

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 3 Issue 24

SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

Mirrors (Forgive me)



In this week's chapters from our companion book, *The Shepherd's Wife*, Pheodora learns that her plan to sell her goats for the Festival of Atonement will not work. The amount of money she will receive is not enough to cover her husband's debt. As readers, we know that his imprisonment isn't about the money, so her plan was never likely to work.

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EVERYONE HAVE
A WONDERFUL
AND SAFE
WEEKEND!

DONATE

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Coincidence? (Divine Synchronicities)



Corky Pickering, in an opinion article for the Red Bluff Daily, shared a couple of stories as illustrations of the common human experience known as the coincidence. An experience for which there is no apparent cause.

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Most part of us believe our world is based on a cause-and-effect model. Something happens and there is a reaction. After all, we're all connected with each other and the rest of the universe. Often, our connections are mysterious and not visible.

So when something happens and we're unable to spot the cause, we say that what happened was a coincidence.

Psychologist Carl Jung coined the word "synchronicity" for coincidences that have a profound effect on our lives. Situations where timing was everything and we can't explain how the timing came to be what it was.

We're thinking about a friend and our phone buzzes. We answer the call and it's the same friend we were just thinking about. Unless this coincidence affects our lives in some significant way, it's not quite synchronicity. But it's still notable.

Pickering notes that "When you receive a call from an old school friend you were just thinking of, and it turns out that he could use someone with your skill set in his successful business — and you happen to be currently unemployed — that's synchronicity. Some might call it an answer to one's prayers, or simply a coincidence."

Julie Beck, in an article for The Atlantic, writes "The over-stuffed crate labeled "coincidences" is packed with an amazing variety of experiences, and yet something more than rarity compels us to group them together. They have a similar texture, a feeling that the fabric of life has rippled. The question is where this feeling comes from, why we notice certain ways the threads of our lives collide, and ignore others."

Some seeds fell along the path...some fell on rocky ground...some fell among thorn bushes... some seeds fell in good soil.

Matthew 13:1-8

Beck's research into coincidences included a paper titled "Methods for Studying Coincidences," published by mathematicians Persi Diaconis and Frederick Mosteller. A coincidence, according to these researchers, is "A surprising concurrence of events, perceived as meaningfully related, with no apparent causal connection."

Experts who study huge numbers argue bizarre things occur when there is a vast number of chances.. Eventually, someone wins the record Powerball jackpot. And the winner's life is likely changed substantially.

Beck concludes, "A coincidence is in the eye of the beholder."

In this week's chapters from our companion book, *The Shepherd's Wife*, Pheodora recalls all the happenstance circumstances that had come together to free her and Chiram. But there is more! James is already a believer. Now, so are Pheodora and Chiram. But there is still more! So are Damaris and Shimon by the end. Coincidence or divine plan?

God, speaking through the Prophet Jeremiah, said, "I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for." But which parts of a synchronicity are divinely planned and which occurs because stuff just happens?

Mirrors (Forgive me) *cont. from pg 1*

Motivated by a new understanding of her brother Yeshua's death, Pheodora concludes that her only option is to sell herself into slavery for six years. The amount of money she expects receiving should be more than enough to cover her husband's debt. Even though her new plan may also fail, Pheodora will not stop trying to free her husband.

The evening before she was to meet her owner, the auctioneer advises her to rest and not worry about what would happen the next day. It reminded Pheodora of similar advice spoken by her brother, Yeshua. Don't worry about tomorrow, for it will come soon enough.

Meanwhile, Yeshua appears to her. The experience seems like a dream at first, but she quickly realizes that it's really happening. Earlier, Pheodora prayed God would reveal to her any debt she owed. Yeshua, aware of her prayer, reminded her that everyone falls short and owes a debt. However, His death covered all debt.

But there is something else eating away at Pheodora. As the youngest of seven children, Pheodora never felt she measured up to her older siblings.

This was particularly true when she compared herself to Damaris, her older sister. In Pheodora's eyes, Damaris was prettier, smarter, and more popular. Her stored up resentment bubbled up when Damaris refused to help her free Chiram from prison.

Go to all people and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Matthew 28:19-20

Surely there are pieces of Pheodora's story that resonate with you, even if you have never read a single page of Angela Hunt's book. According to the Mayo Clinic, not forgiving others results in resentment. While forgiveness actually frees you from the control of the memory of the offense.

