

I have commented before¹ on how much I look forward in anticipation of the first signs of plant life emerging from the barren winter ground. I love to see the first blooms, which are the real sign of production and beauty. But I don't like it when the flowers wilt and fall off, and the leaves fade, turn brown, and die.

I love walking through a garden, looking at the tremendous beauty and variety of the flowers, which bloom at different times and in different places throughout the growing season. I believe that I am like this because I was made in the image of God, for I know that He loves the Garden, too (because He created it²).

Throughout the early spring and late summer I watch the ground and look for life, and I think about a particular favorite plant and wonder if it will re-emerge. It is so exciting to see things come back to life, to see a tiny growth emerging from the dirt. It is like a resurrection, reminding me of the Great Resurrection of the Christ, and the resurrection that will come to us through God's Grace.

God created life that was unrelenting and irresistible, and He said that it was Good. Then, when it became broken by man, He became very disappointed. The ground was cursed, filled with thorns and thistles, and yielded fruit only through toil and sweat.

Rather than starting over, however, God watched patiently for Goodness to emerge from the spirit of man, like flowers coming up in the early spring through cracks in the broken earth. He spoke through one of His prophets³ in a way that makes me think that perhaps He was thinking of mankind:

"You heavens above, rain down my righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness flourish with it; I, the Lord, have created it."

So, when He sees an emerging flower, God says it is "Good" again. He also embraces the Goodness in us⁴, even though we cannot conquer sin by ourselves.

God's joy in seeing a bloom of Goodness in the midst of tremendous struggle is like seeing shoots of a plant that penetrate a thick layer of leaves to reach the glorious power of the sun. This reminds me of how God saved Noah and his family from the flood⁵, and presented Job as a person worthy of praise⁶. And even closer to our hearts, we remember how Christ described the widow giving her last two mites⁷ and the father who ran to meet his returning prodigal son⁸.

Christ compared us to a crop that was worthy of harvest⁹; He even described it as "plentiful". It was certainly worth enough to Him¹⁰ that He emptied Himself of Divine Power and sacrificially offered Himself¹¹ on this earth to be punished in our place¹².

We must ask ourselves if our "goodness" is cyclic like the seasons in terms of our spiritual life. Does God have to keep watching for us to bloom again? Some cycling is a natural part of our human weakness, but we should strive with all of our being to stay in bloom forever for God.

1. refer to my story "Eternal Spring"
2. Genesis 2:8
3. Isaiah 45:8
4. refer to my story "Sparks of Good"

5. Genesis 6:9ff
6. Job 1:6-8, and 2:1-3; note who is roaming the earth in search mode
7. Luke 21:1-3
8. Luke 15:11-32
9. Matthew 9:37-38 and Luke 10:2; Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”
10. “He spent over three decades wading through the muck and mire of our sin yet still saw enough beauty in us to die for our mistakes.” From Just Like Jesus, Max Lucado
11. Ephesians 5:2
12. 1 Peter 2:24

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