

A child's drawing of a garden. The drawing features several flowers with thick, dark outlines. One flower has a red center and a yellow base, with the word 'Jesus' written in black above it. Another flower has a red center and a green base. The stems are drawn with thick black lines and filled with light green. The ground is represented by brown horizontal lines. The text 'Mandy's Flower Garden' is written in a large, blue, outlined font across the center of the drawing.

Mandy's  
Flower  
Garden

Gregory John



*Mandy's  
Flower  
Garden*

Gregory John

Copyright © 2024 by Gregory John

Cover design by: Marigold House

All rights reserved.

No portion of this booklet may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher or author, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law.

Unless indicated, all scriptural quotations are from the Holy Bible, New American Standard Bible (NASB), copyright 1995 by Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

# A Day to Remember



**I**t was Friday morning and the doctor's waiting room was already full of people. After checking in at the reception's desk, I picked up a

nearby magazine from one of the side tables and walked to the back of the waiting room where I nudged myself into one of the few unoccupied chairs.

While trying to settle into my cramped surroundings and focusing in on reading my magazine, I couldn't help but notice that the little girl sitting next to me was drawing and happily humming a church hymn. To be honest, I've never been good at memorizing music, but I knew for sure that I had heard this hymn before, and it slowly began to itch at me that I couldn't figure out the name of it. Before too long though, I was able to shut it out of my mind and go back to reading my magazine, but as God would have it, what came next I was totally unprepared for.

“My name is Mandy! What's your name?” Turning to this frail looking little girl sitting next to me, I said to her with a soft smile, “Gregory.”

“That’s a funny name!” she said with a giggle. By this time her mom spoke up and apologized for her remark. Being a father and uncle, her words didn’t bother me in the least knowing that kids will without hesitation say whatever is on their unbraided minds—sometimes funny, sometimes embarrassing, and sometimes sincerely sweet.

As I began to look more closely, I could clearly discern that something was terribly wrong with Mandy, her pale complexion announced to me that she was more than just a sick kid, but dying inside that little body of hers and without just cause. In my quickly traveled thoughts to my Heavenly Father, all I could ask was, “Why a child?” Mandy’s malady was a fresh reminder to me of how horrible of a disease Sin really is, in that it shows no mercy to anyone or at any age.

As for Mandy though she had such a cheerful spirit about her that not even the impending cords of death could bind her down. As I

watched her draw and color in her masterpiece, she drew the outline of a little red heart, then looked up at me, and said, “Do you love Jesus?”

Amazed and surprised, I first looked to her mom for affirmation, then staring into Mandy’s pretty green eyes, I said to her, “I most surely do; He’s my Savior!”

“Mine too!” she exclaimed with a happy-bright-giggly smile; as in saying to me—all is well with my soul! I must admit that I was deeply touched to the depths of my own soul by this child’s love, innocence and open affection in asking me the most important question anyone could ever ask, and for this reason she won over my heart.

While again admiring her masterpiece, I noticed that one particular flower (the seventh one) had been left uncolored; so I had to ask, “Why is the last flower uncolored?” Never ask a child a question about his or her artwork unless you’re prepared for an honest answer. She then went on



to fully explain in detail her work of art to me—a naïve grown-up. “The flowers are tulips—my favorite! They come up every spring in my front yard; mommy says that Jesus’ gives them to me every year for my birthday. This year I’m going to be seven, but I am real sick, and may not get to see the tulips this year—that is why I can’t color in the last one.”

As I looked again to her mom who was now fighting back a wellspring of tears, I somehow by God’s grace under the heartfelt circumstances managed to hold up a smile in front of Mandy, and with a large lump in my throat said, “I know that Jesus would not want you to miss out on His birthday gift; have faith in Him, knowing His favorite and perfect number is—Seven!”

**For lo, the winter is past, the  
rain is over and gone. The flow-  
ers appear on the earth; Song of  
Solomon 2:11-12 (NKJV)**

It was Friday morning and the Roman judgment hall was already full of spectators. Bound by the cruel fetters of priestly prejudice and hatred, Jesus now stood before the Judgment seat of Roman rule. For the holy and righteous Judge of all the earth was now to be Judged by the wicked standards of the world!

Pilate in his cross-examination of the Accused asked, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?” (John 18:29). As in as much as the darkness hates the light the false charge flung forward, “An evildoer—worthy of death!” Unmoved by the inflamed fury of satanic hatred, Jesus stood calmly silent before His malice accusers “Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shears, so He did not open His mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7).

Pilate couldn't help but notice that Jesus' visage was serene, and that He bore the countenance of godliness without guilt or shame.

Believing Jesus to be innocent of the priests' trumped charges, and only a threatening adversary to the pious and pomp Jewish dignitaries, Pilate inquired of Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33).

With the Holy Spirit's eyes of conviction looking upon Pilate's heart, Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" (verse 34). Pilate's national pride then did answer, "I am not a Jew, am I?" (verse 35): declaring it was Jesus' own nation and priestly magistrates who had delivered Him up as a malignant malefactor. With the Spirit's convictions slighted, Jesus in turn declared to Pilate's reasoning as to His mission in not seeking an earthly throne, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." (verse 36).

Pilate in his self-understanding said to Him, “So You are a king?” (verse 37). Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” (verse 37). Pilate in not knowing what to believe or how to obtain it, self-inquiringly asked, “What is truth?” (verse 38).

The truth is that Jesus died that fateful Friday—given up by Pilate to be crucified on a cross. As with Pilate, we too must ask ourselves, **“What is truth?”** Is it the voice of the angel who declared, “For behold, I bring you good news ...for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11). Is it the voice of the Magi who inquired, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” (Matthew 2:2). Is it the voice in the wilderness who cried

out, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Is it the voice out of the heavens at Jesus’ baptismal-anointing that declared, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” (Matthew 3:17). Is it the voice of the demon who cried out, “What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” (Luke 8:28). Is it Peter’s voice of confession, “Thou art the Christ.” (Mark 8:29). Is it the centurion’s voice that said after Jesus breathed His last breath, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15:39). Is it doubting Thomas’ voice of renewed belief, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). Or perhaps it is someone else like Mandy’s giggly voice in declaring to you and me—**“I Love Jesus;”** He’s my Savior!

# Afterward

Mandy's Flower Garden is a fictional story. As an allegory to Jesus' life in the impending and dark shadow of death on a cross, Mandy's story reminds us that the cord of life is both fragile and often broken without meaning. Therefore, may Mandy's question: "Do you love Jesus?" not be slighted or pushed away like Pilate did in ordering his hope for eternal salvation to be crucified!

Acknowledgement: The picture for Mandy's Flower Garden was created by a little girl named Jessica when she was seven years old.

# *About the Author*

Gregory John is an author, poet, and blogger. He writes mostly in the Christian genre but is also known for his non-fiction writing and tongue-in-cheek poetry. To learn more about Gregory John and read his personal testimony, please visit: **<https://gregoryjohnbooks.com>**

As an author, I would appreciate any comments or reviews of my writings or books. Honest reviews help me to hone my writing skills and to know how to best reach my reading audience. Thank you!