

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community!

Simon says

Do you remember the childhood game “Simon says?” The person in charge gives orders to the players who follow only if the order is preceded by the words “Simon says.” Who is this Simon character any way? And who put him in charge?

This week we will talk about our very human tendency to be people pleasers. Let’s face the facts. We each want to be loved and we will do hand stands to get it. From our very beginning we are trained, quite unintentionally, to presume that love is conditional and this training continues as we learn how to get along in the world. We come to believe that love is a reaction to an action that we un-

dertake. If we clean our room, momma loves me. If I don’t clean my room, I hear something that doesn’t sound like “I love you.”



Ever bring home a bad report card? How is the reaction you received different than the reaction you received, or wished you received, to a good report card?

This is not to say that we don’t rebel and contrary to

what many teenagers might hear we seldom jump off a cliff just because our friends jump first. We are more complex than that. Most of us learn very early to calculate the risk and reward of our actions. Peter was the only disciple to jump out of the boat to find out if he could walk on water. There’s a Peter in every boat but the world is not full of Peters. Nevertheless, deep inside our many layers is our “people pleaser” button — our “Simon says” button. And it gets pushed by numerous people in numerous ways often without our permission nor our knowledge.

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it points to something that we want, but we are much less eager if the sign suggests some-



thing we would rather not do or give up. Yet, faith is oftentimes a willingness to believe that circumstantial evidence is sufficient. But how do we know when circumstantial evidence is sufficient?

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Volume 18 Issue 21
October 21, 2018

Special points of interest:

Asbury Café is Open!

Asbury Café is opened for lunch on Fridays from 10:00am-2:00pm outside the Worship Center on the main floor.



These selections will also be available on Sunday mornings before and after worship.



Open Doors

According to Wikipedia “circumstantial evidence” is evidence that relies mostly on an inference for the evidence to be connected to a conclusion of fact. An example is a person’s fingerprint at the scene of a crime. While the fingerprint strongly suggests that the person touched the place where the fingerprint was found it does

not directly prove that they were the perpetrator of the crime. “Objection, your honor, my client’s fingerprint is circumstantial” the defense attorney shouts out after the prosecutor tells the jury that the fingerprint *proves* guilt.

When it comes to divine “sign language” we may be eager to accept circumstantial evidence of God’s will when

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Open Doors ...cont. from Page 1

Consistency with scripture is both the starting and ending point. And it is much easier to choose between right and wrong than it is to choose between two choices that are both consistent with scripture. It can be even harder when the evidence for each option is supported by different scripture. Mark Batterson, in his book *Whisper*, reminds us that “we don’t interpret Scripture via signs; we interpret signs via Scripture.” Well, this is mostly the case although I suspect that God often uses signs to help us correct a prior erroneous interpretation of scripture passed down from prior generations.

In our previous message, Signs and signals, we focused on direct evidence. Gideon used a wool cloth to further verify that he had properly discerned God’s will and instructions. The stakes were high and the choice of Gideon to lead the revolt seemed too “out of the box” at least for Gideon. And God responded to Gideon’s request for direct evidence. When the stakes are high, clarity is important. But attitude is everything and Gideon clearly recognized that he was hearing from God, but he wanted to be sure he hadn’t let either his own ego or his fear interfere with his understanding. Batterson also reminds us that it is faith that helps us to take the first step before God reveals the next step.

One metaphor that is often used for circumstantial evidence are doors. When an opportunity that we are pursuing is no longer viable we may

Simon says ..cont. from

Often we are people pleasers out of what seems like necessity. Our boss tells us to clean the toilet and even if we find toilets disgusting we do it because that’s our job and we want to keep our job so we can do something for ourselves after we leave

Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to His service and pleasing to Him. This is the true worship that you should offer.
Romans 12:1 GNT

work. Perhaps a hot fudge Sunday to forget about the awful smells we had to deal with while cleaning toilets. Many of us find ourselves in careers that leave us wanting more out of life. We chose the road that we follow simply because it is easier to see the mile markers and ditches. We fol-

say that “God closed the door” to keep us from going forward. When a new opportunity arises we might say that “God has opened a door” to a better possibility. Of course, many of us will try to go through closed doors and I suspect that even more of us will avoid going through an open door, particularly when we are not so sure what is on the other side. Again, it can take a lot of faith to take that first step, to pass through the open door, before God reveals what is on the other side.

