

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Crossing Bridges (From doubt to reconciliation¹)



My memories of crossing the White River on the Oil Trough Ferry are a mixed bag of nightmares and excitement. During my early childhood, my family lived in Memphis. And we frequently traveled to visit my grandparents. This meant first crossing over the Mississippi River on a multi-lane bridge high over the water.

But near our destination,

we had another river to cross. White River is a wide, fast-moving tributary of the Mississippi that makes a 720-mile journey through the Ozark Mountains and arriving in the lower delta region of southern Arkansas. On its way, the river separates the town of Newark, where most of my family was born, from Newport, where I was delivered at a small medical clinic.

Ferry boats are more exciting than bridges. Both get us to the other side of the river. But ferry boats are more up-close and personal, and as a result, more dangerous. Hence my mixed bag of nightmares and excitement.

In the Book of Revelations, we read a vision of humanity, as we know it, finally reaching a conclusion. A conclusion that God decided on long before now. The vision includes the storm before the calm, the final judgment, and the perfect ending to a love story amid revolution. The story ends with reconciliation. God and creation find harmony. And like most great stories, there is a sequel.

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Next Steps (Heaven on Earth¹)



It was 2006. Summer was underway with longer days and temperatures. A typical summer — except that this summer would be different. A few months earlier, I signed up to be an adult volunteer to help

our youth ministry leaders with a trip to West Virginia.

That morning we left just as the sun was just starting to rise in the East. The weather was cooperating. And so were the two dozen

very sleepy teenagers piled into the two large vans we rented for the trip.

For me, this trip was several years in the making. My oldest daughter, Nicole, made four trips like this one with the youth of our church. Each of her four summers of high school featured a week in the Appalachians, where she worked alongside her friends, repairing houses.

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Volume 2 Issue 18

April 18, 2021



You must wear a mask while in the area and to enter church office. If you don't have one, let us know we will provide one for you

Thank you & Stay safe Everyone!

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Next Steps (Heaven on Earth¹) ..cont from page 1

Each time I heard a story about the joy that helping others brought to the giver, I longed to feel that same joy.

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, we find instructions left by Jesus for all who choose to follow His way of life. These instructions are often referred to as the Great Commission. This label is insider speak for answering the question now what

Now what, Jesus?" we ask. Now that we know God lived among people. Now that Jesus shared the mind and heart of God with us, what do we do now?

Now that you know that God has big plans for you. Now that you know God's plans for you are for your prosperity, for your joy, and for your need to feel loved, what do you do with this knowledge?

Go and make disciples of all the nations...teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.

Matthew 28: 19-20

Here at Asbury, we refer to the answer to this now-what question as our next step. What is the next step you are willing to take now that you know that God loves you so much?

The answer to this question often eludes even the most faithful followers of Christ. This happens for a lot of reasons. My late father

might refer to most of this well-thought-out, carefully crafted, perfectly logical reasons as excuses.

Jesus left us with two primary tasks that are to occupy us for the rest of our lives. The first is to share the good news that God loves every one of us. This one should be easy. Most of us love to talk about ourselves, our worries, our problems, and how wrong the world has treated us. So talk.

As you talk, keep in mind that each sentence that comes from your lips is accompanied by breaths of air traveling into your lungs and providing oxygen to your body. Without this simple process of breathing, you would not be able to speak.

If you can't imagine any other way in which God has blessed you, then remember that you are still breathing.

Meanwhile, every minute you're telling others about your struggle, your heart pumps blood to every part of your body. How blessed are you feeling now?

Granted that these are blessings that every living person and animal receives, so you may not feel unique enough with just these two blessings. If this describes you, then how about this — what is your superpower? We each have a superpower or two. Special abilities that we do a bit better than most others.

Don't know your superpower? Ask your friends and do the listening while they speak, and you eventually learn why they're willing to hang out with you.

Share what you learn about the ways that God blesses you. This is the story that is uniquely yours to tell. This is how the world learns about Jesus Christ — from your stories.

