

Do you remember the old hymn, 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;
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.

This year, April is squarely in the middle of our 50-day celebration of Easter. The earth is renewed with life, and what was a barren and deserted landscape is flowering into a garden. The garden metaphor is strong in the Bible, from the Garden of Eden to the garden where Mary tarrys to discover an empty tomb and a risen Savior. John 20 tells us that at first, Mary supposed Jesus to be the gardener.

Even though Mary has not yet recognized Jesus, perhaps she was right. Jesus is the gardener of the Christian life. He takes what was a deserted and sin-swept landscape – our hearts, and cultivates there a garden that he promises will be fruitful – our lives, our talents and abilities, our tithes and offerings. The garden of our lives does not exist for us alone, but for the sake of the world that God loves.

Over the fifty days of Easter, we will hear in worship many readings from the book of Acts. I invite you to prepare by rereading the Acts of the Apostles on your own this week. I encourage this because Acts is an excellent Christian handbook

for Easter gardening! Acts 2 tells us that the first followers of Jesus devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. These are still good acts of devotion for Christians today.

Won't you join Christ the Gardener in nurturing the faith of others? What you plant, you will reap.

Happy Gardening!
Pastor Chris

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