Pheodora's revelation began when a stranger told her a story she heard from Yeshua when she heard Him speak. The story was about forgiveness.

Matthew tells us that one day Peter asked Jesus, "If my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him?" The

opinionated Peter offered the number seven. To which Jesus responded, "No, seventy times seven!"

Those who need an exact number for keeping score can do the math. But Jesus moved from keeping score to an illustration to describe the Kingdom of Heaven.

There was a king to whom was owed a large sum of money by one of the king's subjects. When the king demanded payment, the man didn't have the means to repay him and the king planned to throw him in prison. But the man pleaded for mercy and the king canceled his debt. What a wonderful ending to what could have been an unhappy outcome.

The man also had others who owed him, although not nearly as much as the amount forgiven by the king. The man demanded repayment of a loan, which the man who owed him the debt was not able to repay. But when the man owing him asked for forgiveness of his debt his request was denied.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kevin Croom
 Sylvia Pittman
 Jonathon Misner
 Terrance Williams
 Mirium Watson



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux
 Norma Buzzard
 Nancy Elston



**COMING UP THIS WEEK
 SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 1**

Sept 25	Mon	2:00pm	Staff Meeting
Sept 26	Tues	10am-12N	Food Distribution
		3:00pm	CDC Board Meeting
Sept 27	Wed		
Sept 28	Thu		
Sept 29	Fri		
Sept 30	Sat		
Oct 1	Sun	10:30am	New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

**** IF YOU HAVENT DONE SO YET, PLEASE GET YOUR CHARGE CONFERENCE REPORTS
 IN TO ME ASAP... PLEASE AND THANK YOU. CONNIE

(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](#).)

Upcoming Worship Series "Words"



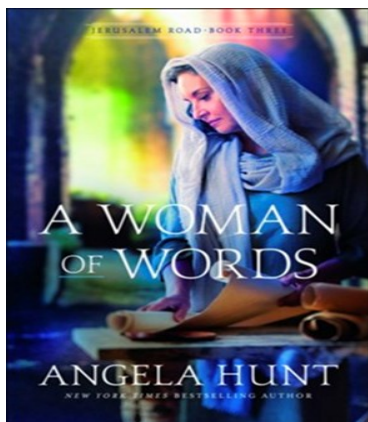
There is a plethora of metaphors that warn us about the impact of the words we speak. One that comes to mind is words are like toothpaste. Once you squeeze toothpaste out of the tube, you can't put it back.

And God said through the Prophet Isaiah that God's Word never returns empty, but always does whatever God intended.

We refer to the Bible as God's Word. We read Jesus is God's Word in the opening lines of John's Gospel.

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Book Club News



Our companion book for our new worship series is Angela Hunt's third book in her Jerusalem Road Series. *A Woman of*

Words recounts the time after the Resurrection of Jesus when the church first takes root as His followers share the good news.

The narrators are two familiar characters. Matthew was a tax collector named Levi when he first met Jesus. One of the least likely candidates for ordination. But Jesus saw in Matthew what others could not.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is one of the most recognized, and perhaps, least understood of all the persons who trav-

elled with Jesus. Angela Hunt fills in the gaps using her imagination and an in-depth knowledge of scripture and speculation about scripture.

James, Peter and John ask Matthew to move to Jerusalem and help with the growing church. He dreams of preaching and performing miracles, but finds his dreams postponed after speaking with Mary, Yeshua's mother. Mary asks Matthew to help her write down the stories of Yeshua while the eyewitnesses are still available to be consulted.

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Kevin Croom	Executive Director
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Kim Sims	Finance Director
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig	Board & Leadership Chair
Mike Sampson	Farms Manager
Terrance Williams	Arts Center Mgr
	Sr Prog Mgr Local Foods
	South Flint Soup Kitchen

Leadership in Worship & Service

Tony & Mirium	Welcome Team
Cyndi	Worship Leader
Anthony & Jim	Ushers
Jonathon & Terrance	Production Team
Yasheah & Mirium	Nursery
Christine & Norma	Cafe

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Upcoming Worship Series — “Words” ..cont from pg 5

Speaking of scripture, do you ever wonder where the four gospels we have in our bibles came from? Did four of the apostles try to capitalize on their inside knowledge with a lucrative book deal?