The second instruction Jesus gives us in this part of Matthew's Gospel is to teach others about Him. This one sounds harder to most of us? "But I'm not a teacher?" we exclaim. "Oh, but you are," Jesus rebuts our excuse.



Whenever we use our superpowers to help others, we are teaching them about Jesus Christ. While it is more effective to give Jesus credit rather than claim it for ourselves, keep on doing, and the words will soon follow.

So what does this have to do with building and being a bridge for racial reconciliation?

In Our Prayers

Kevin Croom
 Sylvia Pittman
 Shirley Craig



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Nancy Elston Elaine Lamoreaux
 Norma Buzzard Mary Nations

★ **Coming up this week** ★

Pastor Book Club will still be via Zoom until further notice—but will slowly start to meet in person, depending on how the next few weeks/months will go. Please call the Church Office for more info 810-235-0016.

Please continue to wear your masks when coming into the Asbury building and use hand sanitizer that is placed throughout the building.

Thank you and everyone stay safe!

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|--------|------|---------------------------|---|
| Apr 19 | Mon | |  |
| Apr 20 | Tues | 10am-12:30pm | |
| | | Water / Food Distribution | |
| Apr 21 | Wed | 12Noon | Pastor Book Club |
| Apr 22 | Thu | | |
| Apr 23 | Fri | | |
| Apr 24 | Sat | | |
| Apr 25 | Sun | 10:30am | New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship |

(We are live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.)

Asbury Worship Series Bridges Through April 18th



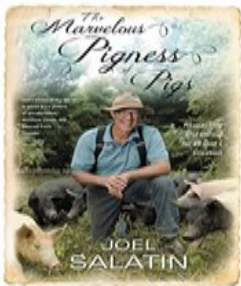
We began our trilogy, *Bridges*, on Valentine's Day with our first episode, *A love story*. Each series in our trilogy takes us on a journey towards reconciliation. In this way, our entire journey is a love story. Each episode is an opportunity to grow closer to God, each other, closer to ourselves, and closer to the planet we call home.

While we won't be where we hope to be by the end of this particular journey, we expect to be much closer to a day when we can celebrate diversity. A time when justice does not depend on skin tone. It is a destination where we respect and enjoy each other's differences—a time when we experience heaven on earth.

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Book Club News

We finished our study of *Be the Bridge* by Latasha Morrison and completed our worship series, *Bridges*.



Racial reconciliation is a work in progress that comes with a great sense of urgency for Asbury. Our community superpower is diversity. But equity takes intentional effort, as does reconciliation. My prayer is that each of us continues the work of bridge-building that God called us to do.

Our next book offers us a glimpse into reconciliation with the earth that sustains us. The creation stories in Genesis offer humanity the blessing of earth stewardship. Again, our community is blessed beyond measure. Asbury Farms is within walking distance from our main campus on Davison Road. This offers all of us insight and opportunities to experience the presence of God in new and more profound ways.

Joel Saladin is a self-proclaimed member of the Christian community that we more progressive thinkers struggle to cozy up to — the conservative Christian right. Yet Joel writes that when visitors come to his farm that he has the “uncanny ability to irritate both the conservative and the liberal.” How? Let's discover this together.

The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs challenges us to put belief into action.¹ Racial inequality, global climate change, food insecurity, and a lot of diseases are human-engineered. We too often use our ingenuity and energy in ways that harm our earth which ultimately harms you and me. The solution is to live out our faith rather than just declare our faith. Put our actions in sync with our words.

In his book Joel challenges the pursuit of increased profits by farms that confine pigs in cramped, dark pens, injecting them with antibiotics, and feeding herbicide-saturated food. According to Joel's interpretation, such practices do not respect pigs as a creation of God. By not allowing pigs to express their *pigness* as God intended, we choose profits and convenience over our claims of faithfulness to God.

In his book, we discover some overlooked ethical instructions found in scripture that should guide how we eat, shop, think about how we work together to end food insecurity. Stewardship of God's creation rather than exploitation offers proven solutions that work.

