

We Have a Destiny

God's Garden

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The word of God is such a precious thing. I feel honored to be able to teach it, preach it and live in it. It is a place of safety, a harbor of safety. It is a place where we can depend on the Lord to answer our needs and our prayers. So the church should be also. The problem comes when church groups are not that, through a church split or the like. It is supposed to be safe and it is not, when people are wounded and injured, even leaving the church. They say people cannot stand two church splits in their lifetime. I've been through that more than once myself. So, I'm a testimony that there is something that I am still looking forward to. I love that song we sing that says, "*I'm looking for a city not made with hands.*" Where is that quote from? Abraham. He was looking for a city not made with hands but made by his Father in heaven.

Isn't that interesting, a **city**. I never thought of myself as a city-dweller, nor liking the urban environment. I always thought the country boy would be me, myself and John Denver, whatever he was. I can tell you one thing. It has taken me years to understand what God meant by "a city not built by hands." A place of safety, a sanctuary.

Back to Genesis

Now I'd like to go all the way back to Genesis, parts of chapters one and two, and talk about what God did there. In Genesis chapter one I am always fascinated. It is not so much about *how* God did things, it is **why** God did things. It does tell you what He did; He created. He created everything we know and love today. He put a breath into our lungs as we sang this morning. He did all kinds of things. You can find His creation anywhere you look. Whether it is through a telescope or a microscope it doesn't really matter, you can find God; His creation speaks of God and who He is. But there is something more than that I'd like to talk about this morning. Because after God was finished creating the universe, it says He rested. How many know what the next thing He did after He rested? In Genesis 2:8, it says that the first thing He did was to plant a garden. Why would the Lord need a garden? ***What is a garden?***

Since this is the gardening season, we can really get into this. I began to meditate and to think about what a garden is. A garden is a

place of beauty to me. It is a place you are trying to make to be an ideal of something. You plant certain flowers here, first the smaller flowers, then the bigger ones, then the shrubs and trees. There may be a structure like a pond or statue. Formal gardens have beautiful walks and all kinds of things placed for beauty in them. But, what is it that man is trying to create when he creates a garden? A place that is ideal, a place of safety, a place where there are *no weeds*. And when there is a weed it gets speedily picked up and thrown out into the compost. It becomes useful there. If I were to make an ideal garden, it would be without mosquitoes. Were there mosquitoes in the garden of Eden? The original garden God planted says it was eastward in Eden.

⁸ The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

- Visually pleasant to sight and good for food. It had a purpose to bring sustenance to man. So the church should be a garden for us, a safe place, beautiful to see and pleasant for our eyes. But it should also be for good *food*. So that means there are no rotten apples. There are no worms to make apples rotten. But that Garden in Eden was a wonderful place! The garden that the Lord wants us in and understand today is to be even more than that.

The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- Now we should know the story. Things weren't always so good in the garden but the best part of all was the Father Himself showed up and fellowshiped with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day, either in the morning or the evening or both.

It wasn't just a singular visitation of God. They *expected to have relationship* with the Creator of the universe. Not just of the universe, but the Creator of that garden that was a blessing to them in the midst of the universe! You don't have to be too smart to understand. When you go into Space, unless you are protected you are going to die. If you go below the water in scuba equipment, the first thing they teach you is that you shouldn't be there. It is a dangerous place for you to be.

But in a garden it is a safe place to be. It is a place of rest and a place of peace. And, by the way, the peace of God is NOT replaceable by anything. You cannot perhaps do something that will replace Him. If you've lost the peace of God, start looking for God Himself, that relationship you should have in the garden with Him.

The story is that the garden did have a predator, as some churches have predators, as some places and homes have predators. Our homes should be a garden! I believe a lot of people, at least Christian men and women, plant a garden with the idea and the understanding that it is an expression of who they are, not someone who is violent and wants their own way, but one who wants the concert of God's creation in their yard and home. In your home, it doesn't have to be flowers. It could just be the way you arrange your furniture. It could be the way you get dressed in the morning, or put your clothes on. You are making an expression of who God wants you to be.

