

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Treading Water (Do fish know they're wet?)

Does a fish, living in a fish bowl, realize that there is a world just outside where creatures take in oxygen straight from the air? A place, inhospitable to a creature with gills, custom made to extract oxygen from water? The fish knows only the water around it and may seek hiding from the tap-tap-tap of the knuckle on the side of their gated neighborhood. Sides that act like walls, keeping the water from spilling out, offering protection of the fish's habitat. Yet restricting the fish's movement and experiences.



We too, swim in a fish-bowl. We too, know the hiding places in our homes and neighborhoods. And, like the fish, we really don't notice that we are wet. Until someone taps on the sides of our world, exposing the existence of the unknown just outside our hood. We can choose to hide. But even hiding places get exposed when someone or

something breaks the sides of our bowl. And we spill out onto the floor. Gasping for air in an inhospitable environment.

We are sculpted by our environment. We don't know that we are wet.

Michigan winters aren't what they used to be. Long before now, we expect our ground to be frozen solid enough to hold the weight of a pickup truck. But just last week, I noticed how the ground gave way to my truck's weight and deep threads of

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Volume 20 Issue 8

March 8, 2020

Special points of interest:

*** Worship Design will meet on Monday, March 9th and the 23rd at 6pm in the Asbury Library.

*** Leadership Team will meet on Monday, March 16th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.

Camping (The Tent of the Lord's presence)

Have you ever gone camping? It's been a long time for me. I suspect that the thrill of sleeping on the ground under the protection of fabric, no matter how waterproof, starts to dwindle after a certain age. Camping is a tame way for us to have an adventure, among other benefits.

I remember going on camping trips as a Boy

Scout. I had a lot of fun. And my experiences helped shape the way I view camping.



But have you considered that persons without a home

built from more permanent materials might not find camping to be so much a thrill as a necessity? Living in a tent can be a vacation, or it can be a necessity, depending on your circumstances.

We read about a large group people living in tents for years in the Bible. We find these stories in the Book

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Camping (The Tent of the Lord's Presence) ...cont from page 1

of Exodus. This book follows Genesis, which begins with the story of creation. Exodus is a story about people escaping slavery with the help of the very God who did the creating in Genesis. The cries of despair coming from an oppressed people was too much for God to ignore.

Moses was one of them, but he had escaped oppression by being adopted into a family that was part of the privileged class of people. Those responsible for the oppression. Moses was an outsider to both groups. Yet God chose Moses, who believed along with a lot of other people, that he was unqualified. Nevertheless, Moses gives in to God's argument, and the whole bunch ends up living in tents in the wilderness. Starting over from scratch. Led by Moses, who was led by a distant God.

Realizing that the people needed God to be more available, the people are instructed to build a meeting tent. A place for God to dwell among God's people. The Good News Translation calls it the "Tent of the Lord's Presence." A thin place where heaven and earth hangout together. While the tent may be in a rather challenging neighborhood, the inside of

the tent was nothing like the hood. It is nothing like any other place on earth.

Except, it is like all other places.

God speaking through Moses gave specific instructions for decorations. For example, in Exodus 26:1, 31, and 36, we read a description of a woven fabric — *fine linen woven with blue, purple, and red wool*. We find this description again in Exodus 27:16. Why fine linen from a blend of cool and warm colors? Why wool?

Scripture contains precise instructions. The various pieces of woven fine linen in three colors is for the inside walls, a curtain, and each of the double-entrances. An otherwise stark, tent is made, more colorful, more diverse.

Isn't it fascinating that God chose a temporary place, a tent, to hang out with these folks? By using a tent, they could take it wherever they wandered. And they wandered a lot during that time. In search of a promise, God made to them. A promise much like the promise made to their ancestor, Abraham. But anyone who has packed and unpacked yards of woven fabric knows that there are wear and tear. Some threads start to unravel.