Joel's personality comes through in his writing. His warmth and humor help deliver what can be received as piercing criticism of our current food systems. I pray that you join us on this fascinating journey from seed to table.

A few of us meet in person each week. With new cases of the coronavirus raging in Michigan I encourage diligence. Most of our regular attenders are vaccinated. However, each person has an obligation to practice safety to protect others.

We each make our own arrangements for lunch at this point. We look forward to a return to pot-luck lunches, hopefully by this summer.

Suppose you prefer to avoid groups or live too far away. In that case, I encourage you to join us online for our Wednesday gatherings. Alternatively, you can call in by phone, be heard, and hear what others are saying by calling (929) 436-2866, and entering the meeting ID, 282 039 5568#.

We are a diverse group, and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion.

You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — FlintAsbury.org.

¹ Joel Salatin. *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs: Respecting and Caring for All God's Creation*. New York: FaithWords, a Division of Hachette Book Group, 2016.

Leadership in Worship & Service

Tony, Mirium	Welcome Team
Anthony, Jim	Ushers
Jonathon, Terrance	Production Team
Miriam	Children
Cyndi	Worship Leader
Christine & Norma	Cafe

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDaniel	Pastor
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig	Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Dir. Operations

Matt DePalma	Farm Manager
Kevin Croom	Farm Operations
Israel Unger	Function to Funding
Kim Sims	Connections
Karl Collyer	Production
Katelin Maylum	
South Flint Soup Kitchen/Production	

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.

Bridges (Through April 18th) ... Asbury Worship Series

Episode two focused on the freedom that comes from truth. However painful it might be to face the truth, it can set us free. While history is essential to knowing ourselves and knowing what is broken, truth transcends time. For followers of Jesus Christ, we know that God already knows the truth, and so should we.

But the threat from within also includes the church that we hold dear. The domestic terrorists that stormed the U.S. Capital did so, they claim because the violence they perpetrated was God's will. They claim a version of the truth offered to them by false prophets claiming biblical authority. But their truth contradicts the trajectory of the biblical narrative. The threat is from within.

Bridges is a series about "pursuing God's heart for racial reconciliation." But let's be clear. Race is a human construct created for the purpose of creating a social, economic, and religious hierarchy. Reconciliation begins with recognizing the raw truth that humans are fond of creating our own sense of the truth.¹

God is merciful. The stories found in scripture offer testimony that God insists on love. God demands love first and foremost towards the One True God and no others. But loving God requires that we love one another, our planet, and ourselves. So reconciliation is a process that frees us in all four directions.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We plan to be live on both Facebook and YouTube. We go live at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our website at FlintAsbury.org. And especially, I look forward to being with you, wherever you are, on Christmas Eve at 6 pm.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Latasha Morrison, *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation*. Yates & Yates and Penguin Random House, 2019.

Crossing Bridges (From doubt to reconciliation¹)... *cont. from pg 1*

Reconciliation is a lot of things. Most of them are closer to the nightmares of crossing the White River on a ferry than crossing the mighty Mississippi in a center lane. Most of all, reconciliation is a love story in the context of a revolution.

Jesus is the bridge for reconciling us all with God. Jesus restored Peter and Thomas, moving from denial and doubt to love and trust. Both are necessary for reconciliation, but both live on the other side of wherever we find ourselves. Separating us from where we are and where we long to be. Both love and trust are necessary for crossing over the other side of where equity lives and oppression cannot reside.

Latasha Morrison, in her book, *Be the Bridge*, writes that "The ultimate goal of *Be the Bridge* communities is to bring racial reconciliation." However, she warns that crossing requires moving through the bridge-building steps.

The Oil Trough Ferry consisted of a cable strung from one side of White River to the other and one cable on each end of the boat attached to rollers on the main cable. This simple contraption allowed us to cross without the current taking us somewhere else.

Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side"

John 20:27

By comparison, the bridge that allowed my family to safely cross the Mississippi River took years to build. Likewise, bridges of reconciliation take time. Skipping steps is a recipe for getting swept away by the currents of bias, guilt, and other emotions that keep us from reaching the other side.



There is a story found in John's Gospel about reconciliation. One of the followers, Thomas, was not in the room when Jesus appeared to the others after His resurrection. As a result, Thomas doubted that what Jesus said would happen actually happened.

Rather than dismiss Thomas as unfaithful and thus not worth making an effort, Jesus returned and invited Thomas to put his fingers on the scars left by the executioners.

Latasha writes this about Jesus and the subject of reconciliation:

Jesus did not just come to restore individual people; he came to break down systems of oppression, to provide a way for his kingdom to appear on earth as it is in heaven. He came so that we, his followers, could partner with him in restoring integrity and justice to broken systems, broken governments, and ultimately, broken relationships.

We have reached the last episode before the conclusion of our series, *Bridges*. I pray that each of us will consider how we participate in building bridges of reconciliation. And although we cross at different times and at different speeds, I pray that we safely travel to the other side where reconciliation is waiting.

We have a new button on the homepage of our [website](#) - [Click here to watch](#). This button takes you to a viewer to allow you to join live or watch later in the week. We're also live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).

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Pastor Tommy

¹ Most of the content for our series comes from Latasha Morrison, *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation*. Yates & Yates and Penguin Random House, 2019.



Asbury Farms offers fresh produce every week!

Go to our website, FlintAsbury.org to place your order for a Veggie Box, or sign up for a subscription. You can also call our office at 810-235-0016 to place your order. We accept EBT and Double-up Bucks for a limited time only!!!

Call By Noon on Wednesday for Thursday delivery.

Life groups question & notes

Go and make disciples of all the nations...Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Matthew 28:16-20. Are you familiar with this text? What do these instructions say to you? How do these instructions affect what you do day to day? What are some ways that you can tell and teach?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Next steps*. God never stops communicating with us. Do you believe this? In what ways are you able to "hear" God speaking? What are some of the things that you learned from our series, *Bridges*? What are some possible next steps for you?
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.

Connecting with New Neighbors and Maintaining Bonds: How Immigrants can do both

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Moving to a new country can be an exciting and potential-filled time in life. However, it can also be terribly lonely. When you're in a whole new place, culture, and environment, it takes a very long time to feel like you're at home. Moreover, you're far away from the people you know and love — and tasked with finding a new community while also continuing to nurture bonds with the family you've left behind.



Fortunately, there are some great ways to manage both. [Asbury](#) is proud to offer a welcoming place where you can connect with your neighbors and find a community that cares. Here's how you can foster connections here and with your loved ones back home:

Offering Financial Support

Many immigrants move in order to find better career prospects, then send money back home to support their loved ones in their home country. When sending money back home, make sure you're using a safe and reliable funds transfer service. For example, if you're sending money to loved ones in The Philippines, [remotely](#) allows you to transfer funds quickly for a small fee [using your debit card](#). This way you know, with confidence, that your money will reach loved ones in a timely manner without a ton of fees or hassle.

If you still have funds to spare, you may also want to consider donating to support local efforts in your new area. For example, [Asbury](#) runs several [community betterment](#) projects that can always use financial support. This is far from the only way to help us reach our goals (more on this in a moment), but if you're able to donate, we deeply appreciate it.

Volunteering

If donating isn't feasible for you, volunteering is a great way to both support community efforts and get to know people. This can be especially [valuable for seniors](#) who aren't working. Volunteering gives you something productive to do that you can be proud of and allows you to meet your neighbors along the way.

You can also look into organizing a fundraiser or goods drive to support your loved ones back home. In addition to the direct impact this will make on your friends and family, it can also help raise global and cultural awareness in your new town. This can make your space more welcoming and understanding for future immigrants and help establish a [global mindset](#).