The open or closed door is circumstantial because the presence of whatever forces we are describing using the door metaphor are most often unclear. Particularly, when people are involved with the opening and closing. We are rightfully suspicious as to God’s role in the situation when we suspect the motives of others who have some control over the opening and

People may try to bolt doors closed for reasons that are far from divine will and open doors for self-serving reasons.

closing. People may try to bolt doors closed for reasons

that are far from divine will and open doors for self-serving reasons. Fortunate for us, with God ultimately in control, attempts by others to thwart divine plans will often have the opposite affect than what the misled person had in mind.

As with most efforts to discern divine will it is best to include others in your discernment.

low the same road that many followed before us and we follow them to the destination that we presume is at the end. Perhaps its retirement and a chance finally to do something that we enjoy doing.

Our training to become people pleasers is further ingrained in us when we begin our formal education. In a study conducted by Head Start, they discovered that 98%of children ages three to five “scored in the genius category for divergent thinking. Five years later...this number had plummeted to only 32%...five years later again...it was down to 10%.”

According to MacKenzie every school he visited was participating in the suppression of creative genius by training kids away

While spiritual maturity is highly subjective we generally have a good idea of which persons are more likely to be helpful by their fruit. Spiritually mature persons bring love and a sense of peace into a situation rather than judgment and anxiety. We may be anxious enough when decisions are life changing. What we need most is non-anxious, clarity.

God spoke through the Book of Revelation to followers dealing with choosing a door opened by divine will. *I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut* (Revelation 3:8a). We are reminded first that God already knows us. The real truth and not just what we tell others and we tell ourselves. Scholars seem to agree that the faith community identified in this revelation is in the ancient city of Philadelphia, which was located in modern-day Turkey. The city was named by a former king who “loved his brother” and named this city in his honor.

I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Revelation 3:8 GNT

But what was the “open door” in this case? This church was under attack by traditionalists who believed in the God of Abraham but

refused to recognize Jesus Christ as Lord. But the people, as confirmed by scripture, remained faithful even in the face of struggle. Perhaps the door was an affirmation that while their current struggles created doubt about their future God was not done with them and a door that God had opened, people could not close.

God did not deny their struggle. This verse goes on to say *I know that you have little strength* (Revelation 3:8b). But God was also aware of their faithfulness.

(Revelation 3:8c). The text goes on to remind the people of the church that Christ will someday return and therefore they can continue their worship in the confidence that God is ultimately in charge.

Does this bring comfort to you? For those who have faithfully held onto visions of a transformed church and community, this text may be words of comfort and assurance. Knowing that God has opened a door for the faithful than cannot be closed should be sufficient. The details will follow. Page 3

Open Doors ...cont. from page 2

For others, it may be a warning—a reminder—a call to repentance. It is not too late. God has a plan for us and its a plan for our wellbeing...but first what are the doors that have opened that you are not sure you want to walk through?

Doors open and close as one way that God reveals divine will. Quite often doors close so that we can avoid a train wreck that awaits us if we continue headed the way that we are going. But we may not realize what God has done for us until we see another door opened. Join us each Sunday and be a part of God’s vision to transform our community.

Pastor Tommy

Simon says ... cont. from page 2

from their natural-born foolishness. Instead of their genius being celebrated and validated, it was criticized and inoculated.

The voice of world values and expectations became the loudest voice in the room. We train our children to be conformist. To think like us. What happens when the way we think is “of the world” rather than kingdom thinking?

Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.
Romans 12:2 GNT

Mark Batterson, in his book titled *Whisper*, argues that “desire” is one of God’s love languages that helps us to better discern divine will. God’s promise in scripture is that if we are faithfully obedient we will be given the “desires” of our hearts (Psalm 37:4). Batterson writes that “what makes it difficult is that we’re more in touch with others’ expectations than our own desires.” This means that we are more in touch with what the world expects of us than what God expects from us despite God creating us with a burning desire to be who God created us to be.

The result is, according to Batterson, is that “We worry way too much about what people think, which is evidence that we don’t worry enough about what God thinks. It’s the fear of people that keeps us from hearing and heeding the voice of God. We let the expectations of others override the desires God has put in our hearts.”

In our last series, *Do you hear what I hear?*, we talked about Psalm 37 and the importance of seeking God who loves us unconditionally, rather than succumb to conditional love. Our theme focused more on our fears than our desires. This week I want to turn our attention to our desires and the role that they play in hearing the voice of God.

