

The Beloved in His Garden

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[0 : 0 0] Let us now worship God by singing to His praise from Psalm 45, the first version of the Psalm, page 267.

Psalm 45, page 267, the first version of the Psalm. My heart brings forth a goodly thing, my words that I indict concern the King, my tongues a pen of one that swift doth write.

Thou fairer art than sons of men, into thy lips a store of grace infused, God therefore thee hath blessed forevermore.

O thou that art the mighty one, thy sword geared on thy thigh, even with thy glory excellent and with thy majesty.

For meekness, truth and righteousness in state right prosperously, and thy right hand shall thee instruct in things that fearful be.

[1 : 1 6] Let us sing these verses. First version of Psalm 45, page 267. My heart brings forth a goodly thing.

My heart brings forth a goodly thing, my eyes are flying in bright.

Ones and the king, my heart's on the ground. Ones and the king, my heart's on the ground. Have a goodly thing, my heart's on the ground.

Amen. No means canary. May ay, or go away else, the king, my heart's on the ground. O nein. O min water's on the ground.

. . .

[2 : 4 2] O thou, thou tart the mighty one, thy sword gird on thy thigh, in which thy glory excellent, found with thy majesty.

For me, yes, true son righteousness, in which I pass personally, on thy right hand shall we instruct in things that fear hold me.

Let us engage in prayer. O eternal and ever-blessed Lord, we have been singing anew about the wedding of weddings, where the bridegroom is described as been fairer than the sons of men, fairer in every respect than the sons of men.

For no son of man can compare to the bridegroom who is described in this wedding song. He is perfect.

He is perfect. Perfect in holiness. Perfect in obedience. Perfect in love. Perfect in grace.

[4 : 5 7] Perfect in grace. Perfect from every aspect to which his character is viewed, both as a person of the Trinity and as the God-man who appeared in O world, and to stroud the stage of this world for a brief time, in order that salvation might be procured for unworthy sinners, undeserving sinners.

And we bless thy name this evening, that he is ascended to the right hand above, a Prince and a Saviour, as he awaits thee, the glorious wedding feast, when the bride shall be brought, with gladness great and mirth on every side, into the presence of the King, and there she shall abide.

O Lord, there is so much that is hidden from our eyes, of the marriage feast that is yet to be. The betrothal takes place in this life, but the marriage feast awaits the second coming of the heavenly bridegroom, when he comes in glory and in power, in might, as he brings the bride to be with him.

Grant, O Lord, that we might find ourselves within the encirclement and encompassment of the heavenly bride, those who have been quickened by the power of thy Holy Spirit to newness of life, those whose eyes have been opened, those whose ears have been opened, those whose tongues have been given to sing the new song of grace.

Grant, O Lord, that none of us be strangers to these things. Bless, we pray thee, out gathering in thy name this evening, each and all as we are found before thee.

[7 : 30] Bless those unable to be present through any restraint in providence, especially those who are elderly and frail, and unable to come, as they came in previous years, to this place of worship, whose hearts may be heavy and sore because they cannot join, in the corporate worship of thy people, and yet, who in a mystical way are able to join at the throne of grace, in the solitude of their own homes, by their own firesides, this evening, or wherever their lot is cast.

Be near to them and visit them in the power of thy grace, and the majesty of thy love. Minister to them and encourage them, and assure them again that thou art their God and their Lord.

Bless, we pray thee, the gospel wherever it is proclaimed. Bless the congregation at this particular time, as they await the ordination and induction of a new minister into the congregation.

O grant, O Lord, that thou wouldst bless the ministry that is expected to begin. May it be richly blessed by thee.

May there be many souls touched by the power of the gospel through the ministry of thy servant, as he commences his ministry in this part of thy vineyard.

[9 : 24] May it be a fragrant ministry, blessed richly by thee. For thou alone art able to give the increase.

