

He Comes to His Garden

by Erlo Stegen

Jesus desires a fruitful garden, where He can come and enjoy Himself, and He reveals what is in our hearts through circumstances to purify us and bring forth a sweet fragrance from us.

Scripture: Proverbs 13:24, Song of Solomon 5:1, Isaiah 35:1-2, Galatians 5:19-23

Topics: "Intimacy With God", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes the intimate relationship between Jesus, the Bridegroom, and His people, urging believers to cultivate their spiritual gardens filled with the fruits of the Spirit. He warns against misinterpreting God's love and the consequences of neglecting spiritual growth, using examples of parenting and personal experiences to illustrate the importance of discipline and correction. Stegen highlights that true love for God is reflected in our actions and the fruits we bear, contrasting it with the dangers of living in sin. He challenges listeners to examine their own hearts and gardens, ensuring they are producing the sweet fruits of love, joy, and peace, rather than the thorns of the flesh. Ultimately, he calls for a life that glorifies God, as He seeks to find delight in our spiritual offerings.

Transcript

1 I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

(Song of Solomon 5:1)

This book speaks about the Bridegroom and the bride. Some would read this book and twist it according to their lusts. But it is to be spiritually interpreted. Those who interpret it according to their lusts do so to their own destruction.

Jesus is the Bridegroom and He speaks of how He has entered into His garden and found it pleasant and the fruit wonderful. We see with what great intimacy He addresses His own people, "my sister, my spouse". In the new Testament He calls His people His brethren.

It is marvellous with what intimacy He views His people. He doesn't speak with such intimacy of the angels for they are His messengers.

There are those who say a God of love cannot put anyone in hell. But that is precisely why one can understand that there is a hell. For anyone who tramples underfoot and spurns such great love, cannot but be condemned to eternal hell!

It should be that when the unconverted see God's great love, they say, "how can I ever again love the world again?"

I knew two brothers well. Both of them were believers. The one felt the calling to proclaim the Gospel. Both of them married and had two children, a boy and a girl each. The one couple said, "we love our children too much to give them a hiding". The other couple brought their children up with the rod. The second couple's children who grew up with the rod feared and served the Lord. The son became a preacher of the Gospel and the daughter dearly loved the Lord and His work and was a great blessing. The other couple, who "loved" their children too much to spank them, were heartbroken because of their children. Both went into the world and rejected their parents and their faith. Such a love for children is a devilish love, where one doesn't correct your children as the Bible teaches.

Eventually the son that went into the world died in a motorbike accident. The father could not accept that his son went to hell and clung to the belief of the non-existence of hell.

However, the Bible is clear, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." (Proverbs 13:24).

Some's love of the Lord only goes as deep as their money. A certain man, who was quite rich, would continually shout Amen and Hallelujah throughout a service. He was quite a disturbance. People spoke to him to keep quiet but that would only spur him on to do it more, Sunday after Sunday. Eventually a certain man that sat next to him one Sunday, whispered to him while he was shouting his Amen's and Hallelujah's, "I can see that you love the Lord dearly; why don't you give R10000 to the work of the Lord." Abruptly his shouting stopped, and he remained quiet for the rest of the service.

Another preacher was annoyed by the continual Amens and Hallelujahs while he preached. So one day he made a deliberate mistake and said something completely wrong, but the hallelujahs continued. Then he stopped them, saying to them, "clearly you're just playing around, for you shout Amen and Hallelujah for anything, even if something is wrong."

In our text we read of Jesus coming into His garden.

This reminds me of the gardens at Maqhogo, where the Lord has blessed the work richly and changed a dry and withered land into lush gardens with different kinds of fruit, even some exotic fruit.

When the Lord comes to your garden, do you have this fruit to offer to the Lord, the fruit of the Spirit?

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23).

Firstly love. Do you know love that keep no grudges, doesn't vaunt itself etc. Read 1Cor 13 on all its qualities. It doesn't seek its own, but the good of others.

Joy - Some people when you meet them their faces are down and long and filled with darkness. People who have faith are happy people. The radiance of God's joy fills their faces.

Peace reigns in the life of the one filled with God's Spirit.

And so we can go through each fruit, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. There is no garden as beautiful as this. One cannot eat enough hereof.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God." (Isaiah 35:1-2).

Is your life like this? Is the glory of Lebanon, Sharon and Carmel there? Is the excellency of our Lord's radiance emanating from your life?

Each one of us must be a fruitful garden where the Lord can come and enjoy Himself.

There are no thorns there, like the fruit of the flesh we also read of in Gal 5.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21).

If you have outbursts of wrath you will not inherit the kingdom of God, as well as those who have these other fruits of the flesh in their lives

It says here that those who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God, no matter who says anything to the contrary. The Word of God guarantees that even if you think yourself saved but practices these things you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Those who practices lewdness and homosexuality will also not inherit the kingdom of God.

The father of a certain boy asked him if he knew what it meant to have a grudge. The boy answered "No". But then he had a dream that he had something against his best friend and withdrew from him. Then he heard God's voice, "my son, with that you cannot enter heaven". He knew what it meant and made it right as soon as he could.

We also know of Sven who heard the other boys speak about evil things at school and then he had a dream that God said to him, "with this thing you will not enter heaven". So he went and made it right. Shortly thereafter he died in a motorcycle accident, but he was right with God.

It doesn't matter what the next man does, God looks at your reaction. You're a fool if you're busy with the mistakes of others, while you should be busy with your own.

God engineers circumstances to reveal what is in your own heart. You think it is the next person doing something against you, yet God allows the thing to happen to reveal your own heart.

God allows some people to tread on your toes to show what is in your heart. Your first reaction might be, "who is this person to do this to me!" It reveals your heart.

God might allow you to be mistreated, through your children, wife or husband to reveal what's inside your heart so that He can purify you. Do these difficulties bring forth a sweet fragrance from you?

If the joy of the Lord is your strength, you will not be distracted how others treat you. Even if others treat you like a dog, you're not distracted thereby, for your eyes are upon the Lord.

There is a story of a certain old man who lost his balance as he climbed off a train and fell between the platform and the track. As the train started to move, his clothes got entangled in the wheels and he was thrown violently against the sides of the platform until he died. Those that saw this happening only heard him thanking and praising the Lord as he was torn to pieces, until his voice fell silent. That was what was in his heart.

There was revival for seventy years in South Korea. It all started about a hundred years ago, when missionaries came to South Korea from America. However the missionaries got disheartened and wanted to return home, but then the Lord convicted them of their lack of love for the people. With tears they made it right during a service, one after the other. Then the fire of God started to sweep through that congregation and through South Korea. Today South Korea sends out more missionaries than any other country, even more than America.

What type of a garden are you when Jesus comes to you? Does He experience the delight of the fruit and the sweetness of the aroma of your garden? If you're still troubled by anger and irritability, it's the devil in your heart. You're a hypocrite.

In the Bible we read that the Lord Jesus came to a fig-tree and looked for fruit. Finding none, but only leaves, He cursed it and it was eternally cursed and withered and never bore fruit again.

In another garden He came to look for fruit, but didn't find any. He asked the gardener to cut it down, but the gardener pleaded for another year to water it more and put fertiliser around it.

Woe to you if He comes to you and find grudges, impatience, irritability, etc.

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