

“You Come, Too”  
 Sermon for 17 February 2019  
 Texts: Gen. 2:4-17, John 14:1-4

*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength—Isaiah 40:31*

My challenge was that of *finding Jesus in Paradise One*, in Gen. 2:4-17. I did consider the tree of life—which some say stands for Jesus *who is our life*. True. However the tree of knowledge also crops up, it was a scandal, a stumbling block especially to those who think that God erred in placing that tree in the Garden at all.<sup>1</sup> Jesus created everything, so I should be able to find him in the Garden, the first Paradise, and not just his fingerprints! Gradually it dawned on me that **They that wait upon the Lord** just might have something to do with *faith* and this **waiting** must have something to do with **renewing their (our?) strength**. Then I remembered the Greeks who came eagerly, **sirs, we would see Jesus** John 12:20-26 (faith), the Syrophoenician mother seeking deliverance for her daughter Mark 7:24-30 (faith) and the woman who had suffered hemorrhaging for eighteen years who believed **if I could but touch the hem of his garment** Matt. 9:21 (faith) They all shared one thing: a stirred up faith, a dependence on Jesus, a **waiting upon the Lord. However, it was an active waiting . . . it involved the stirring of the coals of faith else they neither glow nor give off heat!** This morning I would so stir the coals of your faith that you are warmed . . . now let's go seek him together. The beauty of faith lies in its use.

Consider well, the bride in The Song of Songs, particularly chapter 3 who is beautified by her eager anticipation of her beloved's, her groom's approach. Her dreams are full of him as our should be of Jesus! How she longs for the wedding and the consummation. How much more should we be eager for the Lord's coming. By faith we receive that even as he went to prepare a place for us in the Second Paradise, he is coming back for us. We are his Betrothed. Would anyone know it? What are we doing about it? How are we preparing for our great day? Is there eagerness and excitement in us, and around us? How are the arrangements going, from our side, because we know they are advancing on his side! Do we daily seek to talk with him? Are our conversations with others filled with exclamatory excitement? Does everyone know the thrills of excitement that fill the bride's days and adorn her? Do they see the glow? If not, bestir, bestir, review your privileges and your promises, savor them as morsels in your mouth Taste the goodness, the sweetness! Remember how saved you are! Your debts cancelled, the wrath averted, forgiven and freedom bestowed, your happy security and eternal safety, the fearlessness and joy (no death, nor hell for me!) Are you busy making calls, passing notes, sending invitations and thank-you's and bragging on your Espoused love? Is that what we see brides doing? Exchanging smiles, thoughts and looks . . . sending some for flowers, others to make reservations, others to cook. She embraced her happiness . . . and so should we! Besides we are all his Bride.

---

<sup>1</sup>I don't know about you, but when I hear someone declaring that God makes mistakes, or anyone saying that he erred in what he did, I start backing away as if a providential lightening bolt might be on its way! There's another version that says God did a rather sloppy job in creation, that there's too much slop in the system. I affirm to the contrary that everything God does is right, just, true, fair and perfect in every way. We either receive that by faith now, or we will discover, in the end, that it was so, it was true from the beginning.

Another key to finding Jesus in Paradise, besides our stirred up faith in earnest questing, lies in knowing which Paradise to look for him in. That's right; there're two. In order to find Jesus in the first Paradise, you may have to look for him in the Second Paradise. Demonstrating how scripture interprets scripture. We ask why is he there? What is he doing? Why is his coming so delayed?

Remember these things as we explore three bridges which connect Paradise One and Paradise Two. We are crossing over from one to the other. Bridal activity here prefigures bridal activity there! However, there is groom activity there going on in parallel. He is doing what he alone can do. Here we seem to age and decline, there all that is left behind!

Bridge One: is marriage. The first marriage in Eden spans all of scripture and plants its furthest footing squarely in Second Paradise.

Bridge Two: concerns our abiding place, or abode. Our first abode was a beautiful garden, our abode in heaven is a glorious bridal suite.

Bridge Three: involves the tree of life. In Eden we have a mysterious tree, in Paradise, it turns out to be Jesus who is the source of life.