In the garden there was a problem even before the predator showed up. ***Adam didn't understand his destiny!*** We could ask, "*How could he not? Being washed with the water of the word, that is the Lord Himself, every day.*" Yet he did not understand his destiny. Most of us today, even in the church, don't understand our destiny. Our destiny isn't somehow to eke our way through the circumstances of life, the trials we've been talking about in the last three or four weeks. But is somehow to be in, and make, a place that is safe, not just for ourselves but the people we know. So our words should be safe words, not ones of ridicule or sarcasm. So our thoughts should be weeded. So how do we think about things? We should change according to the word and text of the word of God. It is good and not evil.

So the predator enters the garden and what does he do? He says to Eve, "*You know there is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You really do need to eat of that tree.*" The Father had said to them already, "*That's not for you.*" It is interesting that at a certain future time in history, it probably is okay for them to eat of it. If they had understood their destiny, they would have known that every tree that is in the garden would eventually be theirs. But they did not understand their destiny and they were disobedient to the voice and the word of God!

There are a lot of times we don't understand. Sometimes we just need to accept what God gives to us. Maybe we don't understand it but the provision of the garden that He's putting us, the church, into is enough. Not only the church, the people that we know and love here in this room. But also the word of God that is planted in our heart. The bible talks about this too. We cannot just let these plants grow "willy nilly." We need to put the scripture into a place in our heart where it is going to grow and be nurtured. Turning over the soil of our heart that it might prosper. The word of God is going to go forth, but how much fruit it is going to give is up to you!

The garden of Eden had a gardener, the Father Himself who planted and placed and sorted. However the garden that you are in and the garden that He has for you in the church and who you are as an individual and in your family, it is up to YOU to be the gardener! With the help of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit within you without exception. Therefore, you can't just walk away from your life and say, "*Whatever happens, happens. I'll just try to do my best. I will do what is right in my own eyes.*" No. You will find you are not being a gardener at all. You are being a traveler and you don't understand your destiny. Your destiny isn't just to be a passer-by, "*I'm going to go view the garden today.*" But, did you ever notice when you are in a garden, the first thing you look for are the weeds? Did you ever notice when you are in someone else's house, the first thing you think is, "*Is that furniture arranged correctly? Do I like the curtains?*" How about the driveway or the car they are driving? All that has to do is with how they are placed and does it have that *safe* feeling in your heart. It isn't just materialism. There is something about the peace of God that He's trying to translate into you the peace that passes all understanding. You as a gardener are trying to express that to the world for all to see.

So we can see that Satan had his way that day and Adam was expelled out of the garden with Eve. And, they were not allowed to eat of the tree of life. They have already eaten the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But they were not allowed to eat of the tree of life. However, YOU are allowed today. You see your destiny as a human being, as Adam's children was to have all of the fruit of the garden *eventually*. It just has to be in the timing of God. I am really glad I'm living in His garden, this year in this day. It doesn't matter if it is in New York state. It doesn't matter who is in charge of the government. That is because the garden that we are planting in is the one that God has planted us in, just as He planted Adam in the garden of Eden. He said, "*Be fruitful and multiply.*" And Adam surely did.

When Adam was kicked out of the garden, childbirth became another story. It got intensely worse. Now it took hard work and sweat to tend the garden in this universe which God created. Now there are mosquitoes! Now there are plagues. Now there are pests. But God still wanted them to make a garden.

Let's leave a the garden for a minute to do a contrast. The opposite of the garden is the wilderness. I like a wilderness as much as anyone. When I looked at Mount McKinley, the national park, I see the total wildness of it, grizzly bear, moose, golden eagles, bald eagles, wolves, etc. There is only one road in and one road out. Only buses can

go in there and a ranger. But you can park outside and they drive you in. When I see that and the beauty and the nature of creation of God, I see what God is trying to express there, but it is still a wilderness.

In the bible when it uses the word wilderness it is referring to a particular type of wilderness, more a desert wilderness. There is life there but it is a pretty dangerous place. You wouldn't live very long without shade, shelter and a lot of water. It is not a garden. It is not a safe place for you. You wouldn't want to make your home there unless you had air-conditioning and a lot of water, electricity, etc., like they do in Arizona.

But in contrast to the garden, the wilderness is the total lack of provision. God wants you in a place where He can provide for you, but sometimes He will *put you in the wilderness!* Oh I don't want to hear that. What does the scripture say about that? It says, "*God will prepare a table for you in the wilderness.*" Remember that scripture? What does that mean except that He has given you a destiny whether to find yourself in a formal garden or a messed up garden, or wherever you may find yourself, even in a wilderness. His provision is going to be there for you! Even in the wilderness His provision is going to be there for you.

