

## THE THREE GARDENS

This message is very moving. Dr. W.O. Vaught and the choir of Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock, Arkansas presented this on an Easter morning in the late 1970's. With his permission I revised and adapted it for every church I pastored since 1978. It requires sound effects, such as a bubbling brook with chirping birds (peaceful sounds), a choir for certain hymns (or recordings), sounds of thunder, lightening and strong winds, sound of the rolling of a large stone with an echo, an echoing voice (an angel and the Lord). Visual effects can also be used to enhance the presentation.

### I. THE GARDEN OF EDEN

1. *Genesis 2:8-9, 15*
2. Describe the creation of the garden by God.
3. **First Sound: Birds and bubbling brook (2 minutes)**
4. Discuss the making of man: In the image of God, with volition, a will and a spirit.
  - God gave Adam and Eve total freedom with the exception of eating fruit from a certain tree in the garden. It was forbidden.
  - God met with Adam and Eve every day and walked and talked with them.
5. Discuss Adam and Eve's disobedience:
  - Satan appeared to Eve (as a serpent) and led her to take of the forbidden tree.
  - Eve led Adam to also take of the forbidden tree and to eat.
6. Discuss the results of their disobedience:
  - God withdrew fellowship with them.
  - Adam and Eve's spirits died.
  - They were expelled from the garden.
  - The serpent was cursed to crawl on the ground.
  - God provided clothing for Adam and Eve from an animal He killed.
  - God promised someday to send a "Someone" to restore fellowship with God and to do away with Satan.

This brings us to the second garden: The Garden of Suffering.

### II. THE GARDEN OF SUFFERING

1. In the fullness of time God sent that promised "Someone."
  - Discuss the birth, ministry, and the life of Jesus through the Last Supper.
  - Discuss Jesus going off by Himself to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane

*- Matthew 26:36-37*
2. **Second Sound: The hymn, "Alone"**

3. Discuss the great battle Jesus fought within himself about the upcoming events:
    - **"Is there any other way?"** Jesus asked over and over.
    - Finally He surrendered His will and said, *"Not my will, but thy will be done."*
  4. Discuss the capture, trial and crucifixion of Jesus:
    - Betrayed - mocked - beaten - whipped - a crown of thorns - a purple robe
    - Jesus never uttered a word in His defense. He **meekly** stood and accepted all they did to Him.
    - **Alone**, Jesus carried His cross, **Alone**, Jesus was nailed to that cross, **Alone**, He hung on that cross.
  5. **Sound Three: The hymn, "Meekly, Alone"**
  6. Describe the Crucifixion scene:
    - Those present - His words asking care for His mother - His words to the thief - His words asking forgiveness for those around Him - His cry: *"Eli, Eli, Lama Sabathani?"*
    - He was indeed **alone**, for God, His Heavenly Father, had abandoned Him.
    - As Jesus hung there Heaven and nature cried out in horror:
      - darkness - winds - lightening - thunder - earthquake
  7. **Sound Four: Thunder, lightening, winds, ground shaking, roaring**
  8. Describe Jesus' last words: *"It is finished...Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit."*
  9. Here hung God's promised Messiah, His Savior, His Redeemer, the One who was to defeat Satan - **DEAD!**
    - Had they failed? How would anybody ever know?
- Now, let us look at the last garden, The Garden of Death.

### III. THE GARDEN OF DEATH

1. We now come to the last garden. The garden of death, the burial place (**Matthew 27:57-60**).
2. Discuss the scene: soldiers - religious officials - a few women, followers of Jesus.
  - Joseph rolled a large stone across the doorway and the soldiers sealed it then stood guard.
3. **Sound Five: Rolling of the stone across the tomb's doorway.**
4. The promised one is dead and the echo of the stone closing the doorway of the tomb reverberated in the ears and hearts of the devoted followers of Jesus. **GONE !**
5. Address to the stone: "Oh stone, are you greater than the promised one? Will you be what keeps man and God separated from one another? **NO! NO! NO!**

6. **Sound Six: Rolling of the stone back from across the tomb's doorway.**

7. Discuss that Sunday morning scene: *Matthew 28:1-4*

- Women were there to finish the burial process of Jesus.
- They encountered the tomb's open doorway.
- Angels told them what had happened and what to do.

8. **Sound Seven: The angel's information and instructions (Matthew 28:5-7)**

9. Did God's plan to send a redeemer, a Savior, Someone to defeat Satan work? **YES ! YES ! YES !**

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Throughout that Sunday, Jesus appeared to many: Mary, Women on their way to the tomb, Disciples on their way home to Emmaus, to Peter, to the disciples hidden in a room.
2. Jesus appeared to many, many in the following weeks, to as many as 500 at one time.
3. At His last meeting with His followers, at His ascension, Jesus gave these words of instruction:
4. **Sound Eight: Jesus's Instructions (Acts 1:7-8)**
5. This same Jesus that His disciples saw ascend into the heavens, will come back in the same manner. God has declared **that Jesus will reign forever as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.**
6. **Sound Nine: The "Hallelujah Chorus" (with everyone standing)**