Later, the Israelites moved from a tent to a Temple during the time of King Solomon. An era of prosperity, power, and extravagance. The leaders "rewarded" God by using some of their treasures to adorn the temple. People are still doing this. Rewarding God's generosity by decorating a place for the Lord's presence. Keeping God content with hanging out in a divine meeting space, away from the activities that resulted in accumulating the extravagance.

The problem is that like the original tent, the temples, and thousands of divine meeting places built ever since, we confuse what God wants with our own desires. And these desires come out of our own sculpted-ness. Long after the Temple in Jerusalem was built, Jesus stood on those very stones. Jesus looked at the beautiful structure and declared, "I tell you this: not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one of them will be thrown down" (Matthew 24:2).

No matter how durable the material we choose to contain God, all attempts to contain God are eventually futile. The fabric begins to unravel. And God hangs out wherever God chooses to hang out.

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Treading Water (Do fish know they're wet?)....cont. from page 1

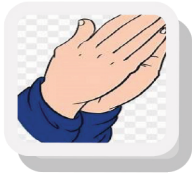
the tires, leaving tracks. The clay ridges will harden leaving a sculpted reminder of the truck's presence.

While sculpted fits the clay ridges better than the water in a fish bowl, both the ground and the fish are sculpted. The fish is sculpted by the water that is its home. Both are left with the imprints of its circumstances. And so are we.

But let's not get too far ahead. For now, settle back into the comfort of who you are. Take a selfie. Look deeply into the person that appears in the photo. What color are your eyes? Your hair? What color is your skin tone? Do you have wrinkles, or freckles, or scars? Like the stillness of the self-photograph, the person you see is sculpted. Let's focus on how you became you, for now.

Over the next few weeks, we are taking a trip together. But we aren't the only ones. This is a trip that we all take to one extent or another. Along the way, we will reference the stories of three men. Jesus of Nazareth, Joel McKerrow, and Matthew Vines, made this trip at different times, leaving from different places. But their stories offer insights into our own trip.

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In our Prayers

Curtis Young	Miriam Watson
Rachel Bastine	Shirley Craig
Norma Buzzard	Christopher Lewis
Mary Lyons	Sarah Tanner
Barbara McIvor	Elizabeth Wright
Austin & Mary Suffle	Judy Tanner

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Elaine Lamoreaux
Mary Nations

Coming up this week

Mar 9	Mon	5:00pm	Youth Choir
		6:00pm	Worship Design
		7:00pm	Flint Jubilee
Mar 10	Tues	10am-2pm	Water Distribution
		6:00pm	Community Gospel Choir
		7:00pm	Kearsley Park Neighborhood Assoc
Mar 11	Wed	12Noon	Pastor Book Club
		2-3:00pm	Fitness Class
		6:00pm	Beginners Bible Study
		6-8:00pm	Rec Nite
Mar 12	Thu	6:00pm	Worship Band Practice
Mar 13	Fri	11am-2pm	Asbury Cafe Open
Mar 14	Sat	10am-12N	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
Mar 15	Sun	8am-10am	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
		9:30am	Café Open
		10:30am	New Beginnings
			Contemporary Worship



DANCE CLASS

(PART OF THE DANIEL FITNESS PLAN)
 JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11TH
 FROM 1:30-2:30PM
 IN THE ASBURY FELLOWSHIP HALL
 EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN IN!!

Asbury Worship Series Woven (Coming March 1)

The Season of Lent, which begins February 26, is seven weeks long. Including the partial week that starts on a Wednesday, we count forty days until Easter. That is when we don't count Sundays.

Book Club News

We chose to recast the Daniel Plan as a set of tools within a larger framework that we are calling *Life raft*. When I tell people about the Daniel Plan their mind jumps straight to dieting. Worse, they imagine a diet of vegetables, or worse, they imagine a vegan diet. And this is usually enough to turn off their listening.

We each hear through filters that come out of who we are at the time. This sculpting comes from our family, our ancestors, our community and society. And we are also shaped by whatever religious beliefs we adopt from those around us.

Our next subject for book club also comes with loads of context. When we hear the word "homosexual" our responses are conditioned by our sculpting. For the next few weeks, we will explore the sculpting, unraveling, and re-weaving of a family living in Wichita, Kansas.

