

The Lord's Garden  
Isaiah 5:1–7

September 11, 2005

**SERMON NOTES**

A. Introduction — Poignant Bible situations

1. Ruth 1:16-17 is the story about:
2. Matthew 23:37
3. Today's Scripture reading relates how God:

B. The Lord's Garden consisted of:

1. What more could God have done?
  - a. the children of Israel were God's C\_\_\_\_\_ P\_\_\_\_\_  
(A) Romans 4:3 – evidenced in the life of:  
(1) because  
(B) Deuteronomy 26:5 – and realized in the life of:  
(1) because
  - b. the children of Israel were God's R\_\_\_\_\_ P\_\_\_\_\_  
(A) Jeremiah 11:4 – because God had:  
(B) Isaiah 43:3 – because God had:
  - c. the children of Israel were God's B\_\_\_\_\_ P\_\_\_\_\_  
(A) God had given them:

(B) God had established for them:

2. What did that garden produce?
  - a. Jeremiah 16:11  
(A) They F\_\_\_\_\_ God  
(B) The F\_\_\_\_\_ I\_\_\_\_\_ and were E\_\_\_\_\_ to them
  - b. Isaiah 5:7 God intended that nation should be one marked by:  
(A) Isaiah 48:18 this was because:  
(B) What kind of grapes did the garden produce?

C. The Lord's Garden in Our lives

1. what more could God have done for us
  - a. Ephesians 1:4; Christians, too, are
  - b. 1 Peter 1:18–19; Christians, too, have been:
  - c. Ephesians 1:3; Christians, too, have been:
2. what has this garden produced
  - a. Galatians 5:22–23; it should produce:
  - b. other fruit that God would desire:

D. Conclusion

1. Revelation 21:17; to become part of the Lord's garden
2. Christian, dedicate yourself anew today!

A. Introduction

1. Poignancy is that quality of a situation which stirs up your feelings, frequently with pain, that brings you to, or almost to, weeping. This can be the case even if you are not yourself personally involved in that situation.
  
2. The Bible relates a number of such situations
  - a. the first that comes to mind is that of Naomi with her two daughters-in-law; widowed, bereft of her sons, and now taking leave of them with weeping to return to the land of Judah. The one daughter-in-law kisses her and stays in the land of Moab. But then we read Ruth 1: 16–17 (NAS): *But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me."* What a poignant statement of devotion, of Ruth's dedication to Naomi.
  - b. Perhaps, though, the most poignant situations are those in which there is unrequited love: the love of one person for another which is never returned. Perhaps you have read Thomas Hardy's novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. It tells of a somewhat rough and clumsy man, dreadfully in love with a certain lady. But, because of circumstances and a certain measure of pride, that love is never completed. Time and time again, this man comes within a hair's breadth of expressing this love as he should and having it returned – but every time it is missed to the end of his life and so the tale ends, a poignant one of unrequited love
  - c. and there are places in the Bible that relate the saddest case of unrequited love, that of God's love for man which is not returned, despite all that God has done
  - d. so, in that vein, the second poignant situation in the Bible of which I am reminded is that which happened when Jesus had come to Jerusalem for the last time, headed to the cross, where God the Son after seeing the hardness of heart of the religious rulers, declared, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling."* (Matthew 23: 37 NAS)

3. and the third situation, is found in God's words to his people in our Scripture reading this morning, Isaiah 5:1–7 (NAS):

- 1 Let me sing now for my well-beloved  
A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard.  
My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill.
- 2 And He dug it all around, removed its stones,  
And planted it with the choicest vine.  
And He built a tower in the middle of it,  
And hewed out a wine vat in it;  
Then He expected it to produce good grapes,  
But it produced only worthless ones.
- 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,  
Judge between Me and My vineyard.
- 4 What more was there to do for My vineyard  
that I have not done in it?  
Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes  
did it produce worthless ones?
- 5 So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard:  
I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed;  
I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground.
- 6 And I will lay it waste;  
It will not be pruned or hoed,  
But briars and thorns will come up.  
I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it.
- 7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,  
And the men of Judah His delightful plant.  
Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed;  
For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.

4. what poignancy! What a cause for weeping! All that God had done for this His garden, and what scanty results! The parallel here between these words and those of Jesus is striking.
5. let's look first at the garden spoken of here, and then at the garden of our lives, and address the questions
  - a. what more could God have done for His garden?
  - b. what was the produce of that garden?

