

The Garden of Jesus

Song of Solomon 4:12-16; John 15:4

December 1, 2019

Greg L. Price

Why do you have a garden? You certainly do not plant, weed, water, and fertilize your garden simply to see just an empty stalk or trunk (as if a mere stick in the ground is beautiful and of any value to you). What you consider to be beautiful and to make your garden valuable to you are the blossoms, flowers, fruits, and vegetables. After a long, cold winter, what joy it is to behold those buds, leaves, blossoms, and fruit. And, O, the fragrance of those blossoms that flow from the flowers and the fruit trees! It is one of those great delights that the Lord gives to us each year as we behold and smell the glory of God's beauty.

From ancient times, the exotic gardens of royalty were places of retreat in which to delight in their beauty and fragrance. Rulers have been temporarily transported from this world to another world—a world of conflict to a world of peace. That is a mere faint image of the delight that Jesus has in you, dear Christian, when He calls you His garden. Jesus takes the greatest delight and pleasure in you, His chosen bride, and in the evidence of His life in you—the fruit of His Spirit. There is nothing more beautiful or fragrant in all of creation to Him than to see and smell His grace in you being lived out in your thoughts, words, and deeds.

The Lord Jesus continues to describe the beauty of you, His Church, and the greatest pleasure you bring to Him by way of the analogy of a king walking, beholding, and smelling the beauty and fragrance of a royal garden. Our main points are: (1) The Fruitfulness of the Garden (Song 4:12-15); (2) The Ultimate Goal of the Garden's Fruitfulness (Song 4:16).

I. The Fruitfulness of the Garden (Song 4:12-15).

A. The Lord Jesus you will recall had called His beloved bride to come and commune with Him and to love nothing or no one in this world more than Him (Song 4:8). Why does He call you to come away with Him? He is ravished with your love for Him (Song 4:9). For there is nothing in which He takes greater pleasure in all of His creation than in beholding His love in you being reflected back to Him in your love for Him. Cast away, dear Christian, all of the attempts of the enemy to keep you away from communion with Jesus: your sin, failures, or unworthiness. You and I know all this to be true. Jesus knows it to be true. And yet He calls you to come away with Him that He might delight in you, in your faith, confession, repentance, forgiveness, love, and renewed obedience, for they are beautiful to Him. Remember—His grace is greater than your sin.

B. The Lord Jesus further encourages you to come away with Him, to commune with Him, and to enjoy Him; for you, His chosen bride, are like a beautiful, fragrant garden in which He sings and rejoices (Zephaniah 3:17). The bride of Christ is likened to a beautiful, fruitful garden (Song 4:12), but the unbelieving world is likened to the barren, unfruitful wilderness/desert (Song 3:6; Isaiah 51:3—the work of the Spirit turns us from a desert to a garden). The evidence of life is fruit (John 15:4). Every Christian bears fruit (without exception)—the fruit of knowledge, faith, repentance, love, obedience, humility, submission, joy, thanksgiving, contentment, patience, crucifying the works of the flesh and being renewed in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). There is no such thing as a fruitless Christian (some 30, 60, or 100 fold). All Christians are, therefore, a beautiful, fruitful garden at different stages of growth. Note what Jesus says about His garden that makes her so beautiful and fragrant to Him.

1. **His Bride Is a Garden That Is Enclosed (4:12).** She is an enclosed garden for two reasons.

a. A wall around the garden indicates that the garden is Christ's prized possession.

A wall separates the garden from the wilderness as His special delight which He has redeemed for Himself.

Therefore, we're to act like we belong to the Lord in our separation from the world, the flesh, and the devil—

in our separation from all lovers that rob Jesus of that first love in our life—in our separation unto His gospel, commandments, doctrine, worship, holiness, and communion with Him (James 4:4). Act like you belong to Him when you are all alone, when you are at home, and at work.

b. A wall around the garden is also for the protection of the garden that it may bring forth fruit; for there are ravenous enemies that are like wild animals in seeking to destroy and crush you (Song 2:15; Psalm 80:13—the boar). The Lord promises to be a wall of fire around His beloved people to protect them (Zechariah 2:5). Though Satan and all his wicked hosts seek to destroy you who trust in Jesus alone for eternal salvation, they will fail. They may tempt you and you may even fall, but the Lord Jesus will not permit them to destroy you (Peter—John 10:28-29). If it were not for His wall around you, you could not be beautiful. How many love the wall of Christ’s protection, but despise the wall of His separation? You cannot have one without the other.

2. His Bride Is a Garden that is abundantly watered.

a. Jesus loves you, His beautiful garden, because you are watered with the spring and fountain of life (Song 4:12; Isaiah 58:11). Without water there is no life; there is only fruitlessness and death (Isaiah 1:30—the wicked in Israel).

b. The water of life that is in you is the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39; John 4:13-14). Without the Holy Spirit, there is no spiritual resurrection—there is only death; there is no faith, repentance, love, new obedience, growth and fruit of the Spirit (Philippians 2:13). This water of the Holy Spirit that brings life is “shut up” and “sealed” for only you, the garden of the Lord Jesus. Were it not for the Holy Spirit that gives you life, you could not be beautiful in the eyes of Jesus. In some churches it seems that the only role of the Holy Spirit is to perform what they consider to be the miraculous. But let me tell you, dear ones, that there is nothing more miraculous than to take that which is dead and to bring forth life, faith in Christ, sorrow over sin, love and obedience to God’s commandments—to take a desert and make it into a beautiful garden.

