



A *Branch* Raised Up
A Series of Services On Redemption and Bearing Fruit

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Leader's Guide

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About This Series

A Branch Raised Up is a 4-part series on CD-ROM for summer or any time of the year that focuses on Christ as the Branch raised up and ties that theme to our bearing fruit for him in various ways. Each service includes a Scripture verse related to Christ, our Branch, and then applies that verse to how we should grow in our own faith as plantings of the Lord.

The CD includes a .pdf and text of orders of service, prayers, sermons, children's sermons, and hymns in .rtf (rich text format) and PowerPoint documents of all four services with text (with a copyright release) for use on screens.

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Service Two: In His Body on the Tree

Complete Script for Worship Leaders

- The **Theme Verse** can be read aloud by the pastor or in unison by the congregation at the start of the service or can be read silently before worship:

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.” 1 Peter 2:24

- The **Opening Hymn and Reading from Psalm 52** are sung to tune Coronation 86 86 86 and spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

All hail the pow’r of Jesus’ name! Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all.
Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all.

Crown him, ye martyrs of our God, who from his altar call;
Extol the stem of Jesse’s rod and crown him Lord of all.
Extol the stem of Jesse’s rod and crown him Lord of all.

P *Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man?*

C **The steadfast love of God endures all the day.**

P *But God will break you down forever;*

C **He will uproot you from the land of the living.**

P *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.*

C **I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.**

Ye seed of Israel's chosen race, ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail him who saves you by his grace and crown him Lord of all.
Hail him who saves you by his grace and crown him Lord of all.

• **The Confession and Absolution** *is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:*

P *Let us confess our sins, asking God to forgive us for the sake of his steadfast love.*

C **Almighty God, we boast of our sin and turn from your Word. We follow our own sinful desires and give in to temptation. In your steadfast love, uproot the sin from our lives and forgive us for the sake of Jesus our Savior.**

P *The steadfast love of God endures forever! In love he sent Jesus to suffer and die for your sins. For the sake of Jesus and by his command, I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

C **I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever!**

• **The Hymn** *is sung by the congregation to the tune Coronation 86 86 86:*

Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget the wormwood and the gall.
Go, spread your trophies at his feet and crown him Lord of all.
Go, spread your trophies at his feet and crown him Lord of all.

• **The Children's Message** *is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:*

(Needed: a photograph of a tree; a cross)

P What does my picture show? *(Hold up the photograph of the tree and let children answer.)* Trees are a beautiful and wonderful creation of God. How do trees help us? *(Let children answer.)* Trees give us shade. Some trees produce good things to eat, like apples or peaches. Other trees are cut down to give us firewood or wood for furniture and homes and for many other things we make.

What do you think about when you see this? (*Hold up the cross or indicate a cross in the sanctuary; let children answer.*) The cross helps us to think of Jesus; it shows us how he died for our sins. We might make crosses out of different materials, but the cross on which Jesus died was made out of wood. Sometimes we call the cross of Jesus “the tree of the cross.” The upright part is like the trunk of the tree and the crossbar looks like branches.

This cross reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never did anything wrong. He never sinned against God or against other people. He never followed the temptations of the devil. Jesus did not have any sins for which he deserved to die. On the tree of the cross, Jesus suffered the punishment we deserve for our sins. He died on the cross and then he rose from the dead on the first Easter. Because Jesus died and rose for us, God forgives our sins. Because Jesus died and rose for us, we will live with God forever. Let’s give thanks to Jesus.

Jesus, thank you for dying for us on the tree of the cross. Help us to tell others about your love. Amen.

- *The Hymn is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Peter CM:*

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer’s ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds, and drives away our fear.

O Jesus, shepherd, guardian, friend, my Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, my life, my way, my end, accept the praise I bring.

- *The Old Testament Reading, Deuteronomy 21:22-23, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:*

Ⓟ And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

- *The Epistle Reading, Galatians 3:10-14, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:*

Ⓟ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

- **The Gospel Reading**, *John 19:31-37*, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

- **The Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Nun Danket All CM*:

The Branch raised up to set us free
Is Jesus, God’s own Son,
Who by his death upon the tree
Has our salvation won.

