

GENESIS 3:1-7 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

<sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup>but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” <sup>4</sup>“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup>“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

<sup>6</sup>When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

MARK 14:32-42 <sup>32</sup>They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” <sup>33</sup>He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. <sup>34</sup>“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” <sup>35</sup>Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup>“*Abba*,<sup>□</sup> Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” <sup>37</sup>Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour?” <sup>38</sup>Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” <sup>39</sup>Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. <sup>40</sup>When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. <sup>41</sup>Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup>Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

THE TITLE OF THIS MEDITATION IS “TWO GARDENS”, AND IT WAS INSPIRED BY A DEVOTION BY ADAM HAMILTON.

IN THE BOOK CALLED- “24 HOURS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD”, HE DESCRIBES ONE SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF THE NIGHT OF JESUS BETRAYAL BY DRAWING OUR ATTENTION TO THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

HAMILTON WRITES NOT ONLY ABOUT WHERE JESUS PRAYED, BUT TAKES US FURTHER BACK TO THE BEGINNING AND THE FIRST GARDEN- EDEN.

HIS PURPOSE IS TO REMIND US WHY GOD SENT HIS SON JESUS TO BE BORN AS A HUMAN BEING IN THE FIRST PLACE.

IT WAS, OF COURSE, DUE TO WHAT HAPPENED IN EDEN WHEN THE WOMAN AND THE MAN MADE A TERRIBLE CHOICE TO TURN FROM GOD’S WILL, AND THUS FROM GOD.

HAMILTON DESCRIBES THAT MOST MOMENTOUS EVENT IN THIS WAY:

“GOD PLANTED THE GARDEN AND THEN CALLED THEM TO TEND IT.

THERE BEFORE A TREE, THEY WERE TESTED AND TEMPTED. THEY SUCCUMBED TO THE TEMPTER, TURNED AWAY FROM GOD’S WAY; AND PARADISE WAS LOST.”

PARADISE, AS WE KNOW, WAS NOT ONLY LOST TO ADAM AND EVE, BUT TO EVERY MAN AND WOMAN BORN SINCE THAT TIME.

THEIR SIN IS IMPLANTED DEEP WITHIN US. AND LIKE A STRONG WEED THAT DEFIES ALL OF OUR EFFORTS TO EXTRACT IT FROM THE GARDEN OF OUR SOUL, IT REMAINS VIABLE THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES.

GOD ALONE HAS THE POWER TO DESTROY THE WEED AND THIS BRINGS US THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION, LIFE, PASSION, AND DEATH OF CHRIST OUR LORD AND SAVIOR..

ON THE NIGHT OF HIS BETRAYAL, JESUS SPENT HIS LAST MOMENTS OF FREEDOM IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

IT WAS THERE HE PRAYED AS HE STRUGGLE WITH A CHOICE HE HAD TO MAKE. HIS CHOICE WAS NOT SO DIFFERENT, IN SOME WAYS, THAN THE CHOICE OF EVE AND ADAM.

THERE AMONG THE OLIVE TREES AND OTHER PLANTS THE HUMAN NATURE OF THE SON OF GOD WAS TEMPTED.

AND ALTHOUGH OTHERS WERE NEARBY, THEY SLEPT, WHICH MEANS THAT JESUS WAS LEFT VERY MUCH ALONE, UNTIL THE TEMPTER CAME TO HIM.

IT IS IN THAT GARDEN, WHILE JESUS STRUGGLED BETWEEN HIS FATHER'S WILL AND HIS OWN, WE ARE REMINDED ABOUT WHO HIS, AND OUR, REAL ENEMY IS--SATAN.

JESUS, KNEW THE REAL THREAT TO HIM CAME NEITHER FROM THE JEWS NOR THE ROMANS. INSTEAD, THE GREATEST DANGER WAS FROM SATAN AND HIS OWN HUMAN NATURE.

SURELY JESUS WAS MINDFUL OF THE ROLE A TREE PLAYED IN BRINGING SIN INTO THE WORLD.

AND HE ALSO KNEW THE ROLE A TREE THAT WAS MADE INTO A CROSS, WAS MEANT TO PLAY IN DELIVERING THE WORLD FROM THE POWER OF SIN.

IT WAS CONCERNING THE LATTER TREE, THE CROSS THAT JESUS PRAYED, AS THE TEMPTER SOUGHT TO DRAW JESUS AWAY FROM HIS FATHER'S WILL, AWAY FROM THE PURPOSE OF HIS INCARNATION AND BIRTH.

WE MAY WELL IMAGINE THAT THERE IN GETHSEMANE, THE SERPENT ATTEMPTED TO PERSUADE JESUS TO DISOBEY GOD IN FAVOR OF HIS DESIRE TO AVOID THE CROSS.

SURELY, HE CALLED INTO QUESTION THE NECESSITY OF THE CROSS, AND ASKED JESUS WAS THAT REALLY GOD'S PLAN?

OR THE TEMPTER MIGHT HAVE SUGGESTED HOW MUCH GOOD JESUS COULD DO IF HE CHOSE TO LIVE RATHER THAN DIE.

IN MANY OTHER WAYS SATAN MIGHT HAVE CALLED INTO QUESTION GOD'S WILL, OR FAITHFULNESS, OR THE NECESSITY OF JESUS TO OBEY.

THIS WAS WHAT THE SERPENT DID IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH EVE, AND ADAM WHO WAS STANDING BESIDE HER.

