

I'm an avid gardener. Okay, maybe not avid because honestly I'm not even sure what that would entail. But, I do love gardening, and, for the most part, I am pretty proficient at it. I think I love every single part of gardening, except maybe the bugs...but, that is the favorite part for some of my kids. From turning the soil to planting the seeds, to watering and pulling the weeds; gardening is wonderfully satisfying. But there is nothing more satisfying to me in the garden than smelling the sweet scent of the ripened fruits at harvest. What a life-cycle. What a God-cycle.

Tomatoes especially are my favorite things to grow. This, probably, has something to do with how much I like the taste of the fruits and also how versatile they are in my kitchen. It also has something to do with the fact that my family loves to make salsa. Our sun ripened tomatoes and fresh grown peppers make a crisp, fresh, right-from-the-garden salsa that has a reputation. The fruits of our plants are tell-tale of the time, energy, and love that we pour into that silly patch of dirt. But, that's not what we are here to discuss. In fact, "the fruits" is a whole other topic. Today, while in the tomato section of the garden, the Lord showed me something. And that something is what I want to share with you. My focus is the plant itself.



Is the tomato plant a vine or a bush? Honestly, I don't care. There are many, many varieties of tomatoes. And, in my garden the plants can grow pretty much the way they desire as long as each produces fruit and that fruit then ripens in the sun. The sun is the only thing that will bring the fruit to that extreme taste of palatable pleasure...which is, of course, our goal. At that point, it can call itself whatever it likes. Some plant varieties grow slow and some much more quickly. Some bloom more and some less. And some produce larger fruit than others. But, the percentage of fruit that each plant bears to ripened harvest is completely dependent on how well the branches grow.

The best way to support a branch is to bind it for a short while. The branch, fed by the roots, continues to grow and becomes stronger. And although the branch is stuck in that position for a time, it is still healthy. However, when a branch is secured in that position for too long, the branch grows in a most peculiar way. When it increases in length, but cannot move beyond the string or other means that has supported it, a loop of stem begins to form and grow behind the string that offers it temporary security. As this loop increases in size, the stem becomes deformed. It seems to be in constant struggle with both the source that binds it and the source that feeds it; twisting and turning and pulling against its own growth. If the gardener does not clip the string, releasing the branch, then inevitably the branch will collapse on its own weight. Bending and crimping, the life will be stifled from its fruit. The fruit will dry up, rot, and then perish completely. The branch stops producing blooms and often will wither and die itself...leaving a tangled mess of dead, brittle stems and leaves for the plant and the gardener to deal with.

In our spiritual lives, how are we bound? Have we needed the support of some means, but are now ready to be released...but are too afraid? Or, are we still bound by one thread that is causing us to loop around in twisted frustration? At what point in this thwarted and un-natural growth will we, will you, allow the Gardener to clip the strings that are holding you back? Are you hanging onto the string that once supported you, but now just deforms you? Are you beginning to feel the lack of spiritual nutrition? Are your blooms withering? Is your fruit dehydrating? Or, has your branch just snapped from your own weight and your struggle with the string?

This spring, is it time to ask the Gardener to clip some strings? This Gardener cannot only free your branches and nurture your growth; He can straighten the deformed, heal the broken, and restore all that is withered. He will stretch you out and wrap your crimped wounds and support you as you mend. And, when your blooms turn to succulent fruit that ripen in His light, He will inhale their fragrant aroma with a deep breath...and smile.

Women's Ministry

April Issue

Easter

2014

First Church of the Nazarene

This season of our year reminds me that our Lord ascended and went back to his primal glory but He does not go back simply as the Son of God, He goes back as Son of Man **AND** Son of God. There is now freedom for us to go

straight to the throne of God. As Son of Man Jesus deliberately limited omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience in Himself. Now they are His in absolute full power. As Son of Man Jesus Christ has all Power at the throne of God. We are children of the King and we now can approach the throne with boldness. We are so blessed to be joint heirs with all that Jesus has provided. He is so good to us. He is our King of Kings and Lord of Lords and I am so thankful to be His child alongside you.

Vickie





April 23rd

Wichita Country Club 8501 E. 13th 11:30 – 1:15 pm,
East Wichita Christian Women's Connection
There will be a special Feature, a special Speaker, and special Music
For reservations: Call Ladean 682-1495. The cost is \$14.00 which includes
your meal.

ANNOUNCEMENT

There will be no monthly Women's Outing for April. Easter is such a busy time that we have chosen to leave it open for each woman to celebrate it however she chooses. We will begin again in June. More details will follow.

BEWARE!!! FUN TIMES ARE AHEAD !!!



Some Interesting Facts About Easter

A decorative graphic for the title. It features a central wooden cross with a white dove perched on top. Below the cross, the word "Easter" is written in large, colorful, 3D-style letters. The letters are in shades of purple, orange, yellow, and pink. There are also small white flowers and a blue flower with a yellow center scattered around the letters.

In the Czech Republic and [Slovakia](#), a tradition of spanking or whipping is carried out on [Easter Monday](#). In the morning, men spank women with a special handmade whip called a ***pomlázka*** (in Czech) or ***korbáč*** (in Slovak), or, in eastern [Moravia](#) and Slovakia, throw cold water on them. The pomlázka/korbáč consists of eight, twelve or even twenty-four withies (willow rods), is usually from half a meter to two meters long and decorated with coloured ribbons at the end. The spanking is not painful or intended to cause suffering. A legend says that women should be spanked with a whip in order to keep their health and beauty during the whole next year.

An additional purpose can be for men to exhibit their attraction To women; unvisited women can even feel offended. Traditionally, the spanked woman gives a coloured [egg](#) and sometimes a small amount of money to the man as a sign of her thanks. In some regions, the women can get revenge in the afternoon or the following day when they can pour a bucket of cold water on any man. The habit slightly varies across Slovakia and the Czech Republic. A similar tradition existed in Poland (where it is called [Dyngus Day](#)), but it is now little more than an all-day water fight.