Welcome to our worship series, *Words*.

Our Worship Series beginning in October will take us to Thanksgiving. I encourage you to follow along with our companion book for this series, *A Woman of Words*, by Angela Hunt. This is the third book in her series, *The Road to Jerusalem*.

In her book, the Mother of Jesus asks Matthew to help her record the story of her Son’s ministry. But Matthew is hoping to preach and teach like his colleagues do. Also, Mathew would not mind performing a few miracles.

However, he gets invited to help with the growing church in Jerusalem because Matthew has a head for numbers. After all, he was formerly a tax collector. A past Matthew would sooner forget rather than be defined by his former vocation.

Of course, Hunt’s creative imagination regarding the origin of the gospels isn’t based on verifiable facts. She invites us to imagine together while learning more about how the early church evolved.

In this series, we focus on what happened after the Resurrection of Jesus.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30am. We share our weekly episodes on our [YouTube channel](#). We go live at 10:30am. You can find these links along with more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our [website](#) at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

Angela Hunt, *A Woman of Words*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2021

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:

Some seeds fell along the path...some fell on rocky ground...some fell among thorn bushes... some seeds fell in good soil.

Matthew 13:1-8

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Five horizontal lines for taking notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS


- 1. Read Matthew 13:1-8. You may want to continue reading through verse 23 where Jesus explains His parable. What thoughts came to mind as you read this story? Where do you fit in the parable?
2. Read this week's articles titled Coincidence? What are some coincidences that have happened to you? What about a coincidence that might be considered synchronicity? How do you explain the coincidence? Where is God in your story?
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.

“Feed Flint”



“Feed Flint”

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A meal goes a long way for a senior living alone, a family struggling to make ends meet, or a child fearful of empty shelves at home. But for the residents of Flint who carry the effects of lead-tainted water, nutrition is critical. Feed Flint provides locally grown, chemical-free, fresh produce to residents living in and around Flint. And we're hoping that you can help us provide 10,000 meals this summer.

Feed Flint includes takeout meals, produce boxes with recipes, and home deliveries as part of our work to guide and support families in moving to sustainable abundance. The reality is that Michigan's food insecurity levels got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this summer's recovery is leaving behind those at the most risk of having to miss meals.

Flint families continue to struggle with the ongoing effects of the water crisis.

We're bringing together the resources of the Asbury Community Development Corporation. This includes Asbury Farms, the South Flint Soup Kitchen, the Asbury Community Help Center, multiple food pantries, and our Sizzling Culture Mobile Food Trailer. Our plan is to care for our neighbors when they need it most. We accept all people as they are, and our doors are always open to anyone.

Asbury Farms provides locally grown produce used to create fabulous and nutritious meals. Our seed-to-table approach is community-based. This not only helps families make it through emergencies and crises. We help move families towards sustainable abundance.

Our Sizzling Culture program provides jobs and new skills to our city's youth. This includes year-round employment. Our staff and most of our volunteers come from the neighborhoods we support. We call this sustainable abundance because families move from need-based on scarcity to enough based on community-generated abundance.

Our work is also about food and justice. Our vision is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions for the common good, where children grow into active citizens. And all residents can enjoy safety, good health, and a culture that fosters life-long learning and satisfying lives. This summer, help us address food insecurity and strengthen Flint's budding local food system by supporting the Feed Flint campaign. Thank you for taking the time to see what we're doing and considering how you can help.

**Donate to our Feed Flint Campaign by visiting:
flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate**

South Flint Soup Kitchen



Bottled Water Drive

ALL SUMMER LONG!

Our clients need bottled water for cooking, going with sack lunches, to bathe and brush their teeth with, and more!

Donations are accepted Monday-Friday
9:30am-Noon at South Flint Soup Kitchen, 3410
Fenton Road (3 blocks north of Atherton Road)
Flint, MI 48507

Questions? Call 810-239-3427 or email
southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com

To donate: www.mightycause.com/feedflint





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*** CONVENIENT PICKUP AT ASBURY OR AT THE SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN ***

Reluctantly, he agrees, although the two face numerous complexities. For one, Gaius Caesar, more commonly known as Caligula, decides to raise a statue of himself in the Holy Temple. And he is willing to kill every man in Israel if needed.

