

THE LESSON OF THE SANTOL TREE

By Irene Taniegra

We are much like santol fruit in a storm.

On June 23, 2009, the Philippines experienced a typhoon. That afternoon, our area was placed under a severe storm warning. The rest of that day and into the night, we heard something banging on our rooftop. When my son asked what it was, I told him it was our santol tree being whipped by the wind.

I regretted not picking the santol's sweet fruit a day earlier, as I had planned. But my mother had told me the fruit wasn't ripe yet and to leave it alone.

At 5:00 a.m. I went outside to look at the tree, fearing to see all the fruit on the ground. I couldn't see into the tree—it was still dark outside—but I did see four small fruits scattered around our backyard.

An hour later I again inspected the tree. To my delight I saw many big, yellow-green fruit still clinging to the branches. Collecting those that had fallen, I noted that two of them had brownish lesions at the bottom. Black speckles discolored the other one, and the last was misshapen and warty in appearance.

I had expected the bigger, heavier fruit to have fallen; they were twice as big as the ones I collected. But there they were: still securely hanging on to the tree.

As I thought about the experience, I concluded that we are much like the two kinds of santol fruits—the ones that fell and the ones that held on. We too could fall when buffeted by the windy trials of life if we aren't holding firm to the tree of life, our Savior Jesus Christ (see 1 Nephi 8:10; 11:8–9, 20–23).

The fruits that fell from our santol tree were weak with disease, not able to withstand the wind. The ones that remained on the tree survived because they were healthy and strong.



If we don't keep ourselves spiritually strong and healthy—learning from the scriptures and the living prophets, keeping the commandments, serving others—we too might fall when the adversary brings his forces against us.

The moment the tender fruits stopped drawing on the strength of the santol tree, their maturation stopped. So too the moment we separate ourselves from Christ, the true vine, our spiritual progress stops (see John 15:1; 1 Nephi 15:15).

Sometimes too we need to bend with the wind. Trials are part of mortality, and a humble spirit helps us accept the will of God in hard times. Humility helps us repent of our sins, forgive others, and forget offenses.

Allied with humility is patience. If we are patient in our trials, if we hold on to our faith a little longer, the answers we seek may come.

Sooner or later the Savior will calm the storm. Peace and deliverance will come. If we remain obedient and faithful, nothing can separate us from the love of God (see Romans 8:38–39). ■

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