

Musings from Pastor's Office:

Lost Paradise in the season of Summer Garden

It is the Discovery Channel that claims to find the lost paradise, Eden, in recent years. It has been questioned for many centuries whether or not the story of the Garden of Eden was real. A great number of people, including scientists, geologists, archeologists, and theologians, devoted their lives to finding this lost paradise.

There is a clue for its possible location in *Genesis*: **"A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.... The name of the second river is the Gihon...The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates."** (*Genesis* 2:10-14)

The last two well-known rivers named the Tigris and the Euphrates hint that the Garden of Eden would be located somewhere in the ancient Near East while the other two rivers have been unknown. What the Discovery Channel team claims to discover is actually traces of the other two unknown rivers after interpreting pictures taken by surveillance satellites. Those satellite images showed evidence of blurry water paths of two rivers connected to the other two present rivers. The Discovery Channel concludes that the lost paradise was located somewhere in modern-day Iraq. One question didn't leave my mind after watching this interesting program: "What was lost?" Was it the garden where all the fragrant fruits and flowers cover the whole land and the breeze freshens our bodies? In what sense is it a paradise to modern people? What has truly motivated so many people to spot the Garden of Eden? What was lost and what needs to be discovered?

For me, the lost garden stands for our lost intimacy with God: **"So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Ede cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."** (*Genesis* 3:23,24)

If God isn't there, there isn't a summer garden. Just like a summer garden would be a barren land if no one visits. It doesn't matter how magnificent it looks.

What Adam and Eve lost was not only the Garden itself but also their intimacy with God. The real tragedy for all human beings is NOT losing the garden. God could've created thousands more gardens. We lost God!!! We lost our true and lovely relationship to God. No matter what the Discovery Channel finds, we need to discover God. No matter how accurate those satellite pictures are in finding the exact spots of the lost garden, they cannot help us restore what we truly lost. Thus, discovering the lost garden is our job. As we enjoy our summer garden, let's recover our walk, talk, laugh, and joy with God in this season.

--Blessings in Christ!

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