B. The Lord's Garden was the Children of Israel, Jacob's descendants

1. what more could God have done for His garden?
  - a. they were God's chosen people
    - (A) verse 2: [and planted it with the choicest vine](#)
    - (B) we are told that
      - (1) God chose Abram while he was yet in the city of Ur of the Chaldees, renaming him Abraham. He was far from perfect but by God's grace he came to be called the "friend of God;" of him it is said ["Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."](#) (Romans 4:3b NAS)
      - (2) that then he in turn chose Isaac
      - (3) and Jacob, the schemer, of whom Deuteronomy 26:5b (NAS) speaks: ["My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; but there he became a great, mighty and populous nation."](#)
    - (C) so God started with a choicest vine, a man and family that he had chosen, on whom He showered His grace, and whom He led and nurtured through their lives — what more could God have done for His garden
  - b. they were God's redeemed people
    - (A) as you read through the Old Testament, again and again you come across statements as in Jeremiah 11:4 (NAS): [which I commanded your forefathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, "Listen to My voice, and do according to all which I command you; so you shall be My people, and I will be your God,"](#)
    - (B) and in fact, God lists Egypt among the nations that He spent to purchase Israel as His own people, Isaiah 43:3 (NAS): [For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place.](#)

- (C) this redemption by God of His people from Egypt, the preservation of His vine, is central to Israel's history
- c. they were God's blessed people
  - (A) verse 1: [My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill](#)
  - (B) verse 2: [and He dug it all around, removed its stones ... and he built t tower in the middle of it](#)
  - (C) God brought His people into a land prepared for them, a land flowing with milk and honey — and he set a protective ditch or hedge around them and erected a watch tower for there protection within them
  - (D) If you examine the law that God established to be kept when Israel entered the land, you discover that much of that law was to achieve what Pierre Elliot Trudeau (former Prime Minister) called, "The Just Society"
    - (1) a land where there was no financial oppression
    - (2) a land where the poor would be forgiven debts
    - (3) a land where the alien, widow, orphan cared for
    - (4) a land where His servants the priests & Levites were provided for, yet without their taking advantage
    - (5) a land of brother living at peace with brother

2. what did that garden produce?

- a. chosen by God as a special people, they forgot about Him; freed by God of slavery, they enslaved themselves to idols: this is the first major theme of the prophets
  - (A) for example, Jeremiah 16: 11b (NAS): ["It is because your forefathers have forsaken Me," declares the Lord, "and have followed other gods and served them and bowed down to them; but Me they have forsaken and have not kept My law."](#)
  - (B) serving means being enslaved to, under their control
  - (C) under control of what were mere vanities
- b. the second major theme of the prophets is that they made a mockery of God's intentions for a just society, a just land
  - (A) verse 2: [and hewed out a wine vat in it](#)
  - (B) God's expectation of this vine was good fruit, a fruit that would produce joy and gladness in His

people

- (C) v. 7 Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.
  - (D) again and again the prophets cry out against the oppression by priest, by prophets, by rulers of the helpless, the poor, the stranger in the land, the widow, the fatherless — this was sour and bitter grapes in the garden of the Lord who had desired a righteousness, a rightness of life in the land of His people
- c. no wonder that the Lord later says in Isaiah 48:18 (NAS): *If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.*

### C. The Lord's Garden in Our Lives

1. what more could God have done for us as His garden?
  - a. Christians, too, are a chosen people of God, Ephesians 1:4 (NAS): *“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love”* tells us this as well as indicating the expected fruit
  - b. Christians, too, have been redeemed by God at a great price, 1 Peter 1:18-19 (NAS): *“knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”* — redeemed from slavery to sin and from the resulting guilt and punishment
  - c. Christians, too, have been richly blessed by God, Ephesians 1:3 (NAS): *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,”*
  - d. is it unreasonable, then, for God to expect fruit in us?
2. what has that garden produced?
  - a. one list of expected produce is in Galatians 5:22-23 (NAS): *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
  - b. the following have been suggested as items that should be found in the Lord's garden <sup>—{2}</sup>.

(A) Four rows of squash

- (1) squash indifference
- (2) squash criticism
- (3) squash gossip
- (4) squash selfishness

(B) Five rows of lettuce

- (1) let us love one another
- (2) let us welcome strangers
- (3) let us be faithful to duty
- (4) let us truly worship God
- (5) let us give liberally

(C) Three rows of Thyme

- (1) thyme for each other
- (2) thyme for family
- (3) thyme for friends

(D) you can, I am sure, see ways of adding to that

c. but let a man, let a woman, let a youth, let a child, examine themselves ... what have I produced?

- (A) have I produced brambles or fruit?
- (B) is the fruit of my Christian life bitter or sweet?
- (C) does my fruit glorify God or not?

D. How should we respond this morning?

1. Given what God has done for us, given the offer of salvation so freely given found in the last few verses of the Bible, Revelation 21:17 (NAS): [And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.](#)
  - a. the most poignant thing, painful situation, cause for tears
  - b. is that someone should reject that offer, should continue to rebel against God
  - c. and never enter to become a part of the Lord's garden
  - d. do not, this morning, let this be your case; come to Jesus now in humble repentance, asking Him to be

your Saviour

2. O Christian, given what God has done for you
  - a. will you not dedicate yourself to Him anew?
  - b. will you not call on His Holy Spirit to be fruitful in you?
  - c. do so now as we prayerfully sing our closing chorus, "Spirit of the Living God"



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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com). Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by "Kerux" followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. From "A Church Garden," anonymous – Kerux illustrations #1538