Matthew's attention turns to saving his people. Meanwhile, Mary encourages him to come to terms with his past. When they finally near the completion of their project, Matthew realizes that the job he reluctantly accepted might be his God-given destiny.

Although Hunt's book is fictional, her attention to details in scripture challenges our knowledge of the Bible. With each character, we meet the questions that percolate inside us. What parts of her description are likely genuine, and which are made up?

Angela Hunt has published over 100 books, selling nearly 5 million copies worldwide. Angela, a New York Times bestselling author, received the Times Book Club Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006. She has a Ph.D. in biblical studies in theology and is well-versed in biblical text. Angela can be found online at www.angelahuntbooks.com. Our Book Club does not meet as a group. However, our weekly messages reference that weeks chapters. You can anticipate spoiler alerts unless you keep up with the pace. I've purchased ten books but when they're gone you can still purchase your own copy or visit your local library.

You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question or enter a prayer request on our website's homepage — FlintAsburyChurch.org.

Pastor Tommy

Angela Hunt. *A Woman of Words*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2021.

Cash or checks can be sent to/dropped off at South Flint Soup Kitchen, 3410 Fenton Road, Flint, MI 48507. Please make checks out to South Flint Soup Kitchen!

Online at www.mightycause.com/feedflint

Donations can be dropped off Monday-Friday 11am-12Noon. Calling ahead is not necessary, but our needs change frequently, so calling ahead of time is a good idea!

Give time! We need volunteers!!! Volunteers arrive at 9:30am and are done by 12:30pm. Tasks include handing out lunches, assisting in the Angel Closet, light cleaning, putting together items to pass out to clients, and more.

Refer people!!

Questions??? Call 810-239-3427

or email southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com

Jesus tells this story about a farmer planting seeds. Without commenting on the farmer's technique, Jesus shares that not all the seeds had an equal opportunity for germination. Some fell on fertile ground, but some also fell among rocks, some fell on compacted ground, and some fell among larger plants. As expected, only the seeds that germinated in fertile soil produced wheat. The other seeds never reached their potential.

Sometimes we feel like seeds blown by the wind and landing in inhospitable places. A child suffering abuse at home, a speeding car plowing into us after running a red light or a bad report from our doctor. Was this really God's plan?

If each of us has agency such that we're free to make decisions independent of God's plan, then both good and bad things can happen that interrupt the divine order. And sometimes, even though we feel like we're between a rock and something harder, we germinate any way and even thrive.

Angela Hunt ends her novel with a lot of loose threads coming together into a sort of comfort blanket. Coincidences turn out to work toward a good outcome for the characters. Perhaps this is the nature of God's better plans for us. Regardless of how many poor decisions we make, God is always one step ahead, coaxing and coaching us towards God's plan for our eternal destiny.

You can join us each Sunday in person or online by clicking the button on our [website's](#) homepage - [Click here to watch](#). This button takes you to our [YouTube channel!](#) You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsburyChurch.org.

A reminder that we publish this newsletter that we call the *Circuit Rider* each week. You can request this publication by email. Send a request to connect@FlintAsbury.org or let us know when you send a message through our [website](#). We post an archive of past editions on our website under the tab, Connect - choose [Newsletters](#).

Pastor Tommy

Our series was inspired by and relies on content provided by Angela Hunt. *The Shepherd's Wife. Jerusalem Road Series.* Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2020.

Corky Pickering. "Synchronicities, or meaningful coincidences" © Red Bluff Daily News, February 10, 2021. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Julie Beck. "Coincidences and the Meaning of Life." © The Atlantic, Feb 26, 2016. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Apparently word got back to the king, who, understandably, was furious. He called the man whose debt he had forgiven to come before him. Only this time he threw the man in prison who hadn't offered forgiveness after receiving forgiveness himself.

With whom do you most identify with among the characters in the story Jesus tells? Why? What are some similar experiences you've had with forgiveness of debt?

The story helped Pheodora see that, like the man who refused to forgive the person who owed him, she hadn't forgiven her sister. But did Pheodora owe a debt?

Are there persons that you have chosen not to forgive? Are you carrying grudges that causes ongoing resentment? What would forgiveness look like for the offense and offender you haven't forgiven? Who do you need forgiveness from?