Although Paul may plant and Apollos may water, it is God alone who gives the increase. And we pray that there may be much increase, as the gospel message is proclaimed from this pulpit in coming days.

Bless the Presbytery as they arrange for this service. And grant, O Lord, that thou wouldst raise up others who would go forth with the glorious message of truth, and be true servants of thine, placed in thy vineyard here and there, to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Help us as we further wait upon thee. Lead us, we pray thee. Guide us by thy spirit. Cleanse in the blood. In Jesus' name we ask it, with forgiveness of sin.

Amen. Let us further sing to God's praise from Psalm 45A, page 57 of the Psalter.

[10 : 53] And verse 5.

Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of those who hate the King, and all the nations of the earth into subjection bring.

Your royal throne, O God, will last throughout eternity. Your kingdom scepter will be one of truth and equity.

Anointing you with oil of joy, your God has made you great, because you care for righteousness and wickedness you hate.

With aloes, myrrh and cassia, in fragrant robes you're clad. From palaces of ivory, stringed music makes you glad.

[11 : 56] Let us sing these verses. Psalm 45A, page 57, at verse 5. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of those who hate the King.

When you shall burn the Lord, close the hearts of those who hate the King, and all the nations of the earth, and to the crown of the King.

Your royal throne, O God, will last in the eternity.

Your kingdom scepter will be one of truth and equity. And my kingdom will be one of truth and equity.

For nor the Psalm Phais to oldu the day your kingdom scepter will be one of the greatest.

[13 : 46] Of the King. For by the Romans Scepter, Österreich will be one of the many, and let us know it's toshare for life. to Him.

When my Lord■ kunnen I see you all then, Three brightoms your cloud Non palaces of salivary Sing music makes your glad Let us now read from the Old Testament, from the book of the Song of Solomon, in chapter 5, reading at verse 2, and into part of chapter 6.

Book of the Song of Solomon. If you find Isaiah, the Song of Solomon comes just before the book Prophecy of Isaiah.

At verse 2, I slept, but my heart was awake. A sound, my beloved, is knocking. Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one.

For my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night. I had put off my garment, how could I put it on?

[15 : 41] I had bathed my feet, how could I soil them? My beloved put his hand to the latch, and my heart was thrilled within me.

I arose to open to my beloved, and my hands dripped with mere, my fingers with liquid mere on the handles of the bald.

I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but found him not.

I called him, but he gave no answer. The watchmen found me as they went about in the city. They beat me. They bruised me.

They took away my veil. These watchmen of the walls, I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him, I am sick with love.

[16 : 46] What is your beloved more than another beloved, O most beautiful among woman? What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you thus adjure us?

My beloved is radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand. His head is the finest gold, his locks are wavy, black as a raven.

His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside a full pole.

His cheeks are like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs. His lips are lilies, dripping liquid mere.

His arms are rods of gold set with jewels. His body is polished ivory bedecked with sapphires. His legs are alabaster columns, set on bases of gold.

[17 : 53] His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet. T'is altogether desirable.

This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Where has your beloved gone, O most beautiful among women?

Where has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you? My beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to graze in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

I am my beloved, and my beloved is mine. He grazes among the lilies.

Amen, and may God bless to us that reading from his truth. Let us further sing to his praise from Psalm 92, page 353 of the Psalter.

[19 : 04] Psalm 92, page 353 of the Psalter. Psalm 92, at verse 12. But like the palm tree flourishing, shall be the righteous one.

He shall like to the cedar grow, that is in Lebanon. Those that within the house of God are planted by his grace, they shall grow up, and flourish all in our God's holy place.

And in old age, when others fade, they fruit still forth shall bring. They shall be fat, and full of sap, and they be flourishing.

To show that upright is the Lord, he is a rock to me. And he from all unrighteousness is altogether free.

Let us sing these verses. But like the palm tree flourishing, shall be the righteous one. For like the palm tree flourishing, shall be the righteous one.