Staying in Touch

Once you start to build bonds in your new area, focus on nurturing them and turning them into strong, sustainable relationships. Although this is a bit more challenging during the pandemic, it's still possible to do this in a way that keeps you and your new community safe. For example, you can look into outdoor, socially-distanced community gatherings. You can also gather with vaccinated individuals while following the [new CDC guidelines](#).

There are several good ways to stay in touch with people back home, as well. Technology has made us more connected than ever before, and you can use video chat software like [Zoom](#) or Skype, message apps, and even [online gaming](#) to interact with your loved ones in real-time. This makes moving across the world at least a touch less lonely, for you and for them.

However, you might also want to consider [sending letters](#). Pen palling with friends back home — even if you also communicate online — can give you a way to send one another small gifts, stories about your day, and even printed photos. This can be especially useful if you or your loved ones back home aren't tech-savvy.

Moving to a new country is a massive transition, but finding a community will be a monumental help when it comes to adjusting. We hope this article helps you come up with ways to forge new bonds with your neighbors while still honoring the relationships you already have.

Looking for a faith-based community? Visit us at [Sunday service](#), and stick around for fellowship afterward: We'd love to get to know you!

Photo Credit: [Pexels](#)

(Written by Jason Lewis, who is a personal trainer specializing in senior fitness. If you would like to reach out to Jason, you may go on [Strongwell.org](#))



**SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN
IMPORTANT APRIL DATES**

Food Giveaways and Angel Closet Dates!

All are welcome! Mask required, if you don't have one, one will be provided for you. Temperature checks taken upon arrival. One person allowed inside at a time.

**APRIL 7TH & 28TH FOOD
GIVEAWAYS • 11 AM -12 PM**

**APRIL 14TH & 28TH ANGEL CLOSET
WALK-INS • 11 AM -12 PM**

**QUESTIONS??? 810-239-3427
SOUTHFLINTSOUPKITCHEN@
GMAIL.COM**

**3410 Fenton Road Flint, MI 48507
3 Blocks North of Atherton Road**

Tell your story. Perhaps the story you tell is about what you have learned over these past ten weeks about bridge-building. Perhaps your story is how ashamed you felt when you realized how humans were captured and forced to help build this nation but denied the benefits of their labor.

How did the story of George Floyd's death under the knee of a police officer affect you personally? How did you feel when you learned that people of color are substantially more likely to be stopped by police, arrested, and lose their lives in the process? How did you feel when you finally realized that the common denominator was skin color?

The next step for a few of us may be bold and brilliant. One or more of us may start or join a Be-the-Bridge group. One or more of us may advocate for equitable justice and reparations. Most of us may simply be better informed and tell others what we learned. And some of them may become bridges for racial reconciliation.

There is a constant and persistent dialogue taking place around us. God's Spirit whispers and nudges, coax and encourages each of us to go and do things that we otherwise would not do. Yet, when we start paying attention, and more importantly, when we take that next step, we discover an otherwise elusive joy. So why does it take us so long?

Latisha Morrison, in her book, *Be the Bridge*, writes that "So many of us hide little flickers of hope inside our hearts, and we ignore the small nudges from God, nudges pushing us to change the direction of our lives." And therein lies the problem.

Latasha reminds us that "when we don't engage God...we end up carrying on in the status quo, even if it is not the right thing, the most just thing." In other words, "it's easy to mistake being still with complacency, to mistake waiting with hiding." Change is hard enough, but when the pathway to change involves guilt, shame, and regret, it's hard to take any step in that direction. Even if it's the right direction to go.

The trial of former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd is nearing its conclusion. Meanwhile, a white police officer killed Daunte Wright, claiming she mistakenly pulled out her gun as she reached for her Taser. Perhaps this is what happened. Unfortunately, the track record of law enforcement across the country sheds doubt on her claim.

Would the police officer take the same action without regard to the color of Daunte's skin?

Sadly, we know that history suggests an answer based on prejudice and a precedent of injustice. Skepticism is justified.

There is bridge-building work to be done. Bridges that allow others to cross the voids that divide us. Bridges that we build through truth-telling, lamenting, and remorse. Bridges help us push through the guilt and shame of our history of racial injustice. Bridges that lead us to confession and repentance.