Now, Jesus knew that. That is where the "temptation of Christ" was.

Satan tempts Jesus

Don't try to go into the wilderness on your own initiative until you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit. You don't belong there. It is not a safe place for you. Okay, when you are baptized in water, when you're baptized in the Spirit; you are ready to go. You have all of the tools you need when you have the Holy Spirit.

4¹ Then Jesus was led up by the (Holy) Spirit into the wilderness . . .

- Not a garden this time.

. . . to be tempted by the devil.

- This temptation, Jesus had already dealt with. It just had to be verbalized, to be played out. But, Jesus already knew His destiny.

2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

- If anybody knows about fasting, if you've fasted for 40 days and nights, you lose your appetite altogether. But for some reason Jesus became hungry. Now when the tempter came . . .

³ *Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."*

- Jesus knew who the tempter was but there is a temptation that comes to us not as a rattle snake or in a snake form, but it comes as a **thought**. "Well, you're hungry, so why don't you make these stones into bread?" Jesus already knew His destiny. His destiny wasn't jut to have a natural provision. His provision was going to be from God and the Holy Spirit.

⁴ *But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "*

- So He is right there! This is an easy-peasy kind of temptation for Jesus. Maybe not for us, but for our Lord.

⁵ *Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:*

'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and,

'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "

- Another words, Jesus was not going to get hurt. He could have said, "That's really good. I don't have to worry about things. This is my life insurance policy."

⁷ *Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' "*

- Then the devil manifested himself more openly.

⁸ *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."*

- Now he identifies himself and gives Him the option of a FALSE destiny. He gives Jesus an idea of something He could actually come into but was not His destiny to do so. He was certainly able to be upheld by the angels. He could certainly trust in the Lord, but it would never be to serve a false god. It would never be to serve His own interest. It would never be just to keep Him fed, or Him from being hurt. It would never be for just Himself to have power. That was not His destiny! Neither is it ours. It says then

that the devil left Him. Another version says the devil left Him for a season.

¹¹ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

- So, where was Jesus tested? He wasn't tested in the church garden. He wasn't tested in a place of safety like the garden of Eden where all the plants were there for Him and He didn't have to worry about His next meal. He was tested in the wilderness.

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

- The devil left Him and the angels ministered to Him.

Interestingly the next temptation we find the Lord in, is back in a garden. In fact, the greatest temptation was there. The one in the wilderness was perhaps not that big of a deal. But here is another story in the garden of Gethsemane. When I thought about this, I tried to find out what kind of garden it might have been. Was it public, private? I couldn't find the historical context anywhere, but it was a garden.

The Prayer in the Garden "Temptation" with Provision

Mark 24³² Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. ³⁴ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch."

- That was not the case in the wilderness but it was here. In fact in Luke 22:39-46 it says

³⁹ Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. ⁴⁰ When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

It was a special place Jesus had where He would kneel and pray and have a conversation with the Father. Interestingly this temptation was so very sorrowful for Jesus. I've thought about this a lot not just in preparing for this teaching. I find myself in the place of choosing destinies also. "God (through the Holy Spirit) do You really think I should do this or that?" Let me tell you, when the real sorrow comes, it isn't because of the circumstances I face. I've been in some pretty rough circumstances. I've been in some pretty tight places with my body, with

disease, kidney stones, cancer. But, the deepest sorrow I've experienced in my life is the *betrayal*.

I believe in my opinion, this deepest sorrow that Jesus had, "*I am exceedingly sorrowful even to the point of death,*" wasn't the fact that He was going to die for our sins only. But, more importantly, to me, is that His disciples would leave Him. And, one of them would betray Him. And, they would betray Him, not in the wilderness but in a safe place, the garden. They would be bringing something into the garden that didn't belong there. Jesus knew what it was like to be in a garden and its gardener. He knew the weeds didn't belong in the garden.

Mark 14³⁴ "Stay here and watch with Me."

³⁵ He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.

- That is the crucifixion, the betrayals, all those things that were ahead of Him in the next few hours.