[20 : 27] He shall like to the cedar grow.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Let us now turn. To the passage that we read. The book of the Song of Solomon in chapter 6. And reading again at verse 2.

My beloved has gone down to his garden. To the beds of spices. To graze or to pasture in the gardens.

[23 : 04] And to gather lilies. The famous Scottish preacher, Robert Murray McChain, used to say that no book of the Bible affords a better test of the depth of a person's Christianity than the book of the Song of Solomon.

Spurgeon used to say, if I must choose one book above others in the Bible, I would prefer some books for doctrine, some for experience, some for example, some for teaching.

And then he went on to say, but let me prefer this book above all others for fellowship and communion. So right at the very outset, I'd like to ask you, do you read this book?

Or do you skip it over? Or do you skip it over? What is your view of this book? Do you skip it over because it is largely a poetical book?

And poetry for some people can be a turn-off. For others, poetry appeals to the imagination.

[24 : 37] It is a book, in my view, that is primarily an exposition of the spiritual relationship between Christ and his people.

It is the first book among a group of books in the Hebrew Bible, which is known as the Megilloth.

The others in that group are the Book of Ruth, Book of Lamentations, Book of Ecclesiastes, and the Book of Esther.

These books were read in connection with the different feasts and fasts in the Hebrew calendar. And this book, the Song of Solomon, was read especially at the time of the Feast of the Passover, and more particularly on the Sabbath of the Passover.

One writer makes the observation that one of the greatest needs of the present generation Church, along with a fresh grip upon the doctrines of the Word, is a fresh and experimental acquaintance with the love of Christ, to know what it is to belong to him, and to be married to him, to appreciate the wonders of the grace of God, to be overwhelmed at the sheer fact of being a Christian, and to be moved to a loving esteem for the Church of Christ.

[26 : 21] The question is asked in the context, where has your beloved gone, oh most beautiful, among women?

Some see this description as being descriptive of a recovering believer, or a restored believer.

In Scripture you find that where the disciplinary process arrives at its goal, and the goal of discipline is always repentance, then restoration is quick.

There is no benefit in continuing to discipline a penitent disciple. But that's just by the way. Where has your beloved gone, oh most beautiful, among women?

That we may seek him with you. And our text this evening gives the response, my beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, and so on.

[27 : 44] So three thoughts from our text this evening. Who is the beloved? Where has he gone? And what is he doing?

Who is the beloved? And to help us answer the question, who is the beloved? Who is the beloved? Who is the beloved? You may remember that she was previously asked the question, almost beautiful among women, what is your beloved more than another beloved?

And you may remember the response, or at least how she began her response. My beloved is radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand.

That's how she sets out the response to the question that she has asked. In other words, that her beloved is unique, stands apart from the rest.

And although she began with much confidence and sought to elaborate on his qualities, it's as if language is totally inadequate to describe the qualities of the beloved.

[29 : 04] And so she says, he is altogether desirable, or as I prefer, he is altogether lovely. As if to say there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that I wish to alter or change, add or take away.

He is perfect. Now I have already stated that this, I believe the book to be an exposition of the spiritual relationship between Christ and his people.

Given the absolute perfection of the beloved, then who else could be the beloved but Christ himself?

And so I'd like to ask another question. Is that how you and I view Christ this evening? Is he your beloved?

Do you look upon him as the perfect God-man? You know how at times you might hear a very devoted couple speak and one say of the other, I would like to make minor changes.

[30 : 22] For example, that either he or she, just by way of example, might be more tidy or might be something else.

But what the church is stating in the context of her description of the beloved is that there is nothing at all that she would wish to change.

He is perfect. However you view Christ, he is without blemish. After all, he is the son of whom the Father speaks that he is well pleased.

He is altogether lovely. The psalm that we sung this evening at the beginning of the service is closely linked to this book.

It's a messianic wedding song. And it also sets before us the qualities that identify the beloved. Thou fairer art than sons of men and to thy lips a store of grace infused.

