

### In the Garden

The scripture lesson for today gives us a clear mandate or marching orders concerning what we are supposed to do as Christians. We are to carry the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations. So, we know what we are supposed to do. Now how do we do it?

One very good way is to try relating forgiveness and repentance to other stories in the Bible. Remember the scriptures says that Jesus opened the minds of the disciples so that they could understand everything the law, the psalms and the prophets said about the Messiah. They were able to preach powerful sermons and carried the message all over the Roman Empire. We are called to do the same thing today and God is still opening our minds in amazing and wonderful ways. Here's an example: Gardens play a pivotal role in the interaction between God and humanity. God places the first man and woman in a garden. It is in the garden where the fall from grace occurs and where Adam and Eve hide from God after their sin. Throughout the Bible whenever bountiful goodness, or beauty is described the scene is often likened to the Garden of Eden. It is no accident then that Jesus Christ often went into a garden to pray. On the night of his capture he was praying in a garden. And the Gospel of John describes his burial place as a garden. These verses in John 20 were the inspiration for the hymn, "In The Garden" by C. Austin Miles.

C. Austin Miles writes his own story on how the words were written to **"In the Garden."**

"One day in March, 1912, I was seated in the darkroom where I kept my photographic equipment and organ. I drew my Bible toward me; it opened at my favorite chapter, John 20 . . . That

meeting of Jesus and Mary had lost none of its power to charm. As I read it that day, I seemed to be part of the scene. I became a silent witness to that dramatic moment in Mary's life, when she knelt before her Lord, and cried, "Rabboni!" . . . Under the inspiration of this vision I wrote as quickly as the words could be formed the poem exactly as it has since appeared. That same evening I wrote the music."  
(From Forty Gospel Hymn Stories, by Sanville)

Imagine the quiet beauty mixed with stilled sadness that filled the air that Sunday morning as Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of her savior and friend. She expected to find his body in need of cleansing and instead she found an empty tomb. Her mind immediately raced to the worst possible conclusion. Instead of investigating further she ran to Peter and John and told them the sad news. They all ran back together and Peter and John go in. Finding the tomb empty they return to their homes but Mary stays behind.

A woman and a garden started this whole story and now as if to complete the cycle a woman and Jesus meet in a garden and Mary begins to take the good news to the world—I have seen the Lord!