



1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. (John 20:1)

This was my mother's absolute favorite, and she sang it almost daily as she went about her daily chores, and she sang it often as she worked among her many flower in garden – our entire lawn was a patchwork garden. I sometimes thought that she must have felt very close to the Lord among her roses and numerous other flowers. The Morning Glories were always still open when she arrived outside to water her flowers and to dig among the many varieties. And, yes, the morning dew still glistened on the petals when she appeared early while the morning was just dawning with its golden rays adorning the eastern horizon. When a small boy, I could not fathom the ecstasy my mother must have felt in seeing beauty being created by her care and labors, but that beauty began to dawn on my mind as I grew in wonder and knowledge of what natural beauty God could create through the hands of His servants of the garden. As I learned of that fervent love of Mary Magdalene in coming to the garden sepulcher early (while it was yet dark), I began to understand more fully my mother's love. Love compels us to seek the object of its love early – even while it is yet dark.

This gentle and gracious little hymn and its music were composed by C. Austin Miles, March 1912.

In the Garden

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.

Refrain

*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.

Refrain

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.

Refrain

We have a God who literally walks in beauty. He did so from the very beginning in the Garden at Eden when He walked in fellowship with our first parents. He is forever at the work of creating life as is done in the silent solitude of the garden. Mary Magdalene braved the wrath of Rome and the Jewish leaders in coming to the Garden Tomb early where she discovered to her soul's delight an amazing wonder – that which was dead was now alive (the Lord Jesus Christ). Doubtlessly, the dew hung heavily upon the roses of the garden that early morning. It was the first opportune moment to come to the tomb since she had witnessed the body of Jesus being placed there for it was the morning following the Jewish Sabbath on which travel was not allowed. Therein lies a lesson for us:

1. **Seek the Lord early while He may yet be found.** *"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." (Isaiah 55:6) "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." (Psalms 63:1-2)*

2. **Do not seek the Lord in the confusion of the market place or the sports arena.** It is easier to hear His Voice where the flowers grow in the silence of the Garden. *".....stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God." (Job 37:14) "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalms 46:10)* God most often speaks in the solitude of the heart in soft and gentle whispers. He is a gentleman who never screams. *"And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." (1 Kings 19:11-12)* If God does not scream and shout at us, perhaps we should also honor Him with our reverence in worship – not shouting or screaming out our prayers. Only Christ can disclose the beauty of His Voice to you in the garden.

3. **Jesus puts a melodious song in our hearts.** His Voice is the most unpretentious, but most resounding, of all in the garden. We are made glad at His Voice and Gospel. *"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15)* There is a beautiful little song by Luther Ridges which goes:

There's within my heart a melody
Jesus whispers sweet and low:
Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still,

in all of life's ebb and flow.

Refrain:

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
sweetest name I know,
fills my every longing,
keeps me singing as I go.

When I get 'down and out' under the disappointments of the world, I simply remember that little song, or the Scripture upon which it is based, and my heart is made glad.

You will remember that God walked with Adam in the dews and damps of the Garden at Eden before Adam chose to follow another voice. God still walks with those in the garden who reject that discordant voice of the serpent and chooses, instead, to hear God. *"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."* Yes, do we not love those Garden and Mountain-top experiences! But we go to the mountain to be near to God and to gain understanding of His will in prayer; however, we cannot remain forever on the mountaintop. Just as Jesus bids us to "Come unto Him" to find rest, He then expects us to *"Go into all the world"* following that newly found rest and preach and teach. Remember it was God's Voice that told Noah to *"Go into the Ark."* When the Flood waters receded, it was the Voice of God that told Noah and his family to *"Go forth out of the Ark!"* We cannot stay in our harbors and havens of rest forever. Once invigorated by the Holy Spirit of God and provisioned with the grace and knowledge of God, we must sally forth to perform our calling in Him.

The refrain in this hymn is quite full of Gospel truth and Spirit: *"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."* Can we walk with Christ? Yes, of course we can do so if we are agreed in surrendering our carnal wills to His Divine Will! *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"* (Amos 3:3) Jesus is forever reassuring our doubtful hearts of His care and love for us. We may, perchance, tarry with Jesus in our Gardens of Prayer and be spiritually fortified and enabled to perform works that we never before believed possible. But during those moments of tarrying, just as the two men walking the Road to Damascus after the resurrection, be overcome with the burning joys in our hearts of His fellowship and Presence over His Broken Bread and Body.

Have you felt that joy? If not, you had best spend more time in the garden listening for that Voice.