



When God saves your soul and moves into your heart, a new seed is planted. It reminds me of the process of a flower's growth. You can take a seed packet and put little seeds in the soil where it is warm, and it will sprout. This is like your communion with God. If you study God's Word and let it work in your life, you will grow into a good soldier for Him. You have a Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the One who will keep you, but you must put forth effort. You have to pray to cultivate the seed. You have to work at becoming a good worker for God. In whatever line of work God has given you, He will help you. However, you must stay close to Him and remember that the devil will always be there to cause problems. That is what he was designed to do, and he is good at his job.

When God saves your soul, you become a new creature in God. He removes the old, sinful spirit. Now, you will have to use your imagination a little. Thinking of your Christian experience, imagine a large garden. Next to this big garden is another plot of land, and there is a hedge between them. That is the devil's garden. He is always camped next door to see what is going on.

God has given each of His children a marked row in this garden. No doubt, you have heard the old saying, "You've got a long row to hoe." That means you must labor

down through life, day by day, week by week, year by year, until God says, "You've been a good gardener," and then He takes you home. As you work in this garden, you are going to find different types of soil. You are going to hit hard places, clay, rocks, and stony places that you will have to work through.

It will not hurt to leave knee prints in the ground where you have had to get down and pray for help from God. As you go along through life, you will see other saints ahead of you who have been good workers for God for years before your time. You can look at their row and see where sometimes they must have gone through dry places. That was where faith had to come in. They had to keep going during the times when it seemed that God was not there.

When those times come, remember that God knows your thoughts. He knows everything that is going on. Do not forget that, and then when He does shower a blessing down upon you, you can rejoice. When you hear a good message that blesses you, it is like a plant getting the water and the sunshine it needs to make it grow into a healthy plant. When a Christian stays close to God, reads the Bible, prays, listens to the messages, and digs deeper, he will blossom into a beautiful person. People around him will notice that he is different.

Maybe he will get a chance to testify to them, and some of them might become Christians too. We are here to be workers for God.

As time goes on in this garden, each gardener will have problems, because Satan is right next door. He is watching, and he does not like anything that God has going on. Satan's garden is full of weeds, poison ivy, and thistles. He has many people working for him, trying their best to keep up with the Christian. Satan will do anything to cause problems. He will gather armfuls of thistles and poison ivy and throw them over the hedge into the garden. If you are not up to power with God, those thistles and poison ivy will wound your heart and poison your mind and cause you to stumble and fall. Satan needs more workers. He likes to get all the workers from God that he can. When he does, that makes his day. If Satan can get a saint to fall, he will jerk him over to his side of the hedge.

As you work in the garden, problems will arise, but God will always come to the rescue. You should not be afraid to get down on your knees and pray and ask God to help you. He will send down blessings. God sends down blessings on the unsaved as well, but they do not fully appreciate them. In Matthew 5:45 Jesus said that God "sendeth rain on the just and on the

unjust." Rain is like the preaching of the Word. You need that spiritual food to help you grow. If you will obey the Word and walk close to the Lord, you will prosper in life. Then you can look back and say, "I remember when I got victory over that."

I was a young boy when World War II broke out. I was ten years of age on the day that Pearl Harbor was bombed. Although I was young, I was worried about having to go to war, because Adolf Hitler had youth corps of eleven- and twelve-year-old boys. The newspapers were full of such stories before Japan attacked us and we got into war with that country. On the Sunday morning that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, I kept asking my mother, "They're not going to take me away from home, are they?"

I was in the Korean War later on. During that war, the government wanted people to put in victory gardens to support themselves. Everything was planted in a V shape, which stood for victory. Every little space that was available in town or in yards was made into victory gardens.

I remembered those gardens as I thought about our spiritual garden. In this garden God will give you a row, and that is your row of life, the path you are going to travel. As you travel this row, you will have opportunities to testify to friends and relatives and to people with whom you work. It makes you a good gardener when you tell them about God, so that God can talk to their hearts, and that will add to your basket of flowers, or souls. In a way this is very similar to how you put the seed in the rich soil and then give it some plant food, such as Miracle Gro. It is a miracle when God saves your soul.

When I was a boy, farmers hired other boys and me to pull suckers off the corn plants. We pulled the bottom leaves off the cornstock and pulled out the wild vines that would wind around and try to choke the plant. It was important to remove what we called "pea vines," because they would wind around the cornstalk and girdle that stalk until

the sap could not come up through. If that vine was not pulled off, when the ears came on, they would not have full ears. So that was kind of a spiritual lesson to me. As we went through the field, someone cultivated behind us; then we would hill the corn.

Looking across to the devil's garden, we see that we are much more fruitful. The Christian's plants look so nice, because God has given him a good crop. He has blessed his garden as He does the soul. The workers for Satan say to the Christian, "Maybe we can get you to come over or your Master Gardener to come and talk over the hedge to us and show us what we are doing wrong." Their weeds and vines are drooping, and there is nothing pretty about them. The only blossoms they have are the kind that float away, and that is what the devil wants them to do. He will try to get a breeze to blow those seeds toward the Christian's garden because he wants that seed to get over the hedge and took root in the soil. God will not permit that. They are tares.

The reason the sinner has a hard time is that he does not get that good, spiritual rain that the Christian's garden gets. About the only thing a sinner can water with is wine or liquor of some sort. Plants do not thrive on that, but that is another way the devil keeps the sinner in darkness. Satan promises a reward down the road, possibly a vacation with friends and relatives. We know where that vacation really is—hell. That will be their reward, or vacation, at the end of their row. It is different in God's garden. When we get to the end of the row, after we have lived a good life for God and have been a good worker, He will have a place for us in paradise. It will be a victory for us. We will go through hard places and dry places, but God will send showers and blessings down on us, just as He does for the literal flowers, and we will blossom and work for Him and win others to God. You cannot get by with sin. There is a payday

for everything you do in life. God will put a protecting hand over you if you serve Him.

I want you to know there is only one way to live. There is nothing out in the world but trouble. When young people go out into sin, they get in trouble. Even some of my own children have gotten into trouble. When they got out from under Dad and Mom's roof, they decided to do what they wanted to do. When I had them where I would watch them, I liked that. I could wash their faces, get them ready, and take them to church. During the church service, they sat only a couple of seats away.

I trust that in this message I have said something that might help you through life. God knows where you are all the time. He knows your thoughts. He knows what you are doing, whether it is good or whether Satan has his claws in you. Our reward is to make Heaven our home. All of us want to go to Heaven. If you were to ask a sinner, "Do you want to go to Heaven?" he would say, "Sure, I want to go to Heaven." On the other hand, if you were to say, "Why not come to church, study about God, and get saved?" no doubt, he would answer, "Well, I don't have time."

No one knows how much time he has left in this life. You could be snatched out of this world at any time. God could take you. It is only by His mercy that you are alive. It is His mercy that you can get out of bed every morning. When you put your feet on the floor and stand upright, you ought to say, "Thank You, God." God has been good to you, so trust in God and live for God, and you will never go wrong. There are all kinds of attractive things in sin. That is what people lust after. There is nothing like being able to get in touch with God quickly when you need Him. You ought to live so that when you need Him, He is there.

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