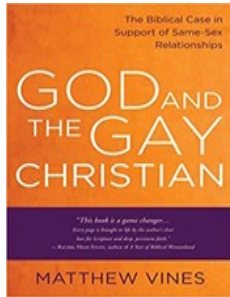
Matthew Vines learned the Bible from his parents and from the church that shaped his view of God. His views of sexual identity and sexual orientation were shaped by how he learned to interpret words translated from ancient texts. Matthew never questioned what he

These forty days are symbolic of the time that Jesus spent in the wilderness following His baptism. We believe that this time is steeped in Holy mystery. But our traditions can reduce the Holy Mystery that we claim for it when viewed by those just outside the fence that separates traditional believers from everyone else.

We design worship at Asbury, based on what little we know about the people that God plans to send to worship with us. This goal leads us to

knew to be as divine truth. That is, until he decided to tell his family that he is gay.

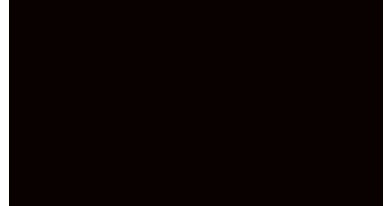
Matthew shares that he later learned that his father would describe the day that Matthew came out of the closet as the "worst day of his life." This news broke during the year after his dad's sister died. And this was his worst day?



Matthew was like a lot of young adults. He had a lot of the same hopes of other people his age. Matthew wanted to be loved for who he is. He imagined that someday he would meet someone to share his life with, and raise children. But when Matthew realized he was gay, his hopes were called into question.

The Bible, that Matthew knew condemned gay relationships. His dad's worse day became a starting point for both of them to first come unraveled as the indisputable truths they both knew shattered.

set aside our customary language. Instead of "Lent," we choose Easter preparations or some other phrase using more familiar words. Words that are more secular because they have multiple meanings in everyday use.



Wall Street, Seung Hoon Park Susan Spiritus Gallery 2

Matthew chose to devote years of intensive research into what the Bible says about homosexuality. And in his book, *God and the Gay Christian*, he takes explores answers to these and other questions:

- Do biblical teachings on the marriage covenant preclude same-sex marriage or not?
- How should we apply the teachings of Jesus to the gay debate?
- Can celibacy be a calling when it is mandated, not chosen?
- What did Paul have in mind when he warned against same-sex relations?

No doubt, this book, when it was released, sparked heated debate. Fortunately, this book also initiated sincere soul search-ing, and changes in attitude towards what it means to be a faithful, gay Christian.

We plan to finish our current book that describes the Daniel Plan in detail next week. In a couple of weeks we begin another book study.

I encourage you to come to our Wednesday gatherings. Our small group is a diverse group and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion. We meet each Wednesday at Noon. There are still books available. While we appreciate donations to help with the cost of purchasing books, your participation is what matters the most. Please accept a copy of this book as a gift.

You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — FlintAsbury.org. Come join us for a light lunch, fellowship and discussion. Our food selections have been fantastic and we always have plenty to share.

Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team	Tony, Mirium
Ushers	Anthony, Jim
Production Team	Jonathon, Terrance
Children	Patrice & Mirium
Worship Leaders	Cyndi
Café	Christine & Norma

Jim Craig	Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Dir. Operations
Blair Neifert	Farm Manager
Matt Dee	Farm Operations
Israel Unger	Function to Funding
Kim Sims	Connections

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
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts

Woven (Coming March 1) ...Cont. from page 4

Woven, is what we call our worship series that begins on March 1. The first month that we associate with Spring. And our series concludes on Easter Sunday.

For this next series, we reference a book, titled *Woven*, as a thematic outline.¹ *Woven* is about a spiritual awakening. The writer identifies three modes, phases, stages, or otherwise, poetic labels for his spiritual journey. The invitation is for us to determine how his journey relates to our own. And to be changed. He identifies these segmentations as sculpted, unraveled, and woven.