Most, if not all, of us know the Lord's Prayer by heart. In this familiar prayer, we ask for forgiveness in proportion to the forgiveness that we offer.

We all fall short of God's expectations. We all owe a larger debt than we can ever repay. But God chose forgiveness over punishment, sending His Son into the world to cancel any and all debt that we owe to God. If we believe this to be true, then we should be able to find a pathway towards forgiving others who owe us.

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Dr. Thomas Long. "Homiletical Perspective," *Feasting on the Word, Year A, Vol 3*, David Bartlett, Barbara Brown Taylor, Eds. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.



6 Approachable Health Strategies for The Whole Family

If you're like most parents, you want everyone in your family to lead happy and healthy lives. But too often, maintaining optimal health can feel like an overwhelming task. How can a busy family like yours find the time to ensure everyone eats well, exercises often, and gets enough sleep? And even if you're running on all cylinders trying to meet these health goals, you'll never get time to relax and practice some much-needed self-care. Good health is about moderation and balance. If you want your family to maintain healthy habits in the long run, stick to approachable health strategies that can easily be incorporated into your everyday life. Here are some tips from [Asbury](#) to get you started.

Take Charge of Your Family's Health Care

Taking charge of your family's health means being proactive about managing your medical care. Keeping your family's [medical files and documents](#) organized will help you understand important information and gain a better picture of your family's health. If you need to share these files with doctors or other healthcare providers, PDFs are often the preferred format. If you find that some of your PDF pages need to be rotated to portrait or landscape mode, you can easily do this with a PDF rotator – [go here](#) to learn more! By taking an active role in your family's health care, you can optimize their health outcomes as patients in the medical system.

Cont...from pg 16

Sign Your Kids up for Sports

Signing your kids up for sports can be a great way to promote their physical health and social development. According to Healthdirect Australia, sports can help children [develop important life skills](#) such as teamwork, communication, and sportsmanship, as well as build self-confidence and self-esteem. Encouraging your children to participate in sports can also help them establish healthy habits and a positive relationship with physical activity that can last a lifetime. Look for sports options that match your children's interests and abilities.

Start the Day with a Healthy Breakfast

Starting every morning with a healthy breakfast will set the stage for a productive and energized day. [Eating a nutritious breakfast](#) provides the body with essential nutrients and energy needed for the physical and mental activities to come, and can also regulate appetite and help you avoid overeating later on. When planning breakfast, aim for a balance of protein, whole grains, and fruit or vegetables. [Some healthy breakfast options](#) include oatmeal with nuts and berries, Greek yogurt with fruit and granola, or whole-grain toast with avocado and scrambled eggs.

Avoid Screen Time in the Evening

Avoiding screen time in the evening can be beneficial for both the physical and mental health of your family. Teladoc Health explains that the [blue light emitted from screens](#) can disrupt sleep by suppressing the production of melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep. Exposure to screens before bedtime can also increase alertness, further delaying the onset of sleep. Instead of screens, encourage your family to engage in calming activities before bed, such as reading a book, taking a warm bath, or practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing.

Cont...from pg 17

Keep Your Home Clean and Cluttered

A cluttered home can really contribute to rising stress levels, so do what you can to keep your home clean and organized. The trick is to do a little at a time so that the mess doesn't become overwhelming. Try putting on some music and cleaning just a few minutes a day – you'll be shocked at the difference it makes! There are plenty of useful tips out there; click here to [find out more](#).

Encourage Enjoyable Hobbies

Engaging in hobbies [that are enjoyable and fulfilling](#) can help reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance overall well-being for everyone in your family. For children, hobbies can help with the development of important life skills, such as problem-solving, creativity, and self-expression. Hobbies can also promote physical health by encouraging regular exercise, improving motor skills, and enhancing cognitive function. Plus, engaging in hobbies as a family is a great way to bond and strengthen your relationships!

Prioritizing the health and well-being of your family doesn't have to be an overwhelming task. By implementing approachable health strategies like organizing your family's medical files, signing up for sports, and starting the day with a healthy breakfast, you can help your family establish healthy habits that last a lifetime!

[Asbury](#) is here to help the Holy Spirit as it works through our community. [Click here to get involved!](#)

Submitted by Jason Lewis

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