3. His Bride Is a Garden That Brings Forth Fruit (Song 4:13-14).

a. The purpose of an enclosed and watered garden is to bring forth fruit (even much fruit). So likewise the purpose of God’s wall of separation and protection around you, and the purpose of the Spirit’s operation in your life is to bring forth fruit (yea much fruit). There are many kinds of spiritual fruit that are found in Christ’s garden, but they are all represented by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). But in order for that good fruit to grow, you must take care that the works of the flesh (like weeds) be uprooted in your life (Galatians 5:19-21). His fruit of the Spirit will only grow and prosper as you by God’s Spirit and grace uproot the works of the flesh through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

b. There are many who profess to be Christians that are far more concerned about the gifts of the Spirit (usually miraculous gifts) than they are about the fruit of the Spirit. And yet let the Apostle Paul (speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit) remind you which is most important—gifts or fruit (1 Corinthians 13:1-8)? It is the fruit of the Spirit that teaches you how you are to use the gifts which Jesus has given to you. Your knowledge, authority, money, possessions, and family are gifts to you, but you will not know how to use them without the fruit of God’s Spirit alive and growing in you. Gifts without fruit will be all about you, rather than Jesus. You will be like an eye that does not see.

c. Remember also that the best and most abundant fruit only comes from being pruned (John 15:2). This is not a pleasant or comfortable process for the branch. If it could speak, it would say that pruning is painful; and yet without it the branch will eventually die as will the fruit. So likewise you must be pruned by the Lord Jesus, and He does so through all of the trials, tribulations, suffering, heartache, and pain that He brings into your life, marriage, and job, and into the life of those whom you love (Romans 5:3-5). Jesus is pruning you that you may bear much fruit to His glory.

II. The Ultimate Goal of the Garden’s Fruitfulness (Song 4:16).

A. All of Song 4:1-15 has given to us the precious words of the Lord Jesus in encouraging you, beautifying you, and calling you to come away with Him into that nearness of communion (whether it be privately as an individual, as a family, or publicly in His ordinances). Jesus is removing all of the excuses you may use not to come away with Him (your preoccupations, your ambitions and dreams, your pointing to your sinful spots and failures). He is continually assuring you that due to His electing love, redeeming love, justifying love, and sanctifying love, you are spiritually beautiful, and He is ravished by the love and fruit that you return to Him (even fruit that is yet immature, but is yet growing).

B. Now it is the bride's turn to respond to her Heavenly Husband. This is the bride's prayer and plea to Jesus—this is your prayer and plea.

1. **“Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south [wind].”** The wind also signifies the Holy Spirit (John 3:8; Acts 2:2). This is an earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit would come with His refreshing breeze from the north when you are facing the hot heat of tribulation and trials and that He would come with His warming wind from the south when you are enduring the coolness of love for Christ and the cold affections from family and friends.

2. **“Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.”** Blow in order that the spices of grace might flow and fill my life, my home, and my workplace with the grace and fruit of the Spirit. Just as your light is not to be hid under a bushel, so the fragrance of your gracious spices of the Spirit are not to be confined within your soul—they are to be wafted to those who are nearest to you and all around you. When you wear perfume, cologne, scented lotions, and deodorant, you don't want that fragrance to be hidden from the noses of others, you intend that they be smelled and enjoyed by others and not just yourself. It is to be your daily prayer that the grace and love of Christ (all of the fruit of the Spirit) be enjoyed by your husband, wife, children, parents, extended family, friends, co-workers, brothers and sisters in Christ.

3. **“Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.”** Here is the ultimate goal of the Spirit's work of grace in the life of the true Christian: “Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.” After all of the expressions of love from Jesus in Song 4:1-15, how can anything but a dead or cold heart not express such a longing for Jesus to come and commune in His ordinances with us? Note the change from “my garden” to “his garden”.

a. It is **MY GARDEN** by way of stewardship in that which is entrusted to me that I might exercise myself to godliness and use all of the means of grace that my garden not be overrun with weeds and be growing in the beauty of love and holiness. It is **MY GARDEN** by way of my duty not to be lazy, forgetful, too busy, or to blame others for the way my garden looks.

b. It is **HIS GARDEN** by way of ownership. He bought it, planted it, protects it, and gives living water. The fruit belongs to Him. Dear ones, the goal of fruitfulness is not ultimately for your own benefit, or even for the benefit of others. The chief goal and end of fruitfulness is ultimately for Jesus to delight in coming into His garden and for Him to rejoice and take pleasure in His pleasant fruit. Your fruitfulness is for His pleasure. Is that your chief end in gathering to worship Him—that He would find the fruit of your worship to be delicious to His taste? It's not what we receive from worship and communion, but what He receives from our worship and communion that matters most.

Copyright 2019 Greg L. Price.