

The Two Gardens

#0851

Study given by W. D. Frazee—July 29, 1960

I want to study two gardens--the Garden of Eden and the Garden of Gethsemane. These are two great gardens in the history of the ages.

The word garden is first used in Genesis 2:

"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads" Genesis 2:8-10.

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" verses 15-17.

The garden was filled with lovely trees. There were trees for beauty and trees for food. Everything to delight the eye and bring pleasure to all the senses. Here was man's life. Here was his work. Here was his place of worship. Here was his school. Here was all that would make life worthwhile, beautiful, inspiring, and satisfying.

The tree of life was in the midst of the garden. This tree was a special tree, the fruit of which had the power to perpetuate life on and on. There was also the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There are few people who understand why that tree was there. Most people are either utterly ignorant and care nothing about it, or else they have in their minds the wish that God had not put it there, a question of whether it was wise for God to do it.

If we have lurking in our hearts even a tiny bit of doubt concerning God's wisdom on any point today, then we would question His wisdom in making this test back there.

Several years ago I heard a lecture arguing for the appeal of the prohibition amendment, the eighteenth amendment. The speaker had the audacity to speak of this experience in the Garden of Eden. He went so far as to suggest that if they had

not been told not to eat of the tree they would have never paid any attention to it. He suggested it was the prohibition that made it so interesting. He thought he was making a point on the appeal of the liquor traffic. I wonder if he realized that in that argument he was allying himself with Satan, the author of sin, the first rebel.

But I wonder if we realize we do exactly the same whenever we question any of God's instructions. It is an echo of the argument of Satan and his angels when they were in rebellion against God in heaven. They charged it all upon God and said that if they had not been reprov'd they never would have rebelled.

Whenever authority is manifested, whenever the standards of God are upheld, there are those today who openly or secretly bring out the suggestion, Well, if it were not for these rules people would be all right. But when they are told not to do something, that is the very thing they want to do and will do.

I say that all those who cherish those sentiments would have questioned the wisdom of God in placing that one tree in the garden, and requiring man to let it alone.

You and I know that choice is necessary for the development of character. We know that love is the greatest joy and the greatest experience in all the universe. We know that love in its truest sense comes to beings of free choice, and God, who is the author of love, longs that His children might know love in its highest manifestations. He wanted us to have that sweet and wonderful experience, so He gave us choice.

To provide a choice, it requires at least two different things. I want you to notice how God arranged it. He did not provide a hundred wrong roads and one right road. He did not provide fifty wrong roads and fifty right roads. He provided a thousand right choices, and made the smallest test possible. Surrounded with every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food, Adam and Eve were restricted when it came to just one tree. Inspiration tells us that was the smallest test that God could devise.

As you know, Genesis 3 tells the sad story of Adam and Eve's failure. Surrounded with beauty and joy and pleasure, they chose to listen to the tempter in the form of a serpent in that forbidden tree. They chose to turn away from the One who had given them that beautiful garden. Into that garden of love, doubt and selfishness came. And from that garden of life, death came. God had told them that in the day they ate of the tree they would surely die.

That is the Garden of Eden. As we look at it, what a beautiful garden it seems, and what a tragedy that from that beautiful beginning should come such a sad ending.

I come down four thousand years and look at another garden:

"When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples. And Judas

also, which betrayed Him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples" John 18:1-2.

The name of this garden was Gethsemane. The name is interesting. It means an oil press. There were many olive trees in this garden, and doubtless an oil press was there. It was from this oil press that the garden received its name. What a figure of the infinite pressure that our Lord went under as He entered the shade of those olive trees. I want to read a statement from the Spirit of Prophecy written in 1892:

"The Garden of Eden with its foul blot of disobedience, is to be carefully studied and compared with the Garden of Gethsemane, where the world's Redeemer suffered superhuman agony when the sins of the whole world were rolled upon Him" *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol.5, page 1103.

"The Garden of Eden with its disobedience and the Garden of Gethsemane with its obedience are presented before us" *Ibid.*, 1103.

So we are to study these two gardens, and study them together. Notice that Sr. White speaks of the Garden of Eden with its foul blot of disobedience. What a beautiful picture that garden was until disobedience put a blot upon it. Adam and Eve had to leave that garden. They left it under a shadow, a dark cloud.

When Jesus entered the Garden of Gethsemane He entered a phase of His life in this dark world such as we can only begin to study in this life. We shall study it throughout the endless ages of eternity.

There are several things that happened in that garden. In describing this experience in Gethsemane, Matthew tells us that Jesus' soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death (Matthew 26:38). He asked the disciples to tarry with Him. I suppose there are those who imagine Jesus was distressed because the mob was going to come and take Him, and that He would be tried and scourged and hung up to die.

That would have been such a tiny little thing in comparison to what was facing Jesus. It would have been simple and easy by comparison. Millions of martyrs have cheerfully gone on to be burned at the stake and crucified.