THERE IS ONE OTHER IMPORTANT SIMILARITY, AS WELL AS ONE BIG DIFFERENCE, CONCERNING ADAM AND EVE, AND JESUS.

THE SIMILARITY WAS THAT WHEN TEMPTATION CAME ALL OF THEM WERE WITHOUT SIN.

THE DIFFERENCE IS HOW THEY RESPONDED TO THE WORDS OF THE TEMPTER.

THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT GOD WALKED IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN EVERY DAY.

THIS MEANS THAT THE FIRST HUMAN BEINGS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH GOD DAILY,

CONSEQUENTLY, AFTER HEARING THE SERPENT'S WORDS AND SEEING HOW DELIGHTFUL THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT LOOKED, THEY COULD HAVE WAITED TO EAT, AND CONSULTED WITH GOD FIRST.

YES, THEY HAD THE ABILITY TO TELL GOD WHAT THE SERPENT SAID, AND TO QUESTION WHY THEY COULD NOT EAT, BUT THEY DID NOT.

HEREIN IS FOUND THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM AND JESUS.

JESUS DID NOT IMPULSIVELY MAKE HIS CHOICE. INSTEAD, HE WAITED AND PRAYED AND STRUGGLED WITH HIMSELF AND HIS FATHER'S WILL.

HE TURNED TO HIS FATHER IN PRAYER, TO CONFIRM GOD'S PLAN, OR PERHAPS TO ASK FOR AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION TO FULFILL GOD'S WILL THAT DID NOT INCLUDE THE CROSS.

THE KEY STATEMENT JESUS MADE, WAS PRECISELY THE ONE THAT ADAM AND EVE FAILED TO MAKE, FOR JESUS SAID TO HIS FATHER, "NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE."

IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, A CHOICE WAS MADE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD.

AND IT WAS THE CHOICE JESUS MADE IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO STICK TO IT, THAT CHANGED THE WORLD AGAIN.

ADAM HAMILTON DESCRIBES THE POWER OF JESUS' CHOICE IN THIS WAY: "IN THIS GARDEN, EDEN WAS REVERSED."

HE ALSO WROTE: "TWO GARDENS: IN ONE ADAM AND EVE WERE WARNED THAT DEATH WOULD COME IF THEY DISOBEYED, AND THEY STILL COULD NOT RESIST THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

IN THE OTHER GARDEN, JESUS WAS TOLD HE COULD AVOID DEATH IF HE WOULD ONLY DISOBEY. HOW DIFFERENT WERE THE RESPONSES TO TEMPTATION.

IN THE FIRST GARDEN ADAM AND EVE SAID: 'NOT THY WILL BUT MINE BE DONE'; AND PARADISE WAS LOST.

IN THE SECOND GARDEN, AS THE DISCIPLES SLEPT...JESUS PRAYED, 'NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE'.

HIS PRAYER WAS CENTRAL TO THE RESTORATION OF WHAT WAS LOST IN EDEN."

IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT AFTER THE CHOICE WAS MADE TO DISOBEY ADAM AND EVE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY ENDURED INNER TURMOIL AND FEAR.

AFTER JESUS MADE THE CHOICE TO OBEY, HE WAS AT PEACE; AND THAT INNER PEACE GAVE HIM THE STRENGTH TO ENDURE ALL THAT FOLLOWED.

I CLOSE WITH PORTIONS OF A POEM BY MELISSA MCLAUGHLIN, ENTITLED: "IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE'

"HIS FOOTSTEPS FALL SOFTLY IN THE OLIVE GROVE... A GARDEN PULSING WITH LIFE YET DEATH CASTS ITS SHADOW THERE.

THE EARTHY SOIL ONCE WET WITH MORNING DEW, NOW SOAKED WITH THE TEARS OF HIS DIVINE SORROW.

HIS STEPS FALTER AS HE DROPS TO HIS KNEES FACE DOWN, BODY GRIPPED WITH ANGUISH THE OMINOUS ORDEAL LOOMS AHEAD.

DROPS OF BLOOD SLIP FROM HIS BROW MINGLING WITH TEARS AND SWEAT.

A RIVER OF GRIEF FLOWING STEADILY DOWN- CRIES AND TEARS ARE HIS PRAYER...

IN THAT MOMENT THE PERFECT ONE ACCEPTS THE PENALTY FOR EVERY TRACE OF WICKEDNESS...

REMEMBER ANOTHER GARDEN NOT SO LONG AGO, WHERE SIN TOOK HOLD, WHERE GOD FORETOLD OF ONE WHO WOULD COME TO UTTER THE FINAL WORD, "IT IS FINISHED."

THAT BATTLE HAS BEGUN RIGHT HERE IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE. THE WORD SPEAKS, "NOT MY WILL, BUT YOURS BE DONE."

THE HEAVINESS LIFTS AS HE ARISES IN THE SOVEREIGN STRENGTH OF HEAVEN'S REDEMPTION SONG.

A RUSTLE OF FEET, HUSHED VOICES CALL, HIS CAPTORS RUSH IN, THE TIME HAS COME.

YET HE WALKS OUT IN MIGHT, SON OF GOD AND SON OF MAN, FOR THE BATTLE ON HIS KNEES IS WON...."

MAY CHRIST'S PEACE BECOME OUR OWN SO THAT WE TOO WILL OBEY THE WILL OF GOD OUR FATHER. AMEN