³⁶ And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

- Another words, not My destiny on My own but I choose the one YOU have given to me. Are you willing to go down this road? Most of us could probably get through most of what was going on in the wilderness/desert. But in the garden of Gethsemane, where things are supposed to be safe, are you willing to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to a place that is not a good place for you personally?

³⁷ Then He came and found them sleeping . . .

- They are sleeping because it is so sorrowful for them.

Could you not watch one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

- Again, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Recognize right up front when you are tempted in the garden, your spirit is willing. You are willing to go there. "*Amen, I can do this.*" But your flesh is weak. We need to die to that, to walk away from our flesh.

³⁹ Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. ⁴⁰ And when He returned, He found them asleep again

- That was twice now. And lastly . . .

⁴¹ *Then He came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

- The Son of Man is being betrayed by His disciples! In the garden, a place where He is the gardener, a place where He had picked out, where He was accustomed to being with the Father and not being assaulted by anything or anyone. There the enemy comes to Him! Through the betrayal of His disciple! What a sad thing to face. The heart of the Lord must have broken.

⁴² *Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”*

- See, this isn't a safe place for us any more. “*But I have a destiny and I know what it is. I am going to it.*” In Luke's rendition . . .

Luke 22 ⁴¹ *And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed,* ⁴² *saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”*

- Most of us know that verse because that is what we do with who we are when we know we have to change. “*Not my will, but Yours be done.*” We face that place where no matter how much control we have, no matter how good the garden looks, no matter how much food we have, it is not enough. We have no one to turn to but the Father in heaven.

⁴³ *Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.*

- You might try to “guts it out,” “white knuckle.” “I can get through this.” But yield to the Holy Spirit! Let Him minister in every way possible to you. Most of the time He will answer your prayers in the word of God and/or by a word of exhortation from your brother or sister, somebody you may not even know that would encourage you.

⁴⁴ *And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

- That's pretty intense prayer, pretty intense sorrow.

⁴⁵ *When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow.*

- Your friends, the ones who are supposed to be holding you up, FAIL you! Has that ever happened to you? The ones in your prayer group forgot to pray for you. Your spouse, wife, husband are not doing what they are supposed to be doing. What do you do? You encourage them!

Summary

So let me summarize this idea of the garden, the idea of walking through the wilderness.

1) Today your garden is in the circumstances and trials you face. That is part of your garden and you are the gardener. You need to be there. You need to be there in the word of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, a Man and Woman of God. That is your destiny. It is not your destiny to run away. It is not your destiny to be JUST on the defensive. When you hold that shield of faith up, make sure your sword is ready at hand. The sword is the word of God. The word of God is what you’ve been planting and nurturing as a flower in the garden all along.

You are not going to nurture pornography. You are not going to nurture materialism. You are not going to nurture those weeds that are in your garden. If they start to choke out what God has put in there, you weed them out! You take them out of your life. You choose not to do what you have been doing. Even some of the good things may turn sour and stale. He has created us new creatures in Christ, every morning. That’s good. In springtime a new garden should speak to us of the newness that God has for us.

2) The provision and the love of God will always be there for you no matter where you are, wilderness or garden. The provision and the love of God will always be there. Why did God make that first garden? for Himself? For an expression of who He was surely, but also for Adam and for him to know that it was God who loved him first, not his creation but God Himself. The circumstances and the trials you face are to let you know that God will provide for you and that God loves you. His love will never fail! Perfect love, incidentally, casts away ALL fear, casts it away. Fear is a weed that can grow deep rooted in you life. If it is still there, dig it out. It is going to take some effort at times because the roots go deep. The root of bitterness especially. Take the shovel, the spade and get down in there. Take it out of your life and replace it with something. With what? The love of God, the mercy, His kindness that you know.

Over and over again King David reminds himself in the Psalms, “Remember what the Lord has done. Remember how He saved us and how He saved me from the lion and the bear.” David knows the goodness of God. Remind yourself of that goodness; don’t walk away. Don’t flinch at the devil. Prepare yourself with the shield of faith. Faith isn’t

something saying, *“I can do this.”* Faith is what Jesus did at the cross, protection by the blood of the Lamb. The word of His testimony that it is going to be strong enough for you. The darts of the evil one will not get through that.