But when Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane He went in there to take the penalty of a broken law and suffer death for man. Perhaps one of the best verses to help us understand what went on in Gethsemane is Hebrews 2:9:

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" Hebrews 2:9.

As Jesus went into the darkness of the garden He fell prostrate upon the cold earth. He fell to the cold ground in desperation. There was such an agony in His mind and soul that the sweat began to come from His pores tinged with blood.

You and I have never experienced anything like that, have we? No. But we can try to gather under the olive trees and there behold the Son of God in that agony, and try to understand what went on in that garden in the shade of the olive trees pierced by the moon beams.

This text in Hebrews says that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels. This chapter shows that means He was made a member of the human family. Why? For the suffering of death, that He should, by the grace of God, taste death for every man.

Have you ever heard of people being in such mental anguish that they actually pulled the hair from their heads. Yes. We have heard of many things that men do in a desperate feeling of anguish and agony. But no one who has lived in this world has ever suffered for himself or for others the agony of the second death. Down at the judgment day, when all the nations meet God at the throne and meet life's records as thrown upon the canvass of the sky, everyone of the lost will know an anguish and agony that comes from separation from God. Jesus said there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth as they find themselves across the great gulf in utter darkness.

When Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane He went down into that great gulf. He went into that awful blackness. His Spirit shuttered. Keep in mind that He did that for how many? Every man.

Did He do it for you as though you were the only one in the whole world? Did He do it for me too? Did He do it for your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, your neighbor, your friend? Did He do it for all those millions in China and Africa, and for all the millions and trillions and billions who have lived and died down through the ages? Yes.

When a certain amount of load is put upon human nature, what happens? It gives way. Suppose we think of it in the physical. Suppose we start to pile some load of wheat upon a man. We keep piling it up and up. What will finally happen? It will crush out his life.

Can men be crushed with mental anguish? Has it been done? Have men actually died under the load of mental anguish? Oh, yes. Human nature can stand just so much.

What happened in Gethsemane? There is something wonderful and mysterious that happened.

"In the garden of Gethsemane Christ suffered in man's stead, and the human nature of the Son of God staggered under the terrible horror of the guilt of sin until from His pale and quivering lips was forced the agonizing

cry, "Oh, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me" *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol.5, page 1103.

Our text says Christ was made a little lower than the angels for what purpose? For the suffering of death. Who deserved to suffer? Man. He deserved to suffer death, for the wages of sin is death. As the divine Son of God, Jesus could not die, for Deity cannot die. For the suffering of death He must take man's nature. That was one of the great reasons He came to earth and became incarnate. He became a little babe, born as we were born. He grew up the spotless Son of God, divine, yet the son of Mary and David. It is a great mystery.

We can never fully understand it or explain it. We gather in Gethsemane and see Christ not kneeling as He often did. This night He is prostrate on the cold ground. He has taken man's nature in order to suffer death for you.

If all He has is man's nature, do you think Christ could ever suffer enough to pay for millions and billions and trillions of people? No, He could not.

"Human nature would then and there died under the horror of the sense of sin had not an angel from heaven strengthened Him to bear the agony" *Ibid.*, page 1103

The angel came to strengthen Jesus. Not to save Him from dying in the sense of removing the cup, but to give Him strength so He could keep on drinking it, suffering death. He was held at the point.

"Human nature can endure but a limited amount of test and trial. The finite can only endure the finite measure, and human nature succumbs" *Ibid.*, page 1103

It gives way. The mind would snap. The body would die. Life would be gone under even the beginning of the tiniest load that fell upon Jesus that night in Gethsemane.

"But the nature of Christ had a greater capacity for suffering to endure that which resulted from the sins of a lost world" *Ibid.*, page 1103

What gave Him a greater capacity for suffering? He was the Son of God. And there in that dear heart was that mysterious blend of human nature and divine nature. The human nature gave Him the ability to suffer as a human being suffers. The divine nature gave Him the capacity to endure that for millions and billions and trillions of people.

"Christ's agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. The storm had in nowise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His bloodstained face. He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; for He had tasted the

sufferings of death for every man" *The Desire of Ages*, page 694.

I want to have it very clear that this describes what happened in Gethsemane. You ask, Why Calvary then? There was a reason for Calvary that was not taken care of in Gethsemane. But there was something that happened in Gethsemane. In *The Desire of Ages*, page 759, there is a very interesting comparison of Calvary and Gethsemane. It speaks about Jesus in Gethsemane as sorrowful with a bitterness of sorrow "exceeding that of the last great struggle with death."

Calvary was an infinite suffering. But here inspiration compares that with Gethsemane. We have much to meditate on here. There was no one driving nails in Jesus' hands there in that garden. No one was lashing Him. It was mental anguish alone--the weight of the sins of the world. Think of it. The disciples were sleeping when all that was going on.