- **The Sermon**, *“In His Body on the Tree,”* is delivered by the pastor:

Ⓟ When we hear the word “curse,” we tend to think in terms of “cursing and swearing.” We think about someone using offensive language, perhaps remembering times when we used words that would have been better left unspoken. The Old Testament reading describes a different kind of curse. It is a serious curse, a condemnation, pronounced by God against anyone who is put to death by being hung on a tree. According to the law as written in Deuteronomy, “a hanged man is cursed by God.” The one hanged on a tree was to be taken down and buried the same day so the land of promise would not be defiled. According to the law in Deuteronomy, anyone who did not conform to the words of God’s law “by doing them” is also cursed. These harsh and terrible condemnations pointed ahead, down through the ages, to an even more harsh and terrible day yet to come—to a day when an innocent man would bear that curse.

Centuries later, on a hill outside of Jerusalem, the promise of the righteous Branch of David’s line and the curse against one hanged on a tree came together at another kind of tree, the tree of the cross. Jesus the Messiah, the righteous Branch of David’s royal house, was lifted up from the earth and hanged on a tree, there taking the curse into himself. The world—long ago lost in the darkness of sin through the forbidden fruit of one tree—was plunged into darkness again as the innocent Son of God hung from another tree.

Jesus was innocent. The curse was ours. The book of Deuteronomy states, “Cursed be anyone

who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them” (Deuteronomy 27:26). The apostle Paul, in our epistle reading from Galatians, repeats that condemnation: “Cursed be everyone who does not abide all the things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” The just condemnation of God rests on everyone who does not keep “all the things” written in his Law, on anyone who does not do *everything* that God’s Law says. It isn’t enough to try really hard to keep God’s Law, to try and follow his will *most* of the time. It’s not enough to say that you are at least better than the other guy who is obviously a much worse sinner. It’s not enough to make excuses by saying, “Well, at least I never murdered anyone,” or “I don’t steal things.” It’s not enough to keep the Law of God 80% of the time, or 95% of the time, or even 99.9% of the time. And even if we *could* keep God’s commandments 99.9% of the time—which we cannot—sin is not just a matter of doing or not doing things. Sin describes our standing, our status, before God. We are sinners. We inherited the stain of sin from our first parents, Adam and Eve, and we justly and rightly stand condemned under God’s curse: “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” That curse applies to you and to me.

There is nothing we can do to remove the curse. The curse of God against human disobedience and rebellion is lifted from us only because Jesus Christ, the righteous Branch of the house of David, took the curse onto himself. The innocent Son of God carried our sins in his body on the tree. Paul writes, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’” Jesus cried out from the tree of the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” The condemnation of God fell on Jesus so that—by God’s grace, through faith in Jesus’ name—it will not fall on us.

According to the Law, the one who was put to death by being hanged on a tree was to be removed the same day so that the land would not be defiled. Jesus died on Friday, the day before a Passover Sabbath. To fulfill the law, and in view of the coming holy day, the Jewish religious leaders asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified criminals broken so that they would die quickly and could be removed from the crosses. But when the soldiers came to Jesus, they found that he was already dead. John, the disciple and gospel writer, gives us his eyewitness report: “But one of the soldiers pierced [Jesus’] side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.” Jesus was taken down from the tree of the cross and buried in a sealed and guarded tomb. The sentence of death, first earned by Adam and Eve, and daily earned by our own sin, was carried out against the righteous Branch of David’s line.

But on the third day, God the Father raised up his righteous Branch. The powers of sin, death and Satan that had cut Jesus down were in turn crushed in the death and resurrection of the Son of God. Jesus took our sin on himself and in exchange gave us his own righteousness. By God’s grace, through faith in Jesus, our standing, our status before God, is changed—from condemned sinners to righteous sons and daughters! The holiness of God’s righteous Branch is

Tune..... Hyfrydol 87 87 D

The image displays a piano score for the tune 'Hyfrydol 87 87 D'. The score is written in 3/4 time and consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system starts at measure 1. The second system starts at measure 8. The third system starts at measure 15. The fourth system starts at measure 21. The fifth system starts at measure 27. The music features a mix of chords and single notes, with some measures containing rests. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'Creative Commons Sample' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

- *The Closing Hymn is sung by the congregation to the tune Hyfrydol 87 87 D:*

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus; his the scepter, his the throne;
Alleluia! His the triumph, his the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood:
“Jesus out of ev’ry nation has redeemed us by his blood.”

Alleluia! Bread of heaven here on earth our food, our stay;
Alleluia! Here the sinful flee to you from day to day.
Intercessor, Friend of sinners, earth’s Redeemer, hear our plea
Where the songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea.

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus; his the scepter, his the throne;
Alleluia! His the triumph, his the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood:
“Jesus out of ev’ry nation has redeemed us by his blood.”

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