God keeps going, keeps on encouraging new growth. Who knows maybe God encouraged my little tree so that I can encourage each of you to hang in there! We never know what God will do with our mistakes! Be bold! Be courageous! God works wonders with our mistakes.

Merry Christmas to All! Happy and Healthy New Year!

*Pastor Peggy*