"By these sleeping disciples is represented a sleeping church when the day of God's visitation is night. It is a time of clouds and thick darkness, when to be found asleep is most perilous" *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, page 205.

We need to study these two gardens--the garden where everything was lost, and the garden where everything was won back. Oh friends, under the plan of salvation it is ever God's purpose to bring light out of darkness and joy out of sorrow. And while we can never experience the agony Jesus experienced in Gethsemane, the Savior has invited us to watch with Him for an hour. And the remnant who go through the time just ahead will know what it means to fellowship with Jesus in this garden.

You and I have been asked to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ, especially the closing scenes. Not that this hour is to be measured by the clock in terms of sixty minutes. No. On many occasions it may be less than sixty minutes. I am of the opinion that between now and the latter rain there will be some hours that will be longer than sixty minutes.

We need not measure it by the tick of a watch. We need to come with Jesus into the garden. The only way He bore it was because that with the humanity which made Him capable of suffering our death was an infinite nature that provided an infinite capacity for infinite suffering.

What made it all? Sin. Sins of pride. Sins of folly. Sins of indulgence. Sins of lust. Sins of covetousness. Sins of worldly ambition, envy, jealousy. Sins of sloth. Every sin was there that night, and was heaped upon the soul of Jesus. It almost killed Him there in the garden before He ever went to the cross.

It would have if the angel had not come and strengthened Him. The angel did not come to take away the cup, or lessen the suffering. From the standpoint of suffering, it would have been mercy if His life had ended right there. But He must drain the cup to its dregs. Our text in Hebrews says that He must taste death for every man.

I used to think of that word taste like tasting a little bit of soup in the kitchen. That isn't what it means. It means to drain the cup and not miss the bitterness of a single drop.

When you were a child did someone give you some bitter medicine, and try to cover it up so you didn't have to taste it?

Jesus had to taste it. He had to experience the bitterness of it, because He was our substitute. He was taking our place. How the heart of the Father must have been wrung.

When Abraham took his son, Isaac, and put him on the altar, it must have been a great sacrifice Isaac made to allow himself to be bound to be sacrificed. But what about Abraham? Do you think he suffered? Yes. If you could choose, would you rather have Isaac's suffering or Abraham's suffering? I think most of us would say Abraham suffered at least as much, or more.

So when we see the Son of God on the cold ground pleading, wrestling, agonizing, bloody sweat pouring from his pores, we must think of the Father's heart that is wrung with anguish as His beloved Son is separated from Him by that awful gulf of sin. Yes, the Father and Son both suffered. But the same power that inflicted that penalty, the power of God was the power that was sustaining our Lord.

"The power that inflicted retributive justice upon man's substitute and surety was the power that sustained and upheld the suffering one under the tremendous weight of wrath that would have fallen upon a sinful world. Christ was suffering the death that was pronounced upon the transgressors of God's law." *Ibid.*, page 1103.

As it were, we see with one hand the judge of all the earth raising the sword of justice to strike to the heart of His beloved Son. This time there is no substitute as in the case of Abraham and Isaac. There is no ram caught in the thicket. Christ Himself, the only begotten Son of God must bare His breast to the stroke. But as that hand of divine justice is uplifted to strike to the heart of Christ, the other hand of the Father is placed beneath His Son to support Him and strengthen Him to bear the awful test and pay the awful price. God and His Son suffered together, my friends.

We should never let the fact that we can dimly comprehend it keep us from studying and meditating upon it. Exactly the opposite should be our reaction. The fact that we understand it so little should challenge us to spend more time in the shadow of the olive trees looking at Jesus as He pays the price.

Here is where sin will get spoiled for us. Here is where human pride will appear in all its ugliness. I doubt we can get very much satisfaction in decorating and adorning these poor mortal bodies if we spend much time in Gethsemane. I think it would solve the fashion problems from head to foot as we kneel and share with Jesus in these experiences in the garden.

I believe this is the cure. I believe the positions and remunerations the world offers, and all appeals to human ambition will fade away into nothingness as we see the love of Jesus as He battles through for us in that awful darkness.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
This were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all.

Satan planned to make sin look to Christ so terrible, and the results so awful, and the penalty for sin so great that it would utterly discourage Jesus from going through with giving His life as the atonement. Satan did everything he could to discourage Jesus. As Jesus looked into that gulf it looked so deep there was no bottom, so far there was no crossing it. He was told that if He went into it there was no coming back. It was forever. Then it was that Jesus made that supreme sacrifice for you and me. If it meant to die and never live again, for my sake He would do it.

That is what it meant to take the cup. Jesus took it. He prayed that if possible it might pass, if there was any way to save man without the separation. But there was no way. You and I must learn that sin means separation, and that there is no way to sin without separation. There is no way to end the separation without getting rid of the sin.

So Jesus took the sin and endured the separation that we might give up the sin and have the separation ended.

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