Following God’s plan is the only certain way to avoid a train wreck. But if your life is already your own customized version of a train wreck its not too late. God accepts us as a living sacrifice in whatever condition we are. We do not have to change to be loved by God. We don’t have to prepare ourselves, clean up our act or even find “church” clothes before God accepts us. We simply surrender offering whatever or whoever we are right now to God. And God will transform you into the person God intended you to be. This is true worship.

Pastor Tommy



HALLOW HARVEST

JOIN US FOR MUSIC, FOOD, GAMES AND A HALLOWEEN PHOTO BOOTH

OCTOBER 26, 2018
6:00PM-7:30PM
ASBURY UMC
1653 DAVISON RD

FEATURING:





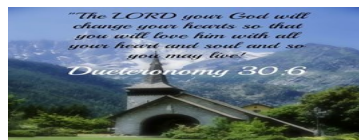
Happy Halloween

In Our Prayers

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Curtis Young | Shirley Craig |
| Rachel Bastine | Christopher Lewis |
| Norma Buzzard | Sarah Tanner |
| Virginia Bigger | Elizabeth Wright |
| Barbara McIvor | Judy Tanner |
| Jonathon Misner | Mary Lyons |
| Nancy Auger | Brenda |
| Austin & Mary Suffle | |

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Sharon George | Mary Nations |
| Elaine Lamoreaux | Carmen Misner |
| Mary Russell | |



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Asbury Worship Series Train Wreck Third of Three Series

As we come to the end of the 2nd series in our trilogy where we focused on listening and discernment, we move into practical illustrations from scripture of real people either avoiding disaster or recovering from disaster by being obedient. Our 3rd series has a subtitle: *Recovery and*

avoidance. And yet another subtitle: *Overcoming temptation through obedience.*

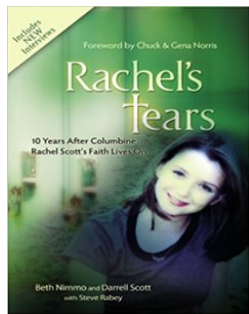
Most of us have felt like we were in a train wreck at some point or another. How do we recover from such a catastrophe? Even better, how can we avoid another train wreck? This series brings our journey into the heart of God's plan for us: Obedience.

Book Club News

NOTE - WE ARE NOW MEETING ON WEDNESDAYS AT 12 NOON.

Has any one ever invited you to watch a movie or read a book with the qualifier "Are you ready for a good cry?" For some of us, this "sweetens" the invitation and the answer is nearly always YES. For some, this qualifier is a disqualifier. Why set myself up to cry on purpose? Then there is the middle ground — the majority. We may dip our toes in emotionally but hold out as long as possible. "There's no crying in baseball!" is a line that comes to mind for me. That's a lie. I've coached hundreds of children in baseball and tears are a part of the game. And a part of life.

As we put our last book selection behind us we turn from analysis to real life. While our last book was non-fiction and full of reporting on life it was mostly at a societal level as we analyzed the



state of our democracy, or lack thereof, from a safe distance. Our next book invites us into the story — into the lives of a family devastated by our inability as a people to provide safety for our children. Not because we aren't trying hard. But perhaps our lack of democracy plays a bigger role than we may care to recognize.

In our study just finished, authors Frances Moore Lappe and Adam Eichen argue that "Democracy is not a choice. Creating democracies truly accountable to their citizens is essential to our very survival—to the flourishing of societies supporting human life, and now, because of climate change, to the survival of the Earth..." The burning question is "What is the world that we want to create together?"

Certainly, our children are at the center of our hopes. As school shootings continue at an increasing rate while politicians huddle in back rooms to find new ways to protect the interest of gun manufacturers and political contributions our youth are rising up and calling them to come out and look into the faces of children who are both afraid and tired of adults unwilling to take action. Our children are using their voices and their votes for change, even as some states try to create new obstacles that discourage them from voting.

Our next book takes us also into the heart of a teenager. A student at Columbine High School who once wrote in her personal journal, "I am not going



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to apologize for speaking the name of Jesus... If I have to sacrifice everything... I will." While I am not one who readily takes on a book that promises to turn on the tears I was hooked as soon as I began reading. And the tears...well have some tissues close by. Amazon's website describes our next book, *Rachael's Tears*, as follows:

The Columbine tragedy in April 1999 pierced the heart of our country. We later learned that the teenage killers specifically targeted Rachel Scott and mocked her Christian faith on their chilling, homemade videotapes. Rachel Scott died for her faith. Now her parents talk about Rachel's life and how they have found meaning in their daughter's martyrdom in the aftermath of the school shooting.

