

# The Survivor Tree

All of us admire the qualities of perseverance and overcoming obstacles we see in others – even in plant life. Minister and author Max Lucado, in *Facing Your Giants*, tells the following story:

*A sprawling, shade-bearing 80-year-old American elm in Oklahoma City, Okla., is a huge tourist attraction. People pose for pictures beneath her. Arborists carefully protect her. She adorns posters and letterheads. The city treasures the tree, not because of her appearance but her endurance.*

*She made it through the Oklahoma City bombing. Timothy McVeigh parked his death-laden truck only yards from her. His malice killed 168 people, wounded 850, destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, and buried the tree in rubble. No one expected it to survive. No one gave any thought to the dusty, branch-stripped tree.*

*But then she began to bud. Sprouts pressed through damaged bark; green leaves pushed away gray soot. Life rose from an acre of death. People noticed. The tree modeled the resilience the victims desired.*

*So they named her the Survivor Tree.*

Author Lucado's story is poignant. The will to live is strong, indeed, sometimes against overwhelming odds. But we can be secure in the knowledge that we serve a God of grace and mercy Who is always present to help us in the struggles we encounter.



***The Survivor Tree is located on the grounds of the Oklahoma City National Memorial***

--Beecher Hunter