These milestones or places can be thought of as phases. The first place is our starting point. The place where our journey begins. We start here in our series by first celebrating together in the spirit of *Mardi Gras*. Fat Tuesday. We dance to the music, only partially aware that in doing so, our bodies are moving. One of the five critical foundations prescribed by the Daniel Plan. Some of us will indulge in a *paczki*, or two. After all, it is a party.

The next day is Ash Wednesday. This year we join with our friends in Flushing as we kick off the Season of Lent with worship. We haven't left home. We are still our sculpted selves. We still live within both visible and invisible fences that keep us safely separated from the other. And in some frightening ways, separated from God.

The first day of March. The month of Spring. We begin our process of unraveling by first meeting ourselves. We meet ourselves from a distance. As though we are strangers who encounter ourselves for the first time. Who are we? Am I meeting the person I expected to meet? We begin with the community that shaped our views. How we see the world.

By March 15, we hope to transition from the safety of our fenced-in world to a place where our sculpted self crumbles. We are in the wilderness with Jesus. We see, hear, and experience ideas that seem foreign to us. We try to imagine life outside the fence. We meet our unraveled self along the path we walk.

By the first Sunday in April, our attention turns towards new possibilities. Can we imagine resurrection? The place we are headed towards becomes more visible. We find a new weave by taking the deconstructed strands of our past beliefs and discover a new way of being and doing. A place where the inside and outside come together. We meet our woven selves.

I pray that you will plan to journey with us.

Here is the plan for March and the first two Sundays in April.

***Fat Tuesday Celebration - February 25, 2020***

Sometimes we just have to be bad to remind us that being bad is not worth it. Join us for a *paczki* and music at 6 pm in the Asbury Event Center in the lower level. While your here be sure to sign up for Daniel Plan 2.0 and take home a personal journal to help guide you through the Season of Lent.

Ash Wednesday - February 26, 2020

Treat your *paczki* hang-over with a worship service to kick-off your participation in *Life raft*. We join with other communities at Flushing UMC for a worship service at 7 pm.

March 1 & 8, 2020***Sculpted******March 15, 22 & 29, 2020******Unraveled******April 5 & 12, 2020******Woven***

Pastor Tommy

¹ Joel McKerrow, *Woven - a faith for the dissatisfied*. Sydney, Australia: Acom Press, 2019.

² Seung Hoon Park, an artist from Seoul, S. Korea, is creating the most unusual images with the use of an 8×10" camera and threading the film to mimic the look of woven textiles. He uses both 8mm and 16mm films to create his work, each with a different outcome.

You are invited. You will be home in time for dinner on Easter Sunday. But if you go with us, dinner will taste different than you remember it. But stuff happens only in the present. The present is reality. The future is fiction.

The Gospel of Mathew begins by claiming that Jesus of Nazareth is a descendant of a former King, who was a descendant of Abraham. Evidence is offered by listing out members of His family tree. Why? Because the ancestry of Jesus matters. The human Jesus was sculpted by the people around Him. That Jesus was of Jewish descent shaped how He learned about the world.

The qualifier that we use after the name of Jesus also matters. Nazareth today is a city. When Jesus lived in Nazareth it was a tiny village. Every body knew each other. It was smaller even than the Eastside of Flint.

Jesus went to school in Egypt. The family of Jesus moved to Nazareth from Egypt, after Joseph received word that it was safe for them to move back to the region of Palestine. Where we live as we come of age shapes and forms us.

Matthew grew up in Wichita, Kansas. His family attended a Presbyterian Church in their home town. Matthew's parents lived out the beliefs that were shaped by the same factors that shaped Matthew. Joel grew up in Sidney, Australia. The church of Joel's youth was spent in an Anglican, mega-church. Like Matthew, Joel grew up with two parents who shared their beliefs about God with their children.

All three men were sculpted by the beliefs of the people they turned to for truth. They learned to speak the language

of the fishbowl that was their home. All three were sculpted by persons claiming to know divine truth. And all three learned that truth is very contextual for each of us.