[31 : 27] God therefore thee hath blessed forevermore. And it doesn't matter how you look at the life of Christ. He is fairer than every son of man.

It doesn't matter who we are. We have our faults. But Christ has no fault. He is without fault.

He is without blemish. He is perfect in every way. And you know the strange thing is the New Testament never gives us a physical description of Christ.

Just think of that. we are given an insight into many of the characteristics and the qualities that describe Christ.

But we don't have a physical description. If you or I were to give a description of someone amongst other things we would describe their physical makeup and perhaps tell of some of the characteristics that we see in them.

[32 : 39] But the New Testament is silent on this. It doesn't tell us whether Jesus was tall or short or of medium build.

Whether he was well built or wiry. We don't know the color of his hair or whether he was prematurely bald. These things are not important.

And I cannot help but think that there was absolutely nothing physically in his build or looks to draw the attention of men.

He blended seamlessly into the sea of humanity that surrounded him. But what is important are the wonderful characteristics that he displays as one who reveals the Father.

Father. The writer the letter to the Hebrews reminds us he had to be made like his brothers in every respect but without sin.

[33 : 45] This was the sinless Son of God in our nature. You remember how his mother Mary was informed about the child that she was carrying.

The child to be born will be called holy the Son of God. his humanity holy without sin. And so as you look at Christ how attractive is this person the God man in comparison to all fallen humanity.

Because of all fallen humanity it is true that we were brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Jesus was attractive in his development for we are told in the Bible he grew in wisdom and knowledge as do many.

But the many have a heart that is deceitful and desperately wicked whereas his heart was without sin of any kind perfectly pure.

[34 : 56] he was never sick although he could speak of hunger thirst tiredness think of the work he did of his perfect obedience and suffering as one who bore our sins yet without sin.

Think of how he demonstrates his pastoral care for the flock how he shows his love as the elder brother. And do you remember there is one particular description in this book that describes the attractiveness and the beauty of his person he is spoken of as the rose of Sharon.

he possesses a special unique beauty as the God man. Now I admit that is not evident or visible to every eye only to the eye of faith for to those who don't have faith he is as a root out of a dry ground.

And so you have to ask yourself this evening how do you view Christ? Do you see the attractiveness of his person or is he as a root out of a dry ground?

He speaks of himself as I said as the rose of Sharon the lily of the valleys. The lily was a white flower flower.

[36 : 38] A flower that often its head was bowed. And you might use that as being illustrative of the humble sinless nature that belonged to him.

There is no glory like Christ's. It's the wonder of glory and the glory and hallelujah of heaven that divinity could stoop so low and not be less divine.

That humanity could rise so high and not be less human. There is no glory like Christ's glory. No beauty like his.

But his own beauty. Who can describe it? His person so lovely. his nature so holy. His spirit so gentle.

His voice so soothing. His whole character and life so inlaid and resplendent with every human spiritual and divine perfection.

[37 : 58] So the answer to the question is our first heading who is the beloved? cannot be anyone but the Lord Jesus Christ. Where did he go?

And the answer that is given to us in our text, my beloved has gone to his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed his flock in the gardens, to gather lilies.

God how do we understand by the term garden? If we confine our exposition to this book, we find that the word garden is used in two ways in this book.

It is used to describe the heart of man, but especially in my view, to describe the church, the bride of the lamb.

For example, you find this written in the book, a garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

[39 : 11] The imagery is suggestive of a walled garden. That's what I understand from the term, a garden enclosed. It is also evident that however enclosed this garden might be, that the beloved has access to it.

You see, it is described as his garden. The fact that it is locked or enclosed suggests security and safety.

What makes the garden so secure? It seems to me that because it is enclosed, that the church is enclosed within the secure walls of the covenant of grace.

To begin with, the church was placed within the walls of the covenant of works. But these walls were unable to keep out the tempter, the enemy of the soul.