Rachel's Tears comes from a heartfelt need to celebrate this young girl's life, to work through the grief and the questions of a nation, and to comfort those who have been touched by violence in our schools today. Using excerpts and drawings from Rachel's own journals, her parents offer a spiritual perspective on the Columbine tragedy and provide a vision of hope for preventing youth violence across the nation.



We encourage you to come to our Wednesday gatherings. Our small group hopes to widen our circle and so we hope that you will join in on our discussion. We meet each Wednesday at Noon. Come join us for a light lunch, fellowship and discussion. Our food selections have been fantastic and we always have plenty to share. And we are always on the lookout for our next book, video lesson or topic. Your participation and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

* Nimmo, Beth, and Darrell Scott. *Rachel's Tears: The Spiritual Journey of Columbine Martyr Rachel Scott*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000, 2008.

Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team Tony, Mirium,
Ushers Anthony, Jim
Production Team Mark
Children Mirium & Emily
Worship Leaders Cyndi
Café Christine & Norma

Jim Craig Leadership Chair
Connie Portillo Office Secretary
Kevin Croom Farm to Table
Israel Unger Business Operations

Asbury Café

Plan to meet outside the sanctuary each Sunday before worship for coffee, tea, snacks, conversation and so on. The music will start when it is time to wrap up and head in for worship.

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel Pastor
Mark Vorenkamp Children & Youth
Sylvia Pittman Worship Arts

Asbury Worship Series ..Train Wreck *continued from page 4*

Trains were not around during the times of the Old Testament prophets but shorts were. So our theme verse uses a pair of shorts as a metaphor for a train wreck — which is in turn our metaphor for a really bad situation that we all would rather avoid. In Jeremiah 13:11 God reveals to the prophet the divine goal: *“Just as shorts fit tightly around the waist, so I intended all the people of Israel and Judah to hold tightly to me. I did this so that they would be my people*

and would bring praise and honor to my name.”

But, the people ignored God’s plan for intimacy and obedience, giving into temptations in the same way that the first couple did in Genesis. God’s message to Jeremiah is to the point: *“But they would not obey me.”* God’s threat that follows from this declaration in Jeremiah sounds a bit harsh. But, God is not happy with the people of Judah because they are chasing after other gods. Sound familiar?

A quick word about what is meant by “other gods” so there is no confusion. In the first of the Ten Commandments God spells out a divine insistence on where our focus belongs. On God and God alone. Worship of any other god is forbidden and a train wreck waiting to happen. What are other gods? The most obvious is money, but other gods include cars, other persons, drugs & alcohol, getting our own way, control, power, and more.

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Coming up this week

- Oct 22 Mon**
- Oct 23 Tues** 10am-2pm Water Distribution
- Oct 24 Wed** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
6:00PM Beginners Bible Study
- Oct 25 Thu** 10am-2pm Water Distribution
- Oct 26 Fri** 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open
- Oct 27 Sat**
- Oct 28 SUNDAY**
9:30am Café Opens
10:30am New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

**Last Week for Worship
Attendance 27 Offering \$ 433**

Look for announcements scrolling on the our screen prior to the start of worship.

Email announcements by the Friday before to:
FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com

Our Asbury church directory has been printed. If you would like one, please leave me a note in my mailbox or leave me a message and I will make sure you get one.

Connie

**** New Asbury UMC Coffee Cups**



are available by bringing a friend or neighbor to Sunday Worship with you! Just fill out a Connect Card so we can get to know them too, turn it in to the Café ladies and you and your guest will be given one of these coffee cups.

Ways to Connect

Donate –You can give online at FlintAsbury.org/donate

Music Ministry –We are looking for vocalists and musicians.

Community Gardening – The Asbury Farm needs volunteers.

Pantry - We need food items, including meats, paper products; personal items diapers, and financial support.

Social Media allows us to tell others about the work that God is doing. All of us can

help enhance our presence in the social media by posting on our Facebook and utilizing our website for blogging.

Housing - the Asbury House offers local college students a way to use their gifts and passions together with their faith in building a better neighborhood.

Women’s Circles - The women of Asbury meet regularly in small groups.

Pastor’s Book Club meets each Tuesday at 12Noon for fellowship, food and learning.

