



Topic: Good Friday. The Garden of Victory. Bible Scriptures: John 18:3-12.

The Garden of Victory

In the garden opposites collide. Earth and heaven, evil and good, humanity and God, self will and God's will, bondage and freedom, surrender and victory.

Let us go back in time, to that moment in the garden, at the foot of the mountain.

It is dark. The sorrow, heaviness of heart and distress of future events is overwhelming. He knows His hour has come.

The disciples follow, for now at least. He tells them to watch and pray, so that they will not enter into temptation. He cares for them so much, more than they are yet to know.

In so many ways He demonstrated His love and servant heart. Knowing His darkest hour was upon Him, He washed their feet and served them. It was to be their last supper together, His thoughts were not for Himself, but for them.

He earnestly prayed for them and all who subsequently will follow Him.

His love is so great, His passion so immense. His faithfulness undeniable.

In The Garden Heaven and Earth Collide

He withdrew from them and went a little farther away, into a private space within the garden. He knew His time had come. He knelt down before His Father in heaven and bowed His face into the ground.

In this most humble position Jesus speaks, *'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.'*

He knew all things are possible with God the Father. In fact all things are possible for Him also as He is the Son of God. He had all the power of heaven at His disposal, yet refused to use it.

He knows there is no other way, as He has told His disciples many times that He must suffer for their sakes and for all humanity.



Topic: Good Friday. The Garden of Victory. Bible Scriptures: John 18:3-12.

Yet He intimately, warmly, tenderly declares, *'O My Father,'*

Jesus reveals His Father. Our Father is there with Him, in His darkest hour.

'...if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.'

He declares if at all possible, knowing there is no other way. In doing so He is identifying with our humanity, conflict, death, sorrow and pain. For He must drink the cup of human suffering. It is our cup. The cup of all our offences that we have thought, said and done towards God and each other and the consequences of them, which is death.

Jesus concludes *'...nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.'*

The two are one in surrender. His whole life His one desire is to live according to the Father's will. They did everything together. Jesus explained this and told them that the Son can do nothing of Himself and the Father and He are one.

In The Garden Self will and God's will Collide

Doing the will of His Father is His food, nutrition, motive and mission. There is no other way.

'...nevertheless not as I will, but as You will be done.'

Even in this most deeply distressing time, they remain as one.

The agony was deep. His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down into the dirt of humanity. He prayed more earnestly.

Jesus demonstrates He willingly give up His human self will and surrender it to His Father's will.

He reveals the heart of our Father who willing gives up everything in His Son to set humanity free.

The Father's will and the Son's will are one.

In the garden opposites collide. Earth and heaven, evil and good, humanity and God, self will and God's will, bondage and freedom, surrender and victory.

He goes back to His disciples. They have fallen asleep!



Topic: Good Friday. The Garden of Victory. Bible Scriptures: John 18:3-12.

Again His concern for them is first and foremost. He declares to them, *‘Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’*

Jesus leaves them and returns to that private place. Again He asks His Father, *“O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.”*

The first time Jesus was identifying with humanity. Now He is identifying with the Father.

He declares your will be done. The reality sets in. The drinking of the cup of human suffering cannot pass away, unless He drinks it. He is the One who has to drink our cup. Our cup of all offences we have ever thought, said and done individually and collectively throughout the ages. Past, present and future. For He is the perfect man. He must drink our cup for humanity to be truly free!

The second time He goes back to His disciples. Again they are sleeping, their eyes are so heavy.

Again He leaves them and returns to that private place. A third time He asks His Father, speaking the same words. A third time He returns to His disciples. He announces it is time.

Three times Jesus engages with the Father.

Three times He surrenders.

The Garden of Shame

To understand the garden of victory, we must go back to the garden of shame.

Back to the beginning when God created. In the midst of the garden was the first man and woman, God created and provided a never ending abundant supply of food and water. It was so beautiful, pristine and very good.

There were many trees for food. Also two other trees were there. The tree of eternal life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Remember this is God’s perfect creation where evil has no place or power. It is a place of love, unity, equality and respect.



Topic: Good Friday. The Garden of Victory. Bible Scriptures: John 18:3-12.

As God so loves and does everything out of love He gave the first man and woman everything of Himself and His creation. He gave the power of choice. The choice to partake of life and live forever or to partake of the knowledge of good and evil and physically die.

The first woman in the garden heard the voice of the evil one and listened. As she engaged with the evil one, she saw through the eyes of deception and pride that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was good for food, pleasing to the eye and desirable to make one wise.

