



# BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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A few years ago, I was pruning an old willow tree at the end of my backyard, when I noticed a huge limb that didn't appear as productive as the others. It appeared out of place. I decided I should get rid of this ugly old branch once and for all, so I pulled out the old chainsaw. Within a few minutes, the surgery had been completed. It is amazing how nice the tree looked without the old, disfigured branch. I stood back and admired my work like Rembrandt or Picasso — it was a work of art (perhaps minus the artists' genius!)

A few months went by, and a heavy storm struck our area. When we woke up the next morning, my beautiful willow had a huge branch which had broken off. It took two landscapers an entire day to cut up the broken branch and remove the debris. After they had finished, a huge chunk was now missing near the bottom of the old willow. I thought the tree would look like new, but the large scar remained. My willow was no longer a beautiful tree.

After the work was completed, one landscaper pointed out a space he found on the tree. It was the spot where I had previously removed the large limb. He asked me when I cut it, and I told him the timeframe. He explained that the limb I had removed had provided balance for the tree. Once it had been removed, the support necessary for the old willow to withstand the storm was no

longer there, causing part of the tree to topple. Unbeknownst to me, I had removed the very branch my tree needed.

Life is much like my experience with the old willow tree. Often our moral values become like the old, odd branch in our lives. The things we once held sacred such as the sanctity of life, the sacredness of marriage, and — most importantly — a relationship with our Lord now seem old fashioned and out of place. As a result, our vulnerabilities to sin have left us broken and exposed.

We think we are making our society better by removing the branches which seem like restrictions on our happiness, only to find they were the very supports which kept our society from falling!

The old willow may never grow another limb big enough to provide support for itself, but we can be reconnected with our life support when we allow Christ to take His rightful place as the Foundation of our lives!

*Dr. L.W. Edwards*



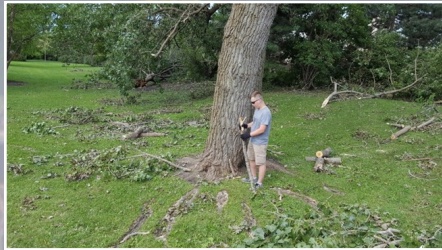




Members of Bethel Baptist Church had a unique opportunity to minister to the Schaumburg community in the wake of a heavy storm which tromped through the area. On Friday, July 21, a microburst, which is a column of sinking air (a downdraft) within a thunderstorm, struck the city of Schaumburg, Illinois. Winds

reached 74 mph, and hail stones larger than baseballs pelted the area.

On Sunday, July 23, Cameron Edwards joined a group from Bethel which spread out in the hardest-hit residential sections of the community, going door-to-door and offering cleanup assistance to the residents. He observed, "The area looked like a disaster zone, with leaves and branches strewn about the ground. The neighborhood was a sight for sore eyes. Trees had been uprooted. It was a real mess."



By the time the teams had reached the neighborhood on Sunday afternoon, most of the larger fallen trees had been cleared. Piles of wood and branches had been set at the end of each lot like garbage. Tree service workers were feeding many of the trees into their giant, truck-mounted wood shredders. As much of the major clean-up work had already been completed, most of the people did not need additional assistance. Still, everyone appreciated the church's willingness to help.

The volunteers circled the neighborhood until they reached one house with particularly heavy storm damage. The homeowner had just returned from a trip, only to find his yard in ruin. A large evergreen had splintered in half and needed to be cut down. Large branches had fallen from other nearby trees as well. Three teams of volunteers pitched in to pick up the debris and moved it to the end of his driveway . . . just in time for another storm.



After the teams had finished the job, Cameron summed up the experience this way, "If we

are serious about reaching our community with the gospel, then this is a great way to do it — by being the hands and feet of Jesus to our neighbors during their time of need." Even more than the residents appreciated the amount of debris the teams had collectively moved, they appreciated the fact someone had cared enough to offer a helping hand. The old adage is true: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."



Contact Dr. Edwards if you would like to have him as your special guest.

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