Along with others who dare to step onto the bridges of reconciliation, we can work together to make reparations. Together we can right the wrongs perpetrated by those who came before us — and continued by our own willingness to accept ongoing, systemic inequities.

Perhaps one of you is called to help others become bridges of reconciliation. As we reach the end of our journey together that we called **Bridges**, my challenge is to make this a new beginning to a journey towards wholeness—a journey towards reconciliation.

Next week, we begin a new series we are calling **Living water**. Our primary subject matter is food. How we grow it, where we get our food, and how we treat creation in the process. Be sure to request your copy of Joel Salatin's book, *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs*. And join us each Wednesday at Noon for Book Club and each Sunday at 10:30 am for New Beginnings.

We have a new button on the homepage of our **website** - **Click here to watch**. This button takes you to a viewer to allow you to join live or watch later in the week. We're also live on **Facebook** and our newly launched **YouTube channel**. You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at **FlintAsbury.org**.

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Pastor Tommy

¹ [Most of the content for our series comes from Latasha Morrison, *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation*. Yates & Yates and Penguin Random House, 2019.](#)

Joel Saladin, in his book, *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs*, compares eggs from Polyface Farm with a typical egg purchased at the local supermarket and coming from a factory farm. The most notable difference was the measure of folate present in the comparison. Approximately 1,200 mcg for eggs from free-range hens and 47 mcg for the factory eggs. So what?



According to the Mayo Clinic, folate (vitamin B-9) is essential in red blood cell formation and healthy cell growth and function, crucial during early pregnancy to reduce the risk of birth defects. Folate (folic acid) is also listed as an essential vitamin for excreting lead from our bodies.

This is not the first time I've come across science that reminds us that healthy bodies are not manufactured in factories. God created us within a complex system of connectedness. And scripture offers insight into how this connectedness brings abundant living when we live out a faith-based on honoring God's plan for creation.

We are each connected to each other, to our own identity, to the earth, and we are connected to God. The world is an interwoven tapestry. The pandemic illustrated for us that we suffer when we cannot depend on each other.

Our next series, *Living water*, begins April 25. Our series is based, in large part, on Joel Saladin's book about the connection between scripture and organic farming. Each episode explores topics that make a difference in our lives. God's plan is for you and me to live healthy, happy lives. But we're often misled by profit motives and false promises.

Lest you leave this article thinking that our entire focus is on free-range chickens or enhanced bottled water, allow me to share a little more insight into this 6-episode series.

In John's Gospel, Jesus used grapevines as a metaphor for our connectedness. In His explanation, Jesus emphasized the importance of connectedness and pruning. His analogy is multipurpose and powerful. And grapevines can help us to understand the difference between living water and cheap imitations.

God chose to live among humanity. It's foolish for me to think that I know for certain God's motivation for doing this, but my role as a pastor invites me to speculate. I'll start with the obvious, but in no way do I believe that I know the mind of God.

God is not a distant and symbolic deity far removed from the messiness of everyday life. Jesus was born in a feeding trough for livestock. He walked on country roads and city streets. He felt hunger pangs, cooked fish over a fire, drank from streams and wells, and cried real tears. Yes, Jesus prayed and led a spiritual life. But the concreteness of His faith was evident in what He did.

Jesus called the acts that offer evidence of what we believe our fruit. The fruit of our labor speaks volumes about what we believe to be true about ourselves, about others, and about the world around us. More importantly, what we do tells the story of what we genuinely believe about God.

Living water comes from another metaphor that describes the connection between God and us. We say that Jesus is "living water" based on the story of a conversation at a local well. A woman coming to the well to draw water during the heat of the day discovers that her thirst can only be partially and temporarily satisfied by the water she draws from the well.

Jesus offers us Living Water.

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Pastor Tommy

¹ Joel Saladin. *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs: Respecting and Caring for All God's Creation*. New York: FaithWords, a Division of Hachette Book Group, 2016.