Three deceptions, three temptations, three forms of corruption. God had already imparted His wisdom and will urging them to choose life and not to partake of the knowledge of good and evil, for they shall surely die.

Yet she chose to partake of it. The first man did likewise. As a result of choosing to become one with both good and evil they gave their power to rule and reign over all the earth to evil and their selfish desires or the flesh.

The Three Temptations

They usurped God's authority and right to define what is good and evil.

Reasoning that:

1. It looks good therefore it must be good, even when God said it wasn't. The deceptions of the lust of the eye.
2. It will feel good therefore it must be good even when God said it wasn't. The deceptions of the lust for the flesh.
3. It is good to be wiser than God even when God said it wasn't. The deceptions of pride.

All three deceptions lead to destruction of self and others. The first man and woman chose to partake of this knowledge. Both chose to be one with evil and good. Giving over their God given power to evil. As a result evil was activated into God's perfect world. Since then humanity has been trapped, a slave to their selfish desires.



Topic: Good Friday. The Garden of Victory. Bible Scriptures: John 18:3-12.

Paradise was lost, it was given away. The curse of human suffering, oppression, injustice and death was activated into God's perfect world. The earth is now out of harmony. Humanity is now at war within and against each other. The good seed of humanity is corrupted.

Jesus the perfect man, born of a woman of the Holy Spirit, in the garden at the foot of the mountain, three times surrendered to the Father's will.

Jesus turns the garden of shame into the garden of victory.

In Jesus paradise is bought back. The cost is beyond measure.

Jesus returns to His disciples and while He is still speaking the darkness sets in.

The multitude have come, led by His betrayer. He comes closer and draws near. For it is with a customary sign of affection that he will identify Jesus to his enemies. He will be betrayed by a kiss.

In the Garden Betrayed with a Kiss

John 18:3-12 *Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."*

Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him.



Topic: Good Friday. The Garden of Victory. Bible Scriptures: John 18:3-12.

I Am He

He knew everything that was going to happen to Him, yet He said I am He. Such boldness, authority and directness. Reminiscent of His teaching and preaching in the daylight. When He said before Abraham was, I am. Yes the Eternal One, the Great I am!

The situation or circumstances do not change His identity, motive or mission. His heart is pure, His passion intense, His authority divine.

With these words, I am He, they draw back and fall to the ground. They are one of the most powerful and brutal armies the world has ever known, accompanied with the temple police, yet at one word from Jesus they all fall to the ground.

Let's take a moment to think about this. They have come to arrest the light of the world in the darkness, carrying lanterns, torches and weapons. They have chosen the darkness.

Jesus with all power and authority responds with a few simple words, I am He. Yet with all the authority of the world super power and religious, they cannot arrest Him, unless He willingly gives them His life.

Therefore He lays down His life and asks them again, whom are you seeking?

They reply Jesus of Nazareth. He reiterates, I am He. He willingly lays down His life, as this is the will of the Father, this is the will of the Son. The two are indeed one.

Again His thoughts are for others. He tells the soldiers it is He that they seek, and as a result they are to let His disciples go.

Yet Peter takes matters into his own hands, still not understanding that it is Jesus who has all the power and authority. With his sword he slashes off the ear of one of those who has come to arrest Him.



Topic: Good Friday. The Garden of Victory. Bible Scriptures: John 18:3-12.

Permit Even This

Jesus answered and said to Peter, *“Permit even this.”* And He touched the ear and healed him.

He healed one of those who persecuted Him, came to arrest Him and do the works of evil.

Oh such love. Can our flesh permit such a thing? Jesus speaks light and life into Peter’s flesh and declares, *Permit even this.*

Jesus willingly gives us and the soldiers and the religious who reject Him His life, to set humanity free. For this is the will of the Father, this is the will of the Son. The two are one.

Jesus reiterates, *Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?”*

God did not give or cause suffering. Suffering is a result of humanity giving power to their flesh and evil. This occurred right back in the beginning in a garden, a perfect garden where everything was good.

In another garden centuries later, a garden was damaged by evil, God in His great love willingly took the cup of suffering and transformed it into the cup of salvation.

A cup of salvation that overflows with freedom and victory for all to freely drink.

It is time for every disciple of Jesus to be truly free. To come to our garden of Gethsemane moment and declare, *Father not my will but yours be done.*

In the garden opposites collide. The choice is real, the consequences eternal. The testimony is true, the events undeniable.

What is your response?