POETRY

By Tommy McDaniel

LIKE A FATHER DOES FOR HIS SON

As I began to make a list
Of all that I did wrong
I started with the smaller sins
The list grew painfully long.

Slow at first the words came
But speed followed soon
And as the list grew longer
The tears began to form.

A man sins so many times
Though he knows what not to do
He cannot face a list of all
He hides his list from view.

But when he comes to judgment
And his list is being read
Will he join the Saints and Angels
Or be sentenced with the dead?

Will his list be read by judges
And will his acts be praised or cursed
Beginning with the little lies
And ending with the worst?

I dreaded with sincerity
The day I faced my God
To account for all the sins I did
Searching for hope before I fall.

At some point in my writing
before my list was done
a hand touched my shoulder
like a father touches His son.

It was not a touch of anger
for the touch I barely knew
like feathers brushing against me
and the softness of a dove.

He stopped my hand from writing
so that I could see His face
and the burden that I carried
was lifted on that day.

The Angels sang a chorus
all heaven heard their sound
that a sinner had been saved
and salvation had been found.

Some days I turn to look
for a touch I surely felt
like a father touches His son
to tell him of his love.

My list was growing longer
and the sins were piling on
but my Lord has stopped my writing
like a father does for His son.

Life Group Questions & Notes

I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Revelation 3:8 GNT

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

1. What doors have closed for you in the past? What other doors opened for you? Can you see where God saved you from a train wreck?
2. Is there a door that is opened before you that you are wondering if it God's way of offering a new direction? How can others help you with your discernment?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week?

Welcome to the Asbury Community

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Flint, MI 48506



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FLINT, MICHIGAN
PERMIT #151

Phone: 810-235-0016
Fax: 810-235-0016 (call first when faxing)
E-mail: FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com

Neighborhood Connection



We envision a community in love with God, each other, and our neighbors evidenced by the transformation of ourselves and our neighborhood. We are a center for worship & spiritual growth, a center for connections and a center for health & wellness.

Our goal is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions for the common good, where children grow into citizens who contribute to building and maintaining a vibrant neighborhood, and all residents are able to enjoy safety, good health, a culture that fosters life long learning and satisfying lives.

We believe that such an ambitious goal can never be attained without God's grace and abundance and Christ calls each of us to be disciples willing to share our witness through words and acts.

Asbury Worship Series ..Train Wreck *cont.. from page 5*

In other words, anything that gets in our way of obedience to God.

We can quickly become so busy chasing after other gods we have little time to hear the voice of the One True God. And God tries to warn us we are either too busy to listen or unwilling to be obedient. God will warn us against doing what we are choosing to do if we are headed for a train wreck. Scripture is full of stories that illustrate the consequences. We are like a pair of underwear that gets hidden in a rock. They soon wear out and no longer fit our body. They are ruined. They are a "train wreck."

Like the pair of linen shorts that God told Jeremiah to put in the rocks, should we pursue other gods long enough, we are ruined. Our life becomes a train wreck.

Many of us come to realize that we are like the prophet Isaiah as he came face to face with God's call on his life: "There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among people whose every word is sinful"

(Isaiah 6:5 GNT).

The prophet encounters God and realizes that he had not obeyed God and lived among people who likewise did not obey God. This is all of us. This leads to a train wreck sooner or later.

Discernment involves a community open to the possibility that God is speaking through actions and decisions all around us. For example, why did our weekly book club small group study a book about democracy? Clearly, our situation in Washington has reached an all-time low, but some question whether the church should take a position on politics? When Jesus said to give to Caesar (government) that which they claim and give to God what God claims was He making a politically neutral statement? Or is Jesus calling it like it is?

Here is a possible discernment: What if God is calling Asbury to become more active in making a political statement of inclusion and democratic process? After all the work that we are doing in our community cannot be done in a vacuum. The City's Master Plan affects our community and the

people we serve. Decisions about land usage, whether we can combine lots, drill wells, eliminate streets and use buildings are all a part of God's plan for good.

Just as shorts fit tightly around the waist, so I intended all the people of Israel and Judah to hold tightly to me. I did this so that they would be my people and would bring praise and honor to my name; but they would not obey me.

Jeremiah 13:11 GNT

God has a plan for Asbury that includes all of us in one way or another. God has a plan for every person and it is a plan for our own good. But unless we are obedient to God's plan we cannot benefit from God's divine favor.

Whether you are recovering from a train wreck or hoping to avoid one, join us each Sunday for a practical message that can help you face your challenges. Pastor Tommy