52 Days of Building a Second Wall with the Word and Wisdom

**Bringing Us Back to the Garden**

Day 27 – June 9, 2013

We saw yesterday that when Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the garden, sin entered into the hearts of all mankind.

**Romans 5:12** “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

One of the **consequences for their sin was to be removed from the garden**, away from the presence of the Lord; and we all have the same consequence when we sin. God is a holy God and He cannot abide with anyone who is unholy. As believers, when we choose to go our own way, when we question His ways and follow our way, we are not allowed access to the garden. But out of His love for us, He made a way for us to return to the garden – through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **Jesus came to our wilderness, to the earth as a man, to reconcile us to Almighty God.** His sacrifice atoned for our sins, all of them. But there is something we must do in this process, **we must repent** daily of our sins. We live in a dirty and sinful world, and we need to repent daily of the decisions we have made without Him. We need to be washed with the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ.

The book of Hosea compares God’s people to a harlot, who had forsaken her husband and sought her own way; following after her lovers. She faced consequences for her decisions, but God out of His love for her, seeks a way to have her return to Him.

**Please read Hosea 2**

**Hosea 2:14** "Therefore, behold, I will **allure her**, **bring her into the wilderness** and **speak kindly** to her.”

**He brings her into the wilderness** to remove the temptations and distractions of her life. Once there, she is able to hear His voice and take comfort in the kind words He speaks to her. The next thing you know, he places her in a garden (vineyard), while she is still in the wilderness. Many times in God’s Word He shows us His delight in changing the barren place of the wilderness into a lush garden.

**Psalm 107:35** “He changes a wilderness into a pool of water and a dry land into springs of water.”

**Isaiah 35:1-2** “The wilderness and the desert will be glad, and the Arabah (desert) will rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it will blossom profusely and rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy…”

In this wilderness garden that the Lord provides for us, He comforts us with His presence, as He pours out His love upon us and betroths us to Himself as a beloved husband. As we spend time with Him in the secret place of His prepared garden, He cleanses us of our sins, teaches us His ways, and gives us His peace; all so we can know Him and His love more and more. As we respond to His love with whole-hearted love for Him, He will respond and make our garden grow bountifully with grain, new wine, and oil. He will be provision for us and for others.

**Isaiah 51:3** “Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; **He will comfort all her waste places**. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; **joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and sound of a melody**.”

God wants all mankind to live in the garden, a place of growth, joy, gladness, and rest. When we are in this place with the Lord, thanksgiving and joyous worship will be as natural as breathing.

**With sin and distress are in our lives, we cannot see the comfort and consolation of the Lord.** Yesterday we read about Simeon seeing the salvation and consolation of the Lord. He saw that through the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s heart desired to restore and return all mankind back to His original plan. We are like sheep that have gone astray, we have left the safety and rest of the garden the Lord has prepared for us, and being the Good Shepherd that He is, He will use whatever methods are necessary to bring us back to His original plan. We must see His rod and staff as a comfort.

**Psalm 23:4** “Your rod and Your staff, they **comfort** me.”

**Psalm 119:50** “This is my **comfort** in my affliction, that Your word has revived me.”

The word **comfort** in Hebrew is ***nacham*** - to console, **extend compassion**, to breathe intensely because of deep emotion. In some references, the word is translated repent, the idea being that regret casual deep sighing (taking a deep breath of expressing sadness). In its sense of comfort, *nacham* does not describe casual sympathy, but rather **deep empathy** (ability to understand the pain of another).

Webster’s Dictionary defines **comfort** - to strengthen; to invigorate; to cheer or enliven; **new strength**; **relief from distress of the mind;** **consolation**.

**Consolation** is that which comforts, or refreshes the spirits.

This garden is a glorious place, but it is not just for us. It is the place where we receive the comfort and consolation of the Lord. **But as God comforts and consoles us in our garden, we must reach out to those we see who are in need of God’s comfort**.

**Isaiah 40:1** "Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God.”

**Please read Isaiah 40**. As God’s forerunners, we must see Isaiah 40 as our instructions in this age.

* **Offer comfort**; strengthen and encourage all who are weak or do not know the salvation of the Lord. (verse 1)
* **Speak kindly to the heart of the Jews**; tell them that Jesus is the Messiah. He offered Himself for their sins and He has come to bring them peace. (verse 2)
* **Be a voice** that calls out to the Church and the world that the **Lord Jesus is returning soon**, and He loves them. (verse 3 – 5)
* **Stand on the Word of God** that stands forever. (verse 8)
* Be a **bearer of the Good News**; boldly share the gospel with all. (verse 9-11)
* **Let people see God in you**. (verse 9)
* **Speak of the awesomeness of God**; the greatness of His might and the strength of His power. (verse 12 - 26
* **Speak repentance;** God sees and hears all. (verse 27)
* **God is the source of our strength and understanding**. (verse 28-31)

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

Using a concordance or the cross-references in your Bible, **look up verses to accompany the nine instructions to forerunners in Isaiah 40.**

Please read **Psalm 119:49-72**, and notice the comfort we receive when we study and observe God’s Word.

Is your memory verse memorized yet? **Psalm 119:58** You have one more day to work on it.