

Series: 1st Corinthians

Sunday, April 19. Read our daily sermon reflections on GCC's app (under Devotionals) or at gardiner.church/devotions

1. THE GARDEN HAS A U..... PROBLEM

(1 Corinthians 1:10-12, 2:16, 3:1,3; See also Psalm 133:1)

- When a particular voice or face becomes the reason we show up, or stay away, we've made the gardener more important than the Owner of the garden. This can cause factions, growing weeds that then quietly destroy a community. These weeds include jealousy, resentment and a painful sense of inferiority when the room seems to light up for someone else and dim for you. These are not just personal struggles; they are symptoms of a garden that has forgotten who it belongs to.
- Consider: Is there a moment when you have stayed away, or withheld your best, because a particular person wasn't present? What does that reveal about where your focus has been?

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2. EVERY GARDENER HAS A GOD-A..... ROLE

(1 Corinthians 3:5-6,9)

- Paul's answer to factionalism is disarming, he says, "what are Paul and Apollos?" They are simply servants working in a field they don't own. One planted and one watered. The Lord assigns each person their task, and those tasks are shaped by the natural and spiritual gifts he has placed in us. No gift is more important than another, even when some receive more attention. All of our service is God-assigned work. All of it matters. All of it will be rewarded.
- Consider: What gifts or roles in this church do you most easily overlook, and what would it look like to genuinely encourage someone in a behind-the-scenes ministry this week?

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Turn page over for #3

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3. THE HARVEST BELONGS TO GOD

(1 Corinthians 3:6-9)

- It was always, always about God. Paul says that neither the planter nor the waterer is anything — only God gives the growth. But each worker has not just a task but a *purpose*, and each will be rewarded according to their own labor. In this life that may mean a deep sense of joy, fruitfulness, and God's smile on your work. In the life to come, it will mean even more. We are co-workers in God's service, not competitors with each other.
- Consider: In what area of your service do you most need to remember that you are a co-worker with others, rather than a competitor?

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Application For This Week: Find one person who serves quietly and faithfully behind the scenes — and tell them specifically what their contribution means. Don't just say "good job." Name what you see God doing through them. And the next time you gather with this church, come ready to receive from whoever God has placed in the garden that day — because the Owner is always present, whatever gardener shows up.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you that this garden is yours — not ours to compete over, not ours to claim. Forgive us for the times we have placed a gardener's face on your harvest. Heal any jealousy, resentment, or sense of inferiority that has quietly taken root among us. Help each one of us to know our God-given purpose, to joyfully serve in the role you have assigned us, and to honor and encourage every other worker in this garden. May we be co-workers together — not competitors — bound by your love and working for your glory. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Verses To Meditate On This Week: *I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ... The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field – 1 Corinthians 3:6,8-9a*
How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! – Psalm 133:1

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