Remember how he gained access to the ear of man within the enclosure of the covenant of works. He got access to our first parents.

[40 : 32] The serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, has God indeed said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden. Oh how skillfully he sowed the seed of doubt in the heart of the woman.

Did God actually say? And you know he is still sowing those seeds of doubt to the present hour, seeking to undermine trust in the inerrant, foundational, unshakable, word of God.

That's what he did in the garden. He questioned the goodness of God as if to say, God is not really good. Does he really speak the truth?

Can you really depend and believe God? You see, the whole point of that conversation, not so much about the fruit of the tree that is forbidden, but about the honesty and sincerity of the word of God.

And the moment they yield to the element of doubt, they are for one of a better expression to the four winds. then Satan contradicts the testimony of God.

[42 : 01] For in light of what Satan stated, we read, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.

she also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Sin gained an entrance and unbelief began its reign, because man rejected the goodness and the truth of God.

the walls of that covenant no longer able to provide shelter. But what's spoken of in this book as an enclosed garden, it is suggested is surrounded by the strong walls of the covenant of grace.

Does that mean that the enemy of the soul of the believer cannot be tempted or open to attack?

It doesn't mean that. They can be tempted. They can be open to attack. But their status is so very different.

[43 : 14] They are surrounded by the strong walls. They are now in Christ in another covenant head. Satan did everything in his power to undermine and destroy the credibility of Christ but he failed miserably.

Oh so miserably. Do you remember what the Bible states when Christ was on the cross he cried with a loud voice what did he cry out? It is finished. Cry that speaks not only of a sacrifice that satisfied divine justice but of a glorious victorious triumph over the powers of darkness.

And Paul goes on to expound it like this right into the Colossians having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us which was contrary to us and he has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross having disarmed principalities and powers he made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them in it.

So you see your security is no longer determined by your own obedience as it was in the covenant of works do this and live but your security is determined by the perfect obedience of your Lord and Savior not that there is any excuse for disobedience on our part so those who are within the walls of the covenant of grace they enjoy secure status they will never perish no one will snatch them out of my hands says Jesus my father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the father son they are in the two fold grasp of the father and the son that's one thought that flows from the enclosed garden an enclosed garden reminds me of a garden we had in our first marital home there was quite a high wall to the rear of the house it enclosed the whole rear garden area it was so private and that brings me to another thought because

I think an enclosed garden suggests the inner secret life of the believer you know how you have meetings with Christ that are recorded only in heaven the secret meetings between you and your saviour for example remember what Christ said to Nathaniel when you were under the fig tree I saw you what was Nathaniel doing under the fig tree he was doing business with his Lord the believer has been set apart by the Lord for the Lord's enjoyment what do I base this assertion on what is stated in the book of Psalms know that the

[46 : 34] Lord has set apart the godly for himself and then there is something else about this garden there is a spring or a fountain there that's suggestive of a constant water supply spring or well but hot spring arises in this garden and in my view it is suggestive of the word of

God you go to the word of God thirsty seeking a drink and what a refreshing spring you find the word of God to be and you know what makes the water of this spring so sweet and so precious is Christ himself flavoring the water satisfy your soul in drought make your bones strong and you shall be like a watered garden like a spring of water whose waters do not fail where did the beloved go he went into his garden his garden he is the proprietor of the garden it is he who cultivates the garden you know gardens just do not happen the area requires to be cultivated it and it's not just cultivation that is suggested but growth it is the proprietor who promotes growth in the garden

Paul writing to the Corinthian states I planted Apollos watered but God gave the increase or the growth so then neither he who plants is anything not he who waters but God who gives the growth God gave it in the past and God still gives it in the present and he will give it in the future to the end of time and I think I can mention something else about the visits of the beloved to his garden he sifts the growth so that the chaff is removed as what he says on a location surely I will sift the house of Israel among all nations as grain is sifted in a sieve yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground is that not comforting perhaps you might see yourself this evening as a very small insignificant grain but not one grain shall fall to the ground and the