Let's start with Bridge One in Genesis 2:22, 24: **And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to him . . . Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.** Just as the entire human race was wholly present in Adam, at the first, now, via marriage, the whole human race is wholly present again. Husband and Wife bear the divine image together and as Jesus said, **What God has joined together, let no one put asunder.** (Mark 10:9 and Matt. 19:4-6 which references both Gen. 1:27 and 2:24) If Gen. 2:22 and 24 were all we have to go on, it would be slim pickings indeed—however, we have the rest of scripture to make up for the bareness of that beginning. Marriage was divinely ordained and divinely instituted with an end, a perfection in view. Rev. 19:7-9 discloses where marriage in Genesis was headed:

**7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His [wife] bride has made herself ready.” 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the [the holy ones] saints. 9 Then he \*said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” And he \*said to me, “These are true words of God.”**

Things have certainly become more elaborate, richer in detail, now haven't they? The cherub has been reassigned. He who stood with the flaming sword who barred the gate of the first Paradise, and so kept us from the tree of life; *lest we forever live a life in bondage to sin, a life displeasing to both the Father and the Son (!); that forbidding cherub will be replaced by the smiling Groom* who stands to bid us welcome to our eternal home as his Beloved Bride:

Isaiah 62:5 **For as a young man marries a virgin,**

So your sons will marry you;  
And as the [exultation of] bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
So your God will rejoice over you.

***Indeed it is the Lord Jesus, our Groom, who escorts us there.*** Isaiah 62:5 picks up on an earlier verse:

Isaiah 61:10: I will rejoice greatly in the Lord,  
My soul will exult in my God;  
*For He has clothed me with garments of salvation,  
He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness,  
As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*  
11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,  
And as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up,  
So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
To spring up before all the nations.

Behold, here is the plan for the heavenly wedding ceremony! And see how sublimely the Prophet alludes to the first marriage in Paradise One with “**the earth brings forth its sprouts**,” with “**as a garden . . . springing up**,” and yet foresees the end time’s glory “**righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations**.” It’s a global event—a “big, fat wedding!” It’s all there for those who have the eyes to see it.

Now, before we leave our first bridge for the second, we should note that Ephesians 5:22-33 provide instruction for Christian marriage, a marriage fairly far across the bridge and on its way to perfection in Paradise because it applies to that perfect union:

**22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is *the head of the church*, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.**

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church [glorious] in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. [This verse is a citation of Gen. 2:24 which anchors it firmly in Paradise One!] 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she [fear, with reverence] respects her husband.**

The first couple, married in Paradise One, is prelude to Christian marriage is prelude to the last couple in Paradise Two Finally it all refers specifically to Christ and his to Bride (the Church and all the saints) the very ones pictured in Revelation. It is a fulfillment of the prophecy in Jeremiah 33:10-11:

**10 “Thus says the Lord, ‘Yet again there will be heard in this place, of which you say, “It is a waste, without man and without beast,” that is, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, 11 the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say,**  
**“Give thanks to the Lord of hosts,**  
**For the Lord is good,**  
**For His lovingkindness is everlasting”;**  
**and of those who bring a thank offering into the house of the Lord. For I will restore the [captivity] fortunes of the land as they were at first,’ says the Lord.**

I think I am beginning to get the picture! The glory of the Second Paradise must exceed the glory of the First Paradise as much as Day does the Night.

“There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before; The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound; What was good shall be good, with for evil so much good more; On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.”  
 -Robert Browning.

Let’s move on to Bridge Two: our eternal abode. Perhaps you recall the promise of Jesus, **I go to prepare a place for you . . .** here’s the passage (John 14:1-4):

**“Do not let your heart be troubled; [or, you believe in God<sup>2</sup>] believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going.”**

First Jesus speaks of his Father’s very ample house. It has many **dwelling places**. He proceeds to assure us that he is coming back for us when the preparation is complete. Being the quick studies you are and agile of mind, you now exclaim with me, “Oh my, the first Paradise was the very ample dwelling place that Jesus prepared for us in the beginning!” And you would be right on. Then, if I were to suggest to you further that **the Father’s house** must be the place that the Son has **gone to prepare**, so as to put on the bridal suite *with a view to our ensuing marriage*! Indeed. Could “Father’s house” be a synonym for the Second Paradise? Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us in Paradise. **If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. *It will be a statelier abode.***

---

<sup>2</sup> I really like the alternate reading here: **Do not let your hearts be troubled, you believe in God . . . keep the faith!** Be over-comers by faith in the Lord Jesus!

Bridge Three: regarding the Tree of Life which I mentioned at the outset. Have you noticed that the substance of every promise to the faithful in the seven churches is life? **Because I live, you also shall live** (John 14:19). I wonder how many of you have ever studied Revelation 1-3 with life in view? Jesus said (John 10:9-11):

**9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and [have abundance] have it abundantly. 11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.**

**I came that they may have life, and [have abundance] have it abundantly.** His is the Lord of life, the source of life. Others have come, like the thief, **to steal and kill and destroy** but Jesus came after, to redeem us back (rather like Abraham did for his hapless nephew Lot when he and his had been carried off as war plunder). Jesus gives pursuit, plunders the plunderer, takes back what was stolen by **saving the lost**, by enfolding scattered sheep. **Only believe.** We also know that he has overcome and defeated the Adversary—Tolkien depicted the work of the thief through Shelob, the giant, ancient spider of Cirith Ungol who poisoned Frodo in The Return of the King<sup>3</sup>.

