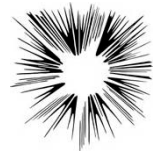




Grace Snap Shot

"Viewing life through the lens of God's grace!"



Garden Digging

Written by Art Henkel

It was a hot day and I was sweating up a storm as I was digging the sod in a portion of my backyard. My plans were to plant a beautiful vegetable garden. Once the ground is prepared, I'd be ready for the next step.

Earlier that week I had sat down and drawn out what my garden would look like. I had taken time to visualize where I would plant each crop. I had also dropped in at the local garden shop to pick up everything I would need to do the job right: fertilizer, tools, wooden stakes, string, and of course seeds.

As I labored in the sun I continually stopped to wipe the perspiration from my brow. At times I could feel it sting as it made its way down my forehead and into my eyes. My water supply had vanished and I could feel my strength was quickly heading south. With each shovel of sod I turned and each rock I discarded, I came to the realization that the idea of planting a garden and the reality of actually doing it were two very different things. What once was a creative idea had now become a laboring chore.

As I was digging my garden, a neighbor happened to drop by. This neighbor of mine was Jesus. He had been watching me from His living room window and couldn't help but notice my struggling effort. He didn't come over just to take a closer look at what I was doing but to actually offer me help. "How would you like a rest from your heavy labor?" he inquired.

I really didn't hear him at first, as my concentration was focused on another huge rock that I had just uncovered. "Sorry, I wasn't really listening, what did you say?" I replied as I continued my work. "I said, 'How would you like it if I took over digging for you. I've dug a few gardens myself you know.'" That was an understatement. For years, Jesus' garden had been the talk of the town. Each year his garden would be ranked number one by the local horticulture society. No one else's garden could even come close to his.

As I heard this master gardener's offer, I experienced mixed emotions. On one hand I wanted to do the work all by myself. This was my garden and I wanted the credit for planting it. Besides, what would people say if they saw Jesus helping me? Then there was the reality that my energy was sapped and I really needed a rest, and Jesus really knew his gardening.

"Well, what do you say?" Jesus said, interrupting my thoughts, "Do you want a rest?"

After a moment, I decided to take him up on his offer. "I would really appreciate your help. Thanks for offering." With that, Jesus took my shovel and began digging. He hadn't been digging for long when suddenly he stopped and turned to me. Looking straight into my eyes He said, "Would you please let go? Take your hands off the shovel. I don't need your help. Sit down and rest!"