Lord even permits Satan to sift remember what Jesus said to Peter and to the rest of the disciples Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat and Satan was granted his request and although he was granted his request there are boundaries to Satan sift if I can put it like this it is enclosed within the Lord sift but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and then we are told not only has the beloved gone into his garden but he has gone to the beds of spices it's not a phrase that's easy to understand when you use the word bed you often associate with bed a place of rest a place of renewal a place of refreshing when

I was a university student I obtained summer work in one of the local Harris Tweed Mills in Stornoway it was a very busy time you worked Monday to Wednesday from 8 in the morning till 9 in the evening Thursday night I used to ask off at 6 to go to the prayer meeting and the prayer meeting was like wine to my soul most refreshing I used to feel at rest peaceful a sense of belonging as if the weariness of the daily grind of work just lifted off you you were in the fellowship of both public and private prayer and surely that was a bed to rest on you heard the word been expounded in the lecture given by the minister that too was in my view another bed and you might be telling me well it's a long time ago certainly was close to 60 years ago but since then there have been many beds and one commentator made this observation that the beds are symbolic of the means of grace there's a shorter catechism which poses the question what are the outward means whereby

[53 : 01] Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances especially the word sacraments and prayer all of which are made effectual to the elect for salvation the word sacraments and prayer in other words the truth as we have it in the Bible observation of the sacrament and prayer note the order the word is given priority so you might say that the beds are symbolic for the means of grace the beds of spices in the fourth chapter the book speaks of some of the spices henna with nard nard and saffron calamus and cinnamon with all trees of frankincense myrrour and aloes with all choice spices and my understanding of this is that is how the graces are imparted as we engage in the means of grace your love is deepened your faith is warmed your hope is strengthened your peace increased your joy is intensified your gentleness developed your patience fortified your repentance is sweetened none of these grow naturally they are all the product of the operation of divine grace and you know perhaps there have been times when you dragged yourself along to the prayer meeting or to the service on the

Lord's day your level of expectancy was low and by the end of that service you had been marvelously uplifted that is at least part of what I understand from the term spices how the graces are cultivated through the means where did he go to his garden to the bed of spices who is the beloved the Lord Jesus Christ finally what does he do he has gone it says here to graze in the garden or to feed in the gardens what could be more natural than for a gardener to feed what is growing it's an essential part of gardening how much more so on the spiritual level how does he feed those who are growing in his garden he feeds them by meeting with them and in my view it is a two way process they feed on him and he feeds on them they have great pleasure in meeting with him it's encouraging to the church that he is present where two or three gather in his name that's what he does by coming into his garden the church asked the question at one occasion in this book tell me oh you whom

I love where you feed your flock she was so desirous of food for her hungry and thirsting soul and so it is to feed or to pasture his flock that he comes to the garden but he has another purpose in coming he comes to gather lilies of what does this speak well the Christ speaks of himself in the second chapter like a lily among thorns so is my love among the daughters in other words he compares believers to being like a lily among thorns and as I said already the lily flower is kind of stooped the head of it stoops down speaks of humility and the lives of those who are indwelt by grace people who show characteristics in their lives that are illustrated for us by the lily humility of heart holiness of life people who use their talents unlike the wicked and slothful servant people who use their talents in the service of

Christ dependent on the grace of God to render service to him people who bear a likeness because of what he has done for them and them people who are loved by him as the father has loved me so have I loved you abide in my love gathering lilies you know there weren't always lilies there were once ugly weeds growing in the wilderness of life but he transplanted those ugly unfruitful weeds and he placed them in his garden he rooted them in a fertile area on a sure foundation you remember what Paul writes in his prayer for the church at Ephesus that

Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith so that you have been rooted and grounded in love you know if you take cuttings from your hedge in the autumn and you put rooting powder on the stems and you place them in a pot with good compost your hope is that the cutting will grow roots draw nourishment from the compost and you may be able to insert them in the spring where perhaps there is a gap in the hedge or even to grow a new hedge and you can grow a new hedge successfully by following that if if you have an interest in gardening you will also know that poor soil does not produce good growth it is important that roots are placed in a fertile soil because without roots a plant dies psalmist in psalm 1 speaks of the believer as a tree it's like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season its leaf does not wither in all that it does it prospers well rooted in love

[60 : 45] Paul writes is it possible that there is a better soil to be rooted in than to be rooted in love love stimulates and feeds the roots of the believer what could be more nourishing than love as the food to nourish and encourage the growth of the believer surely the symbolism that is used rooted in love implies that the believer is to be the channel by which Christ's love flows out in their life remember Paul writing to the Corinthians states for the love of Christ controls us being embedded in love surely also is implied that the believer is controlled motivated and governed by the power of

Christ's love and Paul says the end result is this that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sakes died and was raised rooted in love you know we can go to an ordinate lens even to the point of self sacrifice but without being governed by love how much acclaim what we do might receive it is ultimately worthless and you remember how Paul places emphasis on that if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels have not love I'm a noisy gong clanging simba if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains have not love I am nothing if I give away all I have and if I deliver up my body to be burned but have not love

I gain nothing so they are rooted in love but you know the flowers in every garden no matter how beautiful how sheltered they might be from the winds they wither and they die at some point and there are less and there too but those that are lilies in the garden of Christ they are gathered and they are gathered for a purpose to be with himself that that is his desire and his express will I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me they are displayed ultimately in the Father's house by nature for most people although there are some who would not notice but for most people a vase full of fresh flowers is most attractive placed on a table or wherever it is placed in the home but think how much more attractive are the lilies that are spoken of here when they are gathered perfect in holiness reflecting

Christ when he when he gathers the lilies and brings them to the Father's house what is true they all reflect the beauty of the true lily they shall never wither they are eternally fragrant does one wrote it I'm satisfied with glory near to God unveiled I move and I'll spend eternal ages in the oceans of his love when does he gather the lilies oh when they're ready to be transplanted to glory you know for some they're not long in the garden until they're ripe for glory and so they're gathered in you remember the converted thief on the cross today you will be with me in paradise who wouldn't want to be a lily growing in the garden of the saviour for they are they only are the ones he gathers to be with himself who is the beloved the

Lord Jesus Christ where did he go to his garden to the beds of spices what does he do he feeds and he gathers and he's still doing that and he will do it until his purpose is fulfilled and every lily that he has purposed to bring to the father's house is ready to be transplanted in glory may God bless to us these thoughts on his truth O eternal God help us to look to thyself again this evening and may we be found growing in the garden of grace as those who have been transplanted from the soil of nature into the soil of grace to be prepared for a place and glory and the glory shall be thine in

[66 : 50] Jesus name we ask it Amen Let us conclude by singing to his praise from Psalm 73 A that's page 95 of the Psalter Psalm 73 A at verse 23 page 95 Yet I remain with you continually By my right hand you hold me as my guide You lead me with your counsel to the end and take me into glory to abide in heaven whom have I but you alone on earth there's no one else whom I adore although my heart may fail and flesh grow weak God is my strength and portion ever more those who are far from you will be cut down all those who are unfaithful you destroy and

I'll draw near and shelter in my God your deeds O Lord I will recount with joy these verses yet I remain with you continually away sing I will and hold me O God, you give me your counsel to the end, and give me the glory to the Lord.

In heaven with the light that you have known, I am so one else in my shadow.

O God, O my heart, may fail and bless you, O God, you give me your strength and your strength.

O God, you give me your strength.

[69 : 39] O God, you give me your strength. O God, you give me your strength.

O God, you give me your strength. O God, I will recant with joy.

If you would just let me go to the door after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit, rest on and abide with you all, now and forever.

Amen.