

Garden to Garden - Part 6

Personal Devotional

Day 1: The Mirror of Self-Examination

"Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!"

2 Corinthians 13:5

Pastor Joel introduced his sermon with a story of a one-question test that required honest self-reflection. Just as he was asked to honestly assess his efforts, we, too, are challenged by God's Word to examine ourselves and evaluate our relationship with Jesus. This is important because eternity is at stake. Accurate self-examination requires honesty and humility before God. This is not about self-condemnation but about seeking truth and transformation in our walk with the Lord.

Reflection: What is one area of your life that you have been avoiding examining? Will you bring this area of your life into the transforming light of God's truth?

Prayer Focus: Pray that God will give you honest eyes to see the places of your heart that do not align with Christ and His truth. Pray for courage to repent and believe.



Day 2: The Pivotal Question of Life

“Pilate said to them, ‘Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’” **Matthew 27:22**

Pilate’s question is not just a historical inquiry but a deeply personal and relevant question for each of us. The importance of this question exceeds all others because our response—whether we trust Jesus as Savior and King or reject Him—defines our spiritual journey and seals our eternal fate. Such a question demands urgency and sincerity. God’s Word challenges us to consider where we stand with Christ and how we will respond to His call.

Reflection: How have you personally answered the question, “What shall I do with Jesus?”

Prayer Focus: If He hasn’t already, pray the Lord will settle this question in your heart for good. Identify one person in your life who has not settled this question and pray the Lord will give them a sense of urgency.



Day 3: The Great Exchange

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." 1 Peter 3:18

The narrative of Jesus' trial in Matthew 27 highlights a profound exchange that took place: the innocent Jesus took the place of the guilty Barabbas, symbolizing Jesus' substitutionary atonement for sins. This act of grace is the cornerstone of the Gospel, offering us freedom and righteousness in exchange for our guilt and shame. We are called to embrace this gift with gratitude and faith, recognizing the depth of God's love for us.

Reflection: How can you express gratitude to God for such a great exchange? How is your gratitude reflected in your daily actions and interactions with others?

Prayer Focus: Pray the Lord would give you a sense of gratitude for the magnificent grace you've been shown. Pray that your gratitude will be reflected in your actions and interactions with others.



Day 4: Silent Strength

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."

Isaiah 53:7

Pilate's amazement at Jesus' composure and wisdom during His trial (Matthew 27:13-14) reflects the divine peace that Jesus possessed. His silence and strength in the face of false accusations fulfill Isaiah's prophecy and demonstrate His full submission to God's will. The example of our Lord challenges us to stand firm in our faith by trusting God's goodness and wisdom when faced with trials, accusations, and adversity.

Reflection: How can you draw strength from Jesus' example of silence and composure in times of adversity? What steps can you take to demonstrate trust in God's plan during difficult times?

Prayer Focus: Pray the Lord will give you confidence in His goodness and wisdom, and pray that He will calm your spirit in times of adversity (Philippians 4:6-7).



Day 5: The Urgency of Now

"As it is said, 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.'" Hebrews 3:15

Pastor Joel's sermon concluded with a call to respond, emphasizing that the Holy Spirit's prompting is not indefinite. Just as Pilate had a moment to choose, we, too, have only a limited time to respond to Christ. The urgency of this decision is underscored by the reality that life is fleeting, and the opportunity for salvation is now (2 Corinthians 6:2). We've been given a gracious invitation to surrender to Jesus and find true life in Him. The time to act is today because only God knows what tomorrow holds (James 4:13-14).

Reflection: What is one decision or action you have been delaying in your spiritual life? How can you respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting today without delay?

Prayer Focus: Pray the Lord would give you and your loved ones a sense of urgency to respond to His call.

