

January 7, 2021

Does the sin in your heart ever get you down? It does me. I get very discouraged when faced with remorse for my own foolish deeds, or even for the temptation to pursue foolish deeds. If I consider my life to be a garden for the glory of the Lord, then it very easy to become discouraged if that garden is filled with weeds, failing to yield fruit, and a persistent reminder of my own helplessness.

A garden that is consistently watered makes everything so much easier, but I've been known to try a shortcut, the fast approach, in my efforts to rid my garden of its copious, unwanted weeds. Weed-killers, after all, are readily available at any lawn and garden shop, and all you have to do is spray the weed and wait for it to die.

Isn't that easier than weeding? Easier than making sure my garden stays watered? But the problem with weed-killers is that some of my good plants die too. Once, I was struggling to get rid of a really persistent and noxious vine that had wrapped itself around one of my cypress trees, and went a bit aggressive with the spray handle on my Round-up bottle. Spritz, spritz, spritz. A few weeks later the vine was dead (above ground anyway) but so were large portions of my cypress tree.

I need well-watered soil; I need a heart that is bathed with that spring of water that wells up into eternal life (*John 4:14*). It's 95⁰ in the shade and I'm tired of struggling with those drought resistant weeds. I've injured people I've loved, just like I've injured my cypress trees, by trying to eradicate evil on my own.

There is no substitute, no "shortcut", for coming to God. There is no substitute for His living water. Jesus says: *Come onto me all you who labor and are heavy laden ... come to me with your discouragement, your remorse, your human weakness ... and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28)*. I will give you living water without cost and it can become a spring that wells up within you. (*Revelation 21:6, John 4:14*).

His invitation is offered to all and coming to Jesus, opening one's heart to the living water that flows from His throne is the first step. The first step is not the weeding. The weeds do not need to be eliminated before one can come to Jesus. The first step is not preparing the garden to make it perfect in your own inadequate, human strength. "*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*" (2 Corinthians 12:9)

The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Isaiah 58:11