This is the list of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, who was a descendant of Abraham.

Matthew 1:18

We walk only in the shoes covering our own feet and see the world through the eyes God gave us. We each swim in a fish bowl without realizing we are wet. Until the sides of the fishbowl are shattered.

Joel writes in his book, *Woven*, that "We are birthed not just from parents but from a long line of people. The family home is painted with their stories, layered thick on the walls, whether we can see them or not. They are a river running deep through our self-landscape."¹

We are sculpted not just by the home where we grew up, but also by society. Jesus was born in the midst of an occupied nation. Political and religious leaders, like King Herod, held authority over his family, and Roman Governors and soldiers held authority over them.

We, on the other hand are more influenced by many of the same factors that sculpted Joel and Matthew.

Companies spend roughly \$600 billion each year on advertising. Persuasive messages telling us what we need to find acceptance. In our country, each of us see over 4,000 advertisements every day. One advertising agency, Young and Rubicam, claims that "Belief in consumer brands has replaced religious faith as the thing that gives people purpose in life."

This makes consumption the chief rival to God in our culture. Joel writes that, "We worship in our shopping mall cathedrals. We listen to the sermons of advertisements. The media is the mediator of our spiritual journeys, the shaper of our theology and our worldview. It is our modern-day priest." We are, in part, shaped by society. Sculpted to fit into a particular mold.

We worship in our shopping mall cathedrals. We listen to the sermons of advertisements.

God knows how to cut through all of the advertising, all of the noise, and even be heard, at times, over the other voices in our heads. But we hear God's voice through the filters of our sculpting. Until the ridges that that mark the tracks of our sculpting are broken down by experiencing life through our interactions with people sculpted differently.

As winter slowly gives way to longer days over the next few weeks, I invite you to make this trip with me. We worship each Sunday at 10:30 am. I hope to see you there. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

If you haven't yet signed up for the Daniel Plan, be sure to do so.³ Each person living in our community who signs up receives your very own copy of *The Daniel Plan Journal*.⁴ If you are not a part of the Asbury Community, we still invite you to participate with us, but we ask that you purchase a copy on your own. These journals can be purchased on Amazon or from other vendors. You can also go to the DanielPlan.com store to buy this and other resources.

Pastor Tommy

THE **DANIEL** PLAN

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR YOUR HEALTH

YOU CAN STILL SIGN UP ...

Why the Daniel Plan is so important ...

I have never met Pastor Steve Willis. But there is something that he said that is haunting me. And I hope that it will haunt you too. Pastor Steve's call to action is powerful, timely, and the shoe surely fits our community. We were poisoned by our public water system. But we can recover. Our children can recover. But the problem, at this point, is not someone else's problem. It is our problem. We have the solution and Pastor Steve's challenge is a call to step up and do something about our health.

The fight for good nutrition was never more real to me than when I watched my kindergarten-aged son struggle with adapting to his physician-prescribed, mind-altering drugs. Lucas had been having discipline problems in school, would frequently struggle with the ability to focus on tasks at hand, and found himself well below grade level in many academic areas...This is more than a health issue; it is a social justice issue. Millions of our children are not reaching their God-given potential because we, as adults, won't take the steps necessary to get them the nutrition they need. For the church, this problem has to be seen as a moral issue. For the sake of our children and our nation's future, we have to do better.¹

I agree. We have to do better. Teachers, healthcare professionals, counselors, clergy, and others are anticipating the first part of Pastor Steve's story to be a common story. Children with higher concentrations of lead in their bodies are prone to exhibiting behaviors that are not conducive to learning, including lower cognition. The only known solution is available to us. But not in a drive-through or at a liquor store.

But how is a community that sits in the middle of one of the least healthy counties in Michigan going to be able to regroup and move forward with the necessary changes to help ourselves and our children?

First, we are going to admit that we are incapable. We are going to stop making excuses for ourselves. We are going to quit pointing to some other power, whether it is the force, the ineffective excuse, "I'm spiritual, but I don't go to church" and the hundreds of other absurd claims that I hear every year as to why I don't see people on Sunday mornings. We are going to repent — that is, we are going to change. Our lives matter. Our children's lives matter.

