

In The Garden

Read John 20:1-18

Mary Magdalene was in the garden on the morning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The awesome emotion of this moment need not be limited to that special morning so many years ago. Our risen Savior jealously seeks each one of us to spend similarly intimate fellowship with Him on a daily basis.

Austin Miles left this account of the writing of his hymn, "In the Garden":

One day in March, 1912, I was seated in the dark room, where I kept my photographic equipment and organ. I drew my Bible toward me; it opened at my favorite chapter, John 20-whether by chance or inspiration let each reader decide. 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!"

My hands were resting on the Bible while I stared at the light blue wall. As the light faded, I seemed to be standing at the entrance of a garden, looking down a gently winding path, shaded by olive branches. A woman in white, with head bowed, hand clasping her throat, as if to choke back her sobs, walked slowly into the shadows. It was Mary. As she came to the tomb, upon which she place her hand, she bent over to look in, and hurried away. John, in flowing robe, appeared, looking at the tomb; then came Peter, who entered the tomb, followed slowly by John. As they departed, Mary reappeared; leaning her head upon her arm at the tomb, she wept. Turning herself, she saw Jesus standing, so did I. I knew it was He. She knelt before Him, with arms outstretched and looking into His face cried "Rabboni!"

I awakened in full light, gripping the Bible, with muscles tense and nerves vibrating. 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.

Mary's faith was not complicated, it was sincere and genuine. She was more eager to believe and obey than to understand everything. Jesus honored her childlike faith by appearing to her first and entrusting her with the first message of His resurrection.

- **Why is quiet/personal time alone with the Lord so important?** Look up: Luke 5:16, Mark 1:35
- **Although vibrant worship is possible even in the darkest prison cell, how/why can being surrounded by nature enhance worship?**
Look up: Genesis 1:1, Revelation 4:11
- **Have you ever clearly heard the Lord's voice fall on your ear? Explain what that experience was like? How might we hear His voice?** Look up: 1 Kings 19:12, Isaiah 6:8, 2 Timothy 3:16
- **"He tells me I am His own" - What does this mean to you?** Look up: Psalm 23:1, John 10:27, Psalm 18:2
- **There is a "shared" joy when we spend true worshipful time with God. How would you describe this experience with someone who does not know Christ as Savior?**
Look up: Matthew 18:12-13, Psalm 13:5
- **"But He bids me go" – As awesome as quiet/alone time is with the Lord, He has work for us to accomplish.**
Read Exodus 3:1-14 - Discuss any parallels you see in this passage of scripture and the sentiment conveyed in the hymn.
- **"His voice to me is calling" –** Read Psalm 29 and consider the attributes of the one calling. Then consider how you'll respond.

*I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses
And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses.*

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.*

*He speaks, and the sound of His voice,
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing.*

*I'd stay in the garden with Him
Though the night around me be falling,
But He bids me go; through the voice of woe
His voice to me is calling.*

- Austin Miles, 1912