

Clippings

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Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”— and that he had said these things to her. (John 20:15ff ESV).

Mary, weeping with fresh grief and bewilderment, after seeing the empty tomb, noticed Jesus out of the corner of her tear-stained eye; but even after He spoke to her, she thought He was the gardener. Until He spoke her name, and she turned and looked at Him with eyes wide—and then she knew! He was alive! She took hold of Him, as if to say, “Teacher, now that I have you back, I will never let you go!” He chided her gently to let go, for He was still on the job; His mission was not yet accomplished. “Go to my brothers and tell them,” because this news of His victory over death was not just for her, but for all His people.

Mary wasn’t entirely wrong. Jesus IS the gardener; or, should I say, The Gardener. As Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, squabbling over petty cliquish alliances favoring Paul versus Apollos:

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. [1 Corinthians 3:5ff, ESV]

John wrote that in Jesus there appeared “life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). He said that Jesus was given to us to that “whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Jesus told a parable once about a farmer scattering good seed in his field, and explained,

“The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age...” (Matthew 13:37ff)

and just as a gardener or farmer works to weed and feed and care for the life in his plot of earth, Jesus is working to cultivate us and strengthen us, causing us to bear fruit, and to remain faithful until the harvest, the Day of the Lord.

You are God’s planting, and Jesus is taking care of you. He’s alive! He’s not on vacation—He’s working in His garden, working in you to bear fruit for His Father. So dry your eyes, and open them wide in faith, and lift your face to the life-giving Son: The Gardener, Jesus, the Son of God, slain for your sins, and alive again forevermore!

~ Pastor Fremer