3) He will never leave you or forsake you. Not only will He not leave you but He will never betray you. There is a lot of stuff in our lives that we don't want people to know. Let's get real. There are thoughts the enemy puts into our life that we need to weed out no matter how spiritual you are, or how mature a Christian you are, there are times when you just have to say, *“Oh, I know where that thought is coming from.”* You take that thought and you throw it away. You purposely think about those things which are of good report, not the things that are evil.

4) We are called not just to be *defenders* of the faith, but we are called to be a **threat** against the gates of hell! Your destiny is not just to be a defender, but you are called to be a THREAT against the gates of hell. Take over the territory which the enemy has taken from you and from others. When you bring somebody to the Lord that property belonged to the enemy. Now it belongs to Jesus. That's a good thing. When Franklin Graham goes into a place and gives the alter call and many are saved, he tweeted yesterday, *“I'm really happy with all the people who came to the Lord and committed their selves to Christ in Vermont and New Hampshire yesterday. Pray for them.”* I'm praying for them. Yeah, it is a good thing. That was territory that belonged to the enemy. Now it belongs to God!

There are many men and women who are in college, and some who are not, that are turning on to Jesus in a way that we did not anticipate. When they sing these new songs we can see the glory of God descending upon them; these kids are really joyful in the Lord. Many of them belonged to the enemy. Now they belong to God. We need to keep them in our prayers. Our destiny is to be their prayer warriors. Our destiny is to be Men and Women of God, not fearful of the desert place of the wilderness. But rather, when once you are there, *“Okay, where is my next victim? Which snake do I need to kill and destroy and to drive away?”*

I heard someone say the other day, *“Well, it could be just a natural thing or spiritual.”* Well, almost everything has a spiritual component. More times than not they have a spiritual component. The enemy is hard at work in every way he can to change us, to rob us of our destiny, to make our prayers useless in our life. So what should you be doing? You should be weeding your garden, your mental garden, taking care of yourself, feeding yourself with the water of the word. What does

it say about husbands? You should be washing your wife with the water of the word. You should be doing that to yourself as well! If you are doing it just for your wife, you are missing a major component. Care for the garden. Be the gardener. Be a gardener.

By the way, enjoy the garden too. It was beautiful to the sight, the garden of Eden, and it was also able to provide everything that they needed as their provision. So your life should be. The older you get the more you should have provision for others, physically and spiritually. You should not be a place of poverty but one of wealth to give away what God has given to you. Maybe it is just an exhortation but those exhortations flow from your mouth. Maybe it is a prophecy. Don't harbor them in. That's part of the flowers in the garden, the prophetic gifts. Part of the flowers and the trees in the garden are the exhortations. Part of the flowers is the smile on your face as you greet one another! It is no small thing. If we all came in here with sour looks on our face, I wouldn't stay here long. I'd plant another church.

But there is the love of God in your smile. The love of God is infectious. It is like leaven. You put a little bit in and it leavens the whole loaf! That's your job in the garden, not to just garden but BE the gardener. Enjoy the safety of the garden, the provision within.

Conclusion

I'm going to end with one scripture. There are a lot of scriptures that would fit with this topic. But the one I want to point out is because it is one the enemy seems to be winning at a lot more than he should. I want to take the property back that belongs to God.

2 Corinthians 10³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

- Another words we may have to live in this body for a period of time. We do not war against the flesh.

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (or fleshly) but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds . . .

- That is spiritual things.

⁵ . . . casting down arguments . . .

- An argument is a thought, a thought process

. . . and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God

- So the next time you watch a newscast, next time you hear a philosophy, judge it according to this word. Is it putting itself before

the knowledge of God. Because the most important thing in my life is to know God, the knowledge of God. If it is coming between me and that, whether it is fear, bitterness or any other such philosophy or thing in my life, I'm going to **WEED** it out. I'm going to try and get its root and get it out of there. If it is coming back and I need help, I'll go to counseling or go to my brother, my sister. I'll share it at home group. I'll share it with the body of Christ which is a garden of safety that it is intended to be.

*... our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ** . . .*

- O Lord, give me help and the Holy Spirit to do that. "Well, how are you doing?" "Every thought? Really?" "Yes." Here's the condemnation of the enemy, "That thought is there. It is yours. I came from you." Well it is not necessarily true. Thoughts can come from the enemy himself. Thoughts can come from any where. If it is there and you don't want it, you don't have to have it. You don't have to play it out. You don't have to think about what the circumstance of that thought would be. If it is not God, throw it away!

... bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ
...

- What does that mean? That Christ is the one who judges whether we are going to be obedient or not.

⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

- So you are not even capable of judging other people or things around you unless you start with yourself, on the thoughts in your life. Whether you believe in eternal grace and mercy is not really the issue here in the scripture. It is the thoughts that come to you that I'm talking about, whether you have a fullness of that grace or not.

Now in my life, I know that the grace of God is totally, completely sufficient. His lovingkindness is totally, completely sufficient. I know that the enemy has nothing in me. When I go before the judgment seat of Christ I only have to say, "Oh, by the way, I belong here because I believe in You without reservation. It isn't somehow conjured up by the doctrine I believe in because I know You, Lord Jesus, personally." I don't have to worry about the condemnation of the enemy. So anything

that comes against me to bring some guilt against me, I just hand it over to the Lord and say, “*Lord, I don’t even know how to handle this.*” The Holy Spirit will fill me and maybe give me a word, maybe not. But whatever happens, I know there will be the goodness, and the grace and the mercy of Christ.

But even in the context of all those trials, in all those circumstances that I might face, thoughts and negative thoughts could come to me even in a prophetic sense. There was a time when I was in New Paltz and there was this one brother who rejected the Holy Spirit. He walked away from the concept of being filled with the Spirit and he said, “*The Holy Spirit doesn’t move like that today. That was dispensational.*” As he came against me personally, it was interesting. I went to my wood pile and there was this huge, huge spider in the wood pile. I just killed it. And I heard this small voice, “*So your enemies shall be to you.*” Now, wait a minute. There may be an element of truth to that but there was something in there that was not good. Right? There was something wrong. My heart is not to kill, murder or destroy even the things I might like to. It is only God who brings His judgment upon the earth. So when that word came to me I say to myself, “*Fine, Lord, for You to do so. But keep that away from me, thank You. I appreciate Your protection and Your provision through the circumstance (which did eventually happen) but I pray for this brother that he would not be destroyed but that he would come back to the Lord.*” So you can see that every thought, every doctrine should be judged according to the word of God and the heart of the Father who is in heaven.

And so my garden prospered. The brother, at this point, hasn’t prospered. But I am about in this life to mark my destiny in this world, to plant a safe garden. Is it going to be perfect through my doing? No. But it will be in the grace and mercy of Christ because His word is where I rest and my heart is pure. It is really nice when I come up here. I love being a bible teacher. I’m not a teacher of any doctrine. I am a teacher of *biblical* doctrine and that only. This is a safe place; the word of God is awesome. It brings forth power that is a shield of faith where we can come against the enemy and take back the ground. Amen.

So, for the last few weeks we’ve been taking you through how to deal with trials and tribulations. Now He is saying, “**YOU HAVE A DESTINY!**” That is above all those trials and tribulations. Whether you are going to step into that destiny or not is your choice. The reason I know that is because of Gideon. Only 300 men were able to take up their spears and do what God wanted them to do. The rest followed but there were only 300 men he took into battle. So if you don’t want to go

to be a warrior, I'm giving you the option out. But I have a feeling that most of you are. I have a feeling the Holy Spirit has put on *this fellowship* something that is going to be different from others. That is because we've winnowed down to a few, so maybe we are the ones to go into the spiritual battle. Our prayers on Friday nights, our prayers in home group, our prayers in our prayer closet, prayers in the garden in our homes, the battles should be there. Isn't that good?



Father, we thank You for going before us. Lord, we recognize that we don't really want our own desires but we want the destiny You have for us. We recognize the real provision for us in our life is through the Holy Spirit, not going back to the garden of Eden where they couldn't eat from the tree of life. But rather we walk forward to the garden which You have for us now, today, where we can, where we can eat of You every single day in every circumstance that we find ourselves in. And YOU bring us life not just by hanging in there but one of overcoming. We are to be overcomers. Thank You, Lord God.

So I prophesy to you this morning, that you are to be overcomers. It is your destiny. Your smile will bring forth other smiles. Your exhortation will bring forth other exhortations. That your prayers will bring forth more prayers. In Jesus' name. Amen.