The Daniel Plan
Faith, Friends, Fitness, Food and Focus

I found myself making a declaration this past week that I have declared before. I wrote and said that responding to God's will for our lives is a human right. And as a human right, we need to treat this right in the same way that we protect other human rights. But it is very difficult to respond to God's purpose for us when our health is less than it needs to be. The Daniel Plan is not the solution on its own, but it is a roadmap that points to and can help us pursue the solution. But the solution begins with God. Without God's power any plan is a non-starter.

By the way, Pastor Steve's son, Lucas, soon was off the drugs and today he is an A student. This story is not a one-of-a-kind, never to be repeated miracle. It is the sort of miracle that God offers every one of us. It is the miracle of making better choices. It is the miracle of taking care of ourselves and each other.

We will begin on Sunday, December 29, by writing down a resolution for 2020. For most of us, our resolution will begin in the same way. "In 2020 I will make my health and well-being a priority by participating in the Daniel Plan." And then we will write down a goal for each of the five areas: faith, food, friends, fitness, and focus. During the first five weeks of 2020, we will learn about each of the pillars of success, possibly modify our goals, and meet regularly with others who have made this same New Year's Resolution.

Make a New Year's Resolution for 2020 to commit to The Daniel Plan.

Join us each Sunday and invite your friends and neighbors. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. *Dusty 2.0*, the musical, will be performed on Christmas Eve at 6 pm. We are praying for a big turnout, and that most of our visitors will return to participate in the Daniel Plan.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Warren, Rick. *The Daniel Plan*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan;

Life Group Questions & Notes

I tell you this: not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one of them will be thrown down.

Matthew 24:2 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Matthew 24:1-2. Jesus is responding to His disciples who seem to be enamored with the temple. But Jesus knew something that they didn't know. Are you sometimes awe struck by the structures that we build to honor God? In Exodus, God instructs the Israelites to construct a tent that was called "The Tent of the Lord's Presence." What are the benefits of a tent versus a building?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Camping*. What is your view of camping? How are your views different than how others view the idea of camping? Why do you see camping this way? What other experiences are you aware of that cause you to see the world differently than others see the world? How might these experiences affect how you interpret what you read in the Bible?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week and on-going to help you to be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God? Pray for each other to have the Holy Spirit bless you with more courage.

What if this idea of a place for the Lord to hang out, whether a tent or a stone castle, is a metaphor for you and I. Let me explain.

Last week I laid the groundwork for helping us to recognize that each of us lives in a "fishbowl" that is built

Not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one of them will be thrown down.

Matthew 24:2

during our early childhood, adolescence, and even into adulthood. And that we interpret the world through our experiences in our fishbowl. Like the fish, we don't realize that we are wet. We don't realize how much our experiences shaped our worldview.

Jesus was adopted into a long line of ancestors, dating back to Abraham, Jesus grew up in a Jewish household and community. He was educated in Egyptian schools, spent his teenage years in a small village called Nazareth, and used stories from His experiences to illustrate the points of His teachings. And we interpret the words of Jesus from a totally different context. Our fishbowl is different than the fishbowl that shaped Jesus. Our neighborhood is different than the one where the former Egyptian slaves first set up a tent for God to hang out.

Similarly, the stories of Matthew Vines and Josh McKerrow are different than our stories and the story of Jesus. They each lived in a fishbowl determined by where they lived, where they went to church, their families, their communities, and the society and culture that shaped them. Josh grew up in Sidney, Australia, while Matthew grew up in Wichita, Kansas. Joel's family attends an Anglican Church, while Matthew's family

attends a Presbyterian church. Both men had light skin and knew privilege. Jesus, on the other hand, attended a synagogue and likely had a darker skin tone.^{1 2}

Matthew and Josh write about learning absolute truths that were taught to them. And they each accepted these truths as children without question. These truths came out of how the place where their families went to hang out with God. Their church. And they were shaped by the way their families interpreted the very same Biblical text.

Putting aside whatever differences there may have been in the translations, there were universal truths in each man's upbringing. For example, neither learned the truths that are hidden by privilege. Their families interpreted scripture through the lens of a dominant culture. Jesus, as a Jew, grew up in a land occupied by foreign soldiers and leaders. Jesus grew up among oppressed people.

To interpret the world through our sculpted self is to know the things we know with little doubt. Even though we haven't given much thought to where such absolute knowledge comes from. When the world is full of unanswerable questions, it is comforting to have absolute truth to count on. So our sculpted selves become obsessed with what is truth and what is not. But our sculpted selves do not reach further than our own boundaries;

The reality is this. Our beliefs about God come from the particular biblical interpretation given by our specific Christian tradition, mixed in with the influence of culture. We believe what we believe because we have been shaped to find truth only in certain places. And this can be a tricky proposition to swallow. The idea that our claims to truth are actually shaped by our culture. It is humbling to recognize our own bias.

Our truths are the collections of claims that come out of our fishbowl of existence. Claims that we defend. McKerrow writes, "If we defend our fishbowls as absolute, they become the very thing that inhibits our further movement. They become our safety and our crutch. Our absolutes become our idols."¹

Our absolute truths become our idols? Can we really put a belief ahead of God? I asked the question two weeks ago, "What are you willing to die for?" Are we willing to die for our absolute truth? Are we instead able to admit that we could have it wrong? After all, it is not the first time that the church has confused absolute truth with fear and the desire to control.

McKerrow also writes about attitudes in his country towards immigrants. They also use labels to identify persons who find a way into their country uninvited. Labels, according to McKerrow, is "Our way of choosing not to listen to those who are not of our fishbowl." When we label a group of people, we are better able to defend what we believe to be true. While there are pragmatic and economic arguments against open borders, there is also an underlying fear that gives these argument power beyond their logic.

Our attitudes toward subjects like immigration are sculpted. They are integral parts of our fishbowl. And labeling people and ideas help us to ignore who they are outside of our label. As a nation, we recently experienced what happens to mothers and their children when people in power can declare war against a label rather than the actual people that the labels represent.

Children are ripped from their mother's arms and locked behind bars.

Welcome to the Asbury Community

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Flint, MI 48506



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CircuitRider@FlintAsbury.org

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
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PERMIT #151

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.

Camping (The Tent of the Lord's Presence) ...cont. from page 9

Mothers are imprisoned for trying to do what any good mother does — protect her children. But when labels dissolve into faces and voices and stories we have to fight harder to hold onto our beliefs. We are confronted with flesh and blood, kindred-spirits, children of the same God that we claim to follow. The same God who hangs out in whatever "Tent of the Lord's Presence" where we go.

Whatever tent that you visit where you hope to meet the God who created you, you run a risk. You run a risk that you will leave the tent knowing something that you didn't know before that may change how you see the world. In two weeks, we will move from looking at how we are sculpted to what happens in meeting places all over the world when people actually take the time to hang out with the Lord.

Our truths are the collections of claims that come out of our fish-bowl of existence.

I invite you to hang out with us in the tent of the Lord's presence that we call Asbury. We meet each Sunday at 10:30 am. I hope to see you there. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

If you haven't yet signed up for the Daniel Plan, be sure to do so.³ Each person living in our community who signs up receives your very own copy of *The Daniel Plan Journal*.⁴ If you are not a part of the Asbury Community, we still invite you to participate with us, but we ask that you purchase a copy on your own. These journals can be purchased on Amazon or from other vendors. You can also go to the DanielPlan.com store to buy this and other resources.

Pastor Tommy

¹ McKerrow, Joel. *Woven: A faith for the dissatisfied*. Sidney, Australia: Acorn Press, 2019.

² Vines, Matthew. *God and the Gay Christian*. New York: Convergent, 2014.

³ Warren, Rick, Dr. Daniel Amen, Dr. Mark Hyman. *The Daniel Plan*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.