Here's a question: where is the crown of life, the hidden manna, the white stone with a new name, the morning star and authority over all nature, white robes, the book of life,

---

<sup>3</sup> Shelob, the Spider of Cirith Ungol, was said by Tolkien:

There age-long she had dwelt, an evil thing in spider-form, even such as once of old had lived in the Land of the Elves in the West that is now under the Sea...How Shelob came there, flying from ruin, no tale tells....But still she was there, who was there before Sauron, and before the first stone of Barad-dur; and she served none but herself, drinking the blood of Elves and Men, bloated and grown fat with endless brooding on her feasts, weaving webs of shadow; for all living things were her food, and her vomit darkness. Far and wide **her lesser broods**, bastards of the miserable mates, her own offspring, that she slew, spread from glen to glen, from the Ephel Duath to the eastern hills, to Dol Guldur and **the fastnesses of Mirkwood**. But none could rival her, Shelob the Great, last child of Ungoliant to trouble the unhappy world.

-Bold emphasis mine

So the spiders of Mirkwood were her children, and had spread there, as they apparently did to all evil places. Shelob was greater than her children in Mirkwood. As Tolkien says, Shelob was old. She had been living on the borders of Mordor before it was even Mordor. She was born at least 6500 years before, in the First Age. We know this because 'The Land of the Elves in the West' is Beleriand, which sank into the Sea after the defeat of Morgoth, Sauron's master, at the end of that age.

He also says she is a 'child of Ungoliant.' Ungoliant was a huge, evil power, also in spider-form. She was amazingly powerful, and ate light itself. She even challenged Morgoth, the greatest being to ever live, and required him to call for his Balrogs to come save him from her.

As you can see, each generation of giant spider was less powerful than the last, which is kind of typical of Tolkien's world. The most magical and powerful beings lived earlier in time, and later generations could not match them.

So, as Tolkien said, 'none could rival her, Shelob the Great.' Ungoliant had disappeared ages before, and Shelob was the greatest giant spider remaining. [www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com)

the confession of our names before angels—inscribed on pillars alongside the names of our God, where is the New Jerusalem and Christ, where's the everlasting feast and the throne we are sit upon with our Glorified Lord? ***In short, where is the tree of life?***

***Who, not what is he?*** Surely you have heard rumor of these items, our Paradise Two wear!, their are snatches of them here and there, set in that line of a hymn, or a lyric in our sacred catches! A crown here, a robe there . . . or, all in one place, shoes, wings and harps in addition to crowns! These are the articles of Paradise (our heavenly wear), the accoutrements of our life to come. And they greatly exceed the most fashionable attire and footwear of this present age!

Each of the seven letters to the church are majestic utterances spoken by the majestic Figure (Rev. 1:12-20). These words are the very words of our Risen and Glorified Lord! He determines who gets what and he is the Giver of their rewards. He says he will reward all the faithful His eternal work as Mediator and Revealed of God never ends, this is He who says, "I will give." His divine life passes into us continually. Indeed he is and remains the fountain of life—and should that ever cease, heaven itself will be no more. Check out the letters: Revelation chapters 2-4

What we are going through in this life, prepares us for the life to come—and that alone is sufficient to secure the value of life. It makes life worth living. Christ is the source of power that turns the shaft and through that shaft all the looms and machines are powered. We work that mill, we produce the cloth and the owner will examine our work—and that assessment will impact our destiny. Here's the linkage: trust Christ, receive the power he places in our heart and by his power translated to us we become more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Eternal life begins in germ in the here and now, those who fight the good fight and overcome by faith will be the conquerors he rewards in Paradise. Are we the picture of anticipatory eagerness? Are we making calls, sharing plans and dreams and hopes? Are we actively bragging on Jesus, our Beloved? Are we sharing smiles with him and with each other? Are we active, engaged, involved with our faith? Are we gathering flowers for the table, designing favors, speaking blessings? If we are, we may be sure others will catch the excitement! It's going to be great, you come, too!

We are summoned daily out of the darkness and into the light!  
I am so ready! Are you ready?  
I am going to heaven, you come, too.

**Amen.**