

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

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Worryfree (Pace)



Cyndi and I, like many of you, enjoy certain forms of reality TV. Cyndi's favorite shows tend to be the home renovation series — especially *Home Town* and *Fixer to Fabulous*. And honestly, I enjoy those too... at least to a point.

But I find myself especially drawn to Discovery's off-grid homesteading shows — particularly *Homestead Rescue*. If you haven't seen it, the show features families who are trying to build a simpler, more self-sufficient life, often in difficult conditions and sometimes far from modern conveniences.

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Sabbath (Pace)



We live in one of the most prosperous societies the world has ever known. By many measures, we have more access, more convenience, and more opportunity than previous generations could have imagined. And yet, for all that abundance, something doesn't feel right.

First, the benefits of that prosperity are not shared evenly—here at home or across the world. Much of what we enjoy is built on systems we rarely see, sustained by labor we rarely consider, and driven by a pace that never seems to slow down.

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Asbury Farms ...



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Usually, by the time the Raney family arrives, things are not going well. Water systems are failing. Food sources are uncertain. Shelters are unfinished. And more often than not, winter is coming. Worse, the dream that once felt exciting is becoming overwhelming.

The Raney's show up with tools, experience, creative solutions, and a small construction crew.

In just a few days, they help each family establish critical infrastructure — clean water, reliable shelter, food systems, heat, and protection.

But more than anything else, they restore something many of those families are beginning to lose: Hope.

And I think part of the reason these shows resonate with so many people right now is that deep down, many people are searching for stability in a world that feels increasingly unstable. We live in a world that constantly tells us we do not have enough. We don't have enough money. There is not enough security. Not enough time. Not enough savings. Not enough preparation. Not enough success.

But, "there is good news," the onslaught of ads tells us. And if we listen long enough, we start to believe peace is always one purchase, one upgrade, one election, one investment, one emergency fund, one achievement away.

But somehow, even with more technology, more convenience, more access, and more possessions than previous generations could have imagined... people are exhausted.

Recent surveys show Americans are carrying enormous financial stress. Grocery prices alone have become a major source of anxiety for many families. People are increasingly worried about debt, instability, and whether the systems around us can actually be trusted anymore.

And honestly, some of that worry makes sense. The latest inflation numbers confirm what most of us already know. Grocery prices are going up.

And more people are taking steps they hope will make a difference. And honestly, that shouldn't surprise us.

When leadership feels unstable...when the news cycle runs on outrage...when institutions disappoint us...when people fear economic uncertainty...of course, people start trying to become more self-sufficient.

Some are planting gardens. Some are learning old skills again. Some are raising chickens. Some are simplifying their lives. Many are dreaming about living off-grid altogether, and a few are giving it a try.

Not because they are crazy. But because people are searching for some sense of stability. And there is wisdom in that.

The problem is not preparation. The problem is when fear becomes the thing organizing our lives.

Because fear always demands more. More control. More accumulation. More consumption. More security. More proof that we will somehow be okay.

And human nature has a way of fixating on whatever seems to relieve our anxiety... especially when we are not sure we can trust God to take care of us. Whether we're believers or not, the truth is, we simply find a religion that we think will work for us.

John Mark Comer, author of our companion book, put it this way: "Amazon.com is the new temple. The Visa statement is the new altar. Double-clicking is the new liturgy. Lifestyle bloggers are the priests and priestesses. Money is the new god."

That sounds harsh at first. Until we realize how much of modern life is built around teaching us to seek peace through consumption. And yet the more we consume, the more anxious many people become.

Which raises an uncomfortable question: What if simplicity is not about owning less...What if simplicity is about refusing to let fear and greed rule your life?

Because eventually, we all serve something. And that is exactly where Jesus takes us in His Sermon on the Mount. Matthew tells this story as though he is still standing there on the hillside, listening.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Virginia Bigger

Sylvia Pittman

Mirium Watson

Paula Gamble

Richard Oram

Jonathon Misner

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux

Norma Buzzard

Nancy Elston

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

MAY 18-24

May 18	Mon	6:00pm	Leadership Team
May 19	Tue	9:00am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
		12Noon-6pm	Taco Tuesday (see pg. 20)
May 20	Wed	11am-1pm	Angel Closet at the SFSK (see pg. 17)
May 21	Thu		
May 22	Fri		
May 23	Sat		
May 24	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](#)).



Upcoming Worship Series "Truth"

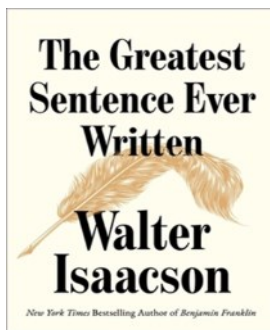


As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, Americans are once again arguing about who we are, what we value, and whether truth itself still matters. Nevertheless, our experiment in representative democracy has been the model to which other nations strive. Unfortunately, we are living through a moment when public trust is collapsing. Driven in large part because the truth is increasingly treated as flexible.

Facts are dismissed as inconvenient. Conspiracy theories spread faster than wisdom. Cruelty is rewarded as strength. Neighbors become enemies. Fear becomes a political strategy.

Sadly, too often, the language of faith is twