

Easter: The Gardner's Hands

Genesis 1-3; John 20:1-10; Revelation 21-22

OPEN

This week we reflect on the power of God and his intentions for each of us. Three of the most important stories in the Bible take place in a garden: Eden, an empty tomb, and a new, promised garden.

What has been your experience of Easter this past week?

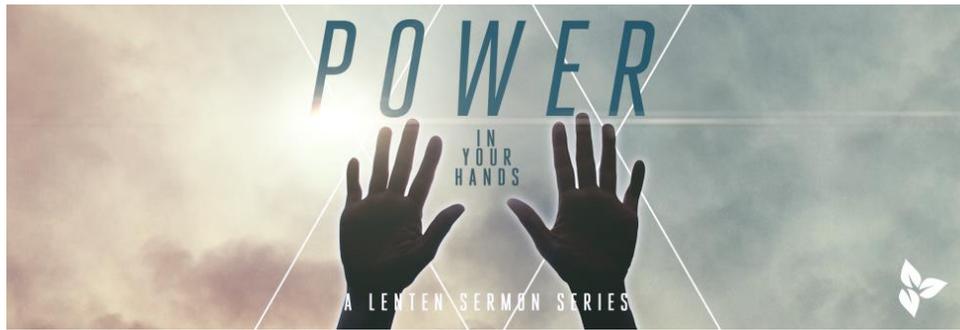
DISCUSS

Garden 1. Quickly review Genesis 1-3. This is the story of beginnings. What do these verses tell us about God? About humanity (and you)? About creation?

In Gen 1:26-27, we are told we are created in the image of God. What significance does this have for God's people? Think about the mission of God (now in the resurrected Christ) in this world...flourishing in new life, providing meaning for time on earth, calling, redeeming, forgiving, and reconciling. As you think about your image in God, how do you feel when you consider that God is extending this work to YOU (and his church)?

Garden 2. Read John 20:1-10. As a group, compile a list of the significance of the resurrection of Jesus.

Garden 3. Read Rev 21:1-8 and 22:1-5. God's plan will be complete when all things are finally made new...including creation. What stands out to you in these passages?



If someone were to ask, "How do these three gardens fit together?" How would you respond?

How do you respond to this quote from the Easter message:

"As a result of the resurrection, the disciples were changed... Everywhere they went, they told the story of the Great Gardener and set their hands to renewing some part of his creation until the day when he would return to restore it all.ⁱ I can't stress enough that the Gospel these disciples preached and died for wasn't the message it often gets reduced to in our time. It wasn't: *"Consider Jesus 'cause he was a really great guy."* It wasn't: *"Contemplate Jesus because he had some good teachings."* It wasn't: *"Hey, y'all, lets circle up in his memory and support each other."* The message of Easter was simply this: *"Commit your life to Christ because his resurrection proves that he has the POWER to overcome sin and death and bring forth new life."*

What does Easter mean to you?

YOUR NEXT STEP...

- Reflect this week on the significance of Easter. Consider writing a prayer to God sharing your thoughts, gratitude and commitment to him.
- As you journey forward from Easter Sunday, think about and intentionally take steps to live a resurrected life every day.

ⁱ Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:8