

With God in the Garden

Read Genesis Ch 2 v 8-15

“In the beginning God created.....” words very familiar to all of us as the beginning of Genesis Chapter I. Throughout that Chapter we read that God was pleased with all that He created and that it was good. Chapter 2 relates how God **planted** the Garden of Eden and placed Adam in the garden to “cultivate it and guard it”. God gave Adam instructions not to eat of the fruit from the tree of knowledge that grew at the centre of the garden but, as we know, when Eve offered the fruit to Adam, he could not resist. God reprimanded Adam, Eve and the snake, who beguiled them and they were banished from the garden. The disobedience of man had begun but the original garden was **good**, “pleasing to the eye and good for food” (v 9). It was, as we said last month, the ultimate heaven on earth.

I don't know what your image of the Garden of Eden is but I imagined it as a relatively small, probably walled area, all neat and tidy. However, it seems I was wrong. Although many explorers have looked for such an area and Christopher Columbus thought he had found it on the northeast coast of Venezuela, it is generally assumed that it was a large richly vegetated space that was washed away in the flood. In order to re-create Eden, we would have to travel round the whole world collecting all the plants that have ever been created. What a wonderful place that would be.

God's purpose for us was and still is that we be planted in His garden, to grow in his presence. He wants us to become the beautiful blooms, the rich variety of foliage, the tall pine trees and the lush grasses, all flourishing under his guidance. Although we are all very different, together under Him as the supreme gardener, we can achieve great things both for others and for ourselves. In Genesis Ch 3 v 8 we read “in the evening God walked in the garden”. Although Adam and Eve were frightened and hid, we have no need to hide. Through Jesus, we can walk with God as we dead - head the roses or prune the hydrangea.

The Bible tells us the God “planted” the garden not “made” a finished product and as gardeners know only too well tending a garden is hard work. So too, our relationship with God, needs constant attention and care to be successful and fulfilling. Just as a garden is alive and constantly changing, our relationship with God changes and hopefully deepens as our life progresses. Gardens are never finished or ever complete. There is always room for another plant and there is always more work to do. We need to be open for God to work in our lives – to plant, hoe and to do gentle pruning if necessary.

For Discussion

1. Is your church group alive and open to change? Are you willing to work with God and let Him plant, hoe and prune where necessary?
2. The Eden Project in Cornwall goes along way to re-creating the Garden of Eden. If you were re-creating the Garden of Eden what would you plant? You could make a plan of your garden.