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This preview document contains excerpted portions of the major components for the Midweek of Lent 1.

RETURN FROM EXILE: A LENTEN JOURNEY

Resources for Lent–Easter Preaching and Worship

Sermon series by Jeffery Pulse

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PREACHING AND WORSHIP RESOURCES

Ash Wednesday

Sermon: “Heart to Heart: Sackcloth and Ashes to Robes of Righteousness”

Children’s Message: “The Garment”

Bible Study: Genesis 3 and 27; Leviticus 16; and Revelation 7 and 19

Midweek of Lent 1

Sermon: “Garden to Garden: Eden to Heaven”

Children’s Message: “The Garden”

Bible Study: Genesis 3; and Revelation 22

Midweek of Lent 2

Sermon: “Mountain to Mountain: Mount Moriah to Mount Zion”

Children's Message: "The Mountain"

Bible Study: Genesis 22; John 3 and 6; and Revelation 19

Midweek of Lent 3

Sermon: "Out of Egypt: Through the Water"

Children's Message: "The Water"

Bible Study: Exodus 14; Mark 1; and Revelation 22

Midweek of Lent 4

Sermon: "Tree to Tree: The Tree of Life to the Cross"

Children's Message: "The Tree"

Bible Study: Genesis 2 and 3; Luke 23 and 24; and Revelation 22

Midweek of Lent 5

Sermon: "Death to Resurrection: The Wilderness to the Promised Land"

Children's Message: "The Lord Provides"

Bible Study: Genesis 3; Exodus 16 and 19; Acts 1; and Revelation 19

Holy Thursday

Sermon: "Meal to Meal: The Passover to the Lord's Supper"

Children's Message: "The Meal"

Good Friday

Sermon: "Sin-Bearer to Sin-Bearer: The Day of Atonement
to the Atonement"

Children's Message: "The Two Goats"

Easter Vigil

Sermon: "The Pit to the Pit: The Pit of Lions to the Tomb"

Children's Message: "The Pit"

Easter

Sermon: "Welcome Home!"

Children's Message: "Home"

Bible Study: Genesis 3 and 37; Exodus 3 and 50; Mark 15 and 16; Revelation 7

New Series Hymn

We Are Exiles from the Garden

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF LENT 1 CHILDREN'S MESSAGE—THE GARDEN

TEXTS: GENESIS 3:22–24; REVELATION 22:1–5

MESSAGE

Hello, everyone! Today we are taking a journey through the Bible, but not just any journey—this is a journey from garden to garden! What does that mean? I love gardens. I like to work in my garden, but I also love to visit gardens because they are such peaceful and beautiful places. That is the way they are talked about in the Bible too. They are beautiful places where things are peaceful and perfect. Can anyone tell me what garden is first talked about in the Bible? That's right—the Garden of Eden. Who lived there? Adam and Eve. Does anyone know why they did not live there forever? Adam and Eve sinned and ruined the perfect, beautiful garden, and God made them leave.

That must have been hard, but Adam and Eve's sin separated them from the garden and from God. The same is true of our sin. It separates us from God, but God does not like that. God wants us to be close to Him and walk with Him and live with Him, but sin stands in the way. Sin even keeps us away from the perfect garden—heaven.

What can we do? Nothing! We want to do something, but every time we try we just make it worse. So, God did something! God sent Jesus. God sent Jesus to journey to the cross with our sins. On the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sins with His blood and He reunited us with God. The sin that stood between us and God was washed away by Jesus. The sin that stood between us and the garden gates of heaven was taken away by Jesus. Jesus opened the gates to us.

In Revelation, when it talks about heaven, it says it has the river of life and the tree of life right where Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God. That sounds a lot like the Garden of Eden! Do you see where the journey through the Bible has taken us? We started in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, and learned about the Garden of Eden. Then, we end the journey at the last book of the Bible, Revelation, and we learn about the garden of everlasting life, heaven. And, most important of all, we learned that it is Jesus who leads us on this journey from garden to garden. . .

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HOMILETIC NOTES –GARDEN TO GARDEN: EDEN TO HEAVEN

Texts: Genesis 3:22–24; Revelation 22:1–5

TEXTUAL NOTES

GENESIS 3:22–24

V. 22: “Man has become like [God] in knowing good and evil” because of his act of disobedience. However, because man has disobeyed, he has lost the image of God—perfection.

Knowing good and evil (being like God) and lacking perfection (lacking God's image) is a deadly combination. Therefore, God cannot allow man to eat of the fruit of the tree of life or else man will live forever in his deadly state. In other words, God's action in separating Adam and Eve from the tree of life and the Garden of Eden was an act of grace. Being sinful and yet living forever would be a terrible tragedy. Sin is also responsible for breaking down our bodies with disease, age, and so on. To suffer these realities and not be able to die physically would be a fate worse than death.

V. 23: The Garden of Eden is the first sanctuary, and as Luther states, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the first altar where Adam and Eve came each day to worship God through their obedience. Now man is separated from the garden and also from the face of God. The relationship has been changed, and not for the better. Everything will be different until the Lord God restores it as promised (Genesis 3:15).

“work the ground from which he was taken”: Work in itself is not to be considered bad or evil. Adam and Eve certainly worked within the confines of the garden. However, work that is separated from the garden and the face of God is toilsome and often painful.

V. 24: It is often pointed out, and most probably it is true, that the reason the tabernacle, temple, and, later, Christian churches are oriented so that people worship facing east is because this action is symbolic of trusting God's promise to return us to the garden. It is also interesting to note that the cherubim in the tabernacle/temple guarded the Most Holy Place, which was considered the dwelling place of God on earth with man. Only the high priest could go into the presence of God in the Most Holy Place and only once a year, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Separation from the garden and from God is a terrible thing; and yet, it is a grace-filled move by God for man's sake. Adam and Eve recognized from the first that this was only a temporary reality. God would send the Seed of the woman to rectify the effects of man's disobedience . . .

THE GARDEN MOTIF

From the beginning, in Scripture, gardens have been places of peace, perfection, and the provision of the Lord. Gardens are where one walks in the presence of God, seeking His face. The Garden of Eden is the first garden—the first perfect paradise—into which God places the crown of His creation. Man walks with God, converses with God, and sees Him face to face in this beautiful garden. However, when Adam and Eve disobey God and eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, sin enters into the world, and man is exiled from the Garden of Eden. God even places the cherubim with a flaming sword as guardians lest man seek to return and eat of the tree of life.

Yet, from the very moment of exile, God reveals His plan to return man to the garden. He tells of the Seed of the woman who will crush the head of Satan, defeating him and overcoming sin and death. When this takes place, the gates of paradise will be flung open, and man will be invited into the presence of God as it was in the beginning. . .

SERMON— GARDEN TO GARDEN: EDEN TO HEAVEN

A beautiful, perfect place—paradise! God created the heavens and the earth. God created all living creatures that crawl on the ground, that swim in the waters, and that fly in the air. God created man; in His own image He created them, male and female He created them. And it was good! Very good. It was perfect. He placed man, the crown of His creation, in a beautiful garden called Eden. Indeed, it was beautiful because it was perfect. There was no need to labor and till the ground because it produced all that man needed in abundance. There was no need to worry about the weather because the world was perfect and danger did not exist. There was no need to worry about anything because everything was exactly right, exactly perfect, and exactly how God intended for it to be.

However, the best reality of all was the relationship God had with the crown of His creation. God and man were united together in perfect unity. It was an amazing relationship. God and man walked hand in hand, talked face to face, lived in perfect communion. A beautiful, perfect place with God and man united in a beautiful and perfect relationship. The beautiful Garden of Eden, the place where God and man dwelled together in perfect harmony.

So it was in the beginning. But man desired to be like God. The old, evil foe tempted Adam and Eve to question the beautiful relationship by casting doubt on God's integrity. Satan whispered that God was hiding something from them, holding back the ability to be like Him. They believed Satan, and they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—and they tasted death.

A beautiful, perfect place lost—paradise lost. An amazing relationship severed—a chasm opened up. An eternal immortality exchanged for everlasting suffering and death. Adam and Eve sinned and were driven from the Garden of Eden, and their return was forbidden by the flaming sword of the cherubim. They were exiled from a perfect place of light and beauty and thrown into the darkness, a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. They were exiled, and their return was forbidden, their access to the tree of life cut off.

Dust to dust—we are created in God's image from the dust now only to be returned to the dust in disgrace. We are created to live forever in the presence of God now only to be exiled to a land of darkness and death far from the face of God with its light and grace. How tragic for Adam and Eve. How tragic for their children. How tragic for us!

Exiled like Adam and Eve from the beautiful garden; exiled from before the face of God, from before the presence of God; exiled and driven out into the darkness of a sin-damaged world with sin-filled hearts. Sin exiles man from God. Sin exiles us from the courts of heaven, from the courts of everlasting life.

Oh, if we become perfect, if we resist all sin and walk in absolute purity, if we are found to be righteous in God's sight by the works of our hands, then—only then—could we return to the garden. Its gates would be thrown open, and we would be received with great rejoicing. Once again the garden would be our dwelling place and God would be our constant companion, as we would walk together once more in the cool of the day—if we become perfect.

But our sin is ever before us. We cannot return from our exile by our own reason or strength. We cannot enter into the presence of God by means of the work of our hands. We cannot. We find ourselves helpless and hopeless, wandering in the darkness. We hang our heads unable to look our Creator in the face, unable to see His glory, unable to meet His eye. We are sinners, exiled from the garden, exiled from the presence of God. . . .

BIBLE STUDY– THE GARDEN

INTRODUCTION

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon is one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, which represent structures of architectural grandeur and advanced engineering. And it was quite unique from the other six wonders. By no means any less impressive and meticulously constructed, it was the lush beauty of the trees and vegetation in contrast to the surrounding arid plains that was so striking. The purpose of these gardens was nothing other than rejuvenation and pure pleasure, and gardens continue to serve this purpose today.

Step into the gardens of Scripture—there are more than you may realize—and you will find that they become the backdrop for a more beautiful reality than the gardens themselves, and they have an eternal purpose!

(Note: Questions only are found in the student section.)

READ GENESIS 2:4–24.

Q1. Eden is the first garden of Scripture, as well as the most well-known. Describe how you envision this first garden. What are some specific words you would use in your description?

A1. Descriptions and words will vary. Adam and Eve should be included because God created and placed them in this beautiful garden specially prepared for them. The names of the two trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, should also be on the list as well as the idea of perfection and what this means to the students. Scripture tells how God deliberately placed man in the garden and provided all he needed to flourish. He gives man the good gifts of work, nourishment, and each other.

READ GENESIS 3:8

Q2. What does this verse suggest about the relationship between God and man in the beginning?

A2. There was a perfect, life-giving relationship between the Creator and man, who was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). Man had no shame or terror from sin to impair the relationship. Man had perfect faith in God and obeyed Him. He feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things as his life giver and sustainer, and he received all things from God.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

READ GENESIS 2:16–17

Q3. These verses tell us what was good for man and what was pleasing to God. They also help us to know God’s overall plan for man and for his relationship to God. Discuss what this plan might be. . .

c

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE—GARDEN TO GARDEN: EDEN TO HEAVEN

Gardens are places of beauty. Gardens are places of rest. Gardens are places that bring joy to our hearts as we walk through their midst. The Garden of Eden was such a place—of beauty and perfection, of joy and peace. But man could not resist temptation, and the result was a view of the beautiful garden from the outside. No more joy, no more peace, only pain and sorrow, sweat and tears. Today, our journey is from the Garden of Eden (from which we have been exiled) to an even more beautiful garden, the Garden of Everlasting Life. This will not be an easy journey. There will be much stumbling and falling, many bumps and bruises—after all, the world has been infested by sin and all the hazards that go with this reality. A difficult journey, but one that was taken first by our Lord and Savior Jesus. Because He first made the journey and suffered in our place, the gates of the new, heavenly garden stand open before us. No more tears, no more sorrow, this garden is our place of perfect rest, joy, and peace.

Stand

- L O Lord, open my lips,
 C **and my mouth will declare Your praise.**
- L Make haste, O God, to deliver me;
 C **make haste to help me, O Lord.**
- C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
 Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our salvation.**

+ PSALMODY +

PSALM

Psalm 137:1–6 (Tone F)

¹ By the waters of Babylon, there we sat | down and wept,*
 when we remembered | Zion.

² On the | willows there*

we hung | up our lyres.

³ For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, | saying,*
“Sing us one of the songs of | Zion!”

⁴ How shall we sing the | Lord’s song*

in a | foreign land?

⁵ If I forget you, O Je- | rusalem,*
let my right hand for- | get its skill!

⁶ Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth,

if I do not re- | member you,*

if I do not set Jerusalem above my | highest joy!

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*

and to the Holy | Spirit;

as it was in the be- | ginning,*

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Sit

OFFICE HYMN

“We Are Exiles from the Garden” (*See insert*)

+ READINGS +

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 3:22–24

²² Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

L O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE

Revelation 22:1–5

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

- L O Lord, have mercy on us.
 C **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 13:10–17

¹⁰ Now [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹ And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. ¹² When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.” ¹³ And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. ¹⁴ But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” ¹⁵ Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? ¹⁶ And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” ¹⁷ As He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

- L O Lord, have mercy on us.
 C **Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSORY

LENT

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- L Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.
 C **Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**
 L In You, O Lord, do I put my trust, leave me not, O Lord, my God.
 C **Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**
 L Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.
 C **Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

“The Garden”

SERMON

“Garden to Garden: Eden to Heaven”

+ CANTICLE +

Acknowledgments

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CREATIVE WORSHIP SERVICE—GARDEN TO GARDEN: EDEN TO HEAVEN

AS WE GATHER

Gardens are places of beauty. Gardens are places of rest. Gardens are places that bring joy to our hearts as we walk through their midst. The Garden of Eden was such a place—of beauty and perfection, of joy and peace. But man could not resist temptation, and the result was a view of the beautiful garden from the outside. No more joy, no more peace, only pain and sorrow, sweat and tears. Today, our journey is from the Garden of Eden (from which we have been exiled) to an even more beautiful garden, the Garden of Everlasting Life. This will not be an easy journey. There will be much stumbling and falling, many bumps and bruises—after all, the world has been infested by sin and all the hazards that go with this reality. A difficult journey, but one that has been taken first by our Lord and Savior Jesus. Because He has first made the journey and suffered in our place, the gates of the new, heavenly garden stand open before us. No more tears, no more sorrow, this garden is our place of perfect rest, joy, and peace.

SERIES HYMN

“We Are Exiles from the Garden” (*See insert*)

OPENING SENTENCES

P Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; hold not Your peace at my tears!

C **For I am a sojourner with You, a guest, like all my fathers.** *Ps. 39:12*

P Thus declares the LORD of hosts: Return to Me, says the LORD of hosts,

C **and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.** *Zech. 1:3*

P Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;

C **let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.** *Is. 55:7*

P And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;

C **they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.** *Is. 35:10*

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; hold not your peace at my tears!

C **For I am a sojourner with you, a guest, like all my fathers.** *Ps. 39:12*

CONFESSION

P We are on a journey from a deserved exile to a gracious promised land. Although we merit nothing, because our heavenly Father promises forgiveness and mercy to all who call on Him for Jesus' sake, let us go to Him, confessing our sin.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination

A Heavenly Father, we are fallen creatures, prone to hiding our faults from one another, yet knowing our sins are laid bare before You.

C **Forgive us and clothe us with Christ's own righteousness.**

A We have erred and strayed from Your way.

C **Forgive us and turn our feet toward the paradise You promise.**

A We have attempted to placate Your just demands by our own efforts.

C **Forgive us for the sake of Your Son's sacrifice in our stead.**

A We have often failed to reflect the new life You granted us in our Baptism.

C **Forgive us and drown the old Adam within us.**

A We have eaten "forbidden fruit" in our disobedient thinking, speaking, and acting.

C **Forgive us and grant us the new life won on the tree of the cross.**

A We have failed to trust Your care and protection as we journey through this wilderness.

C **Forgive us and accompany us on our pilgrim way.**

FORGIVENESS

P Our gracious God, even when we were dead in our trespasses, You made us alive together with Christ (*Eph. 2:5*). You who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ (*Eph. 2:13*). May He who began this good work in you bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Phil. 1:6*).

C **Amen.**

PSALMODY (spoken)

Psalm 84 (antiphon: v. 10)

P A day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

P How lovely is Your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD;

C **my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.**

P Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,

C **at Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.**

P Blessed are those who dwell in Your house, ever singing Your praise!

All: A day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

P Blessed are those whose strength is in You,
C **in whose heart are the highways to Zion.**

P As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs;
C **the early rain also covers it with pools.**

P They go from strength to strength;
C **each one appears before God in Zion.**

P O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob!

All: A day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

P Behold our shield, O God;
C **look on the face of your anointed!**

P For a day in Your courts is better
C **than a thousand elsewhere.**

P I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
C **than dwell in the tents of wickedness.**

P For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
C **the LORD bestows favor and honor.**

P No good thing does He withhold
C **from those who walk uprightly.**

P O LORD of hosts,
C **blessed is the one who trusts in You!**

All: A day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

[OR]

[PASSION If the congregation is reading through the Passion, a portion of it may be read here.

L O Lord, have mercy on us.
C **Thanks be to God.]**

READING *Genesis 3:14–24 (God clothes, then expels Adam and Eve from Eden.)*

- L After Adam and Eve sinned, God spelled out the results of their disobedience. But He also clothed them and promised that a descendant of Eve would triumph over Satan.

A reading from the third chapter of Genesis.

The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
 cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field;
 on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

- C **I will put enmity between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring and her offspring;
 He shall bruise your head,
 and you shall bruise His heel.”**

- L To the woman He said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
 in pain you shall bring forth children.
 Your desire shall be for your husband,
 but he shall rule over you.”

And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
 and have eaten of the tree
 of which I commanded you,
 ‘You shall not eat of it,’
 cursed is the ground because of you;
 in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
 and you shall eat the plants of the field.

- C **By the sweat of your face
 you shall eat bread,
 till you return to the ground,
 for out of it you were taken;
 for you are dust,
 and to dust you shall return.”**

- L The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.
 C And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.
 L Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live

forever—” therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

- L O Lord, have mercy on us.
 C **Thanks be to God.**

READING

Revelation 22:1–5 (The description of heaven reflects Eden.)

- L A reading from the twenty-second chapter of Revelation.

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

- L O Lord, have mercy on us.
 C **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN—WE ARE EXILES FROM THE GARDEN

Tune: JEFFERSON

We are exiles from the garden,
 Banished by our sinful choice,
 Terrified to seek His pardon,
 Hiding from our Father’s voice.
 Underneath the branches swaying,
 Sweat and blood fall to the ground.
 In the darkness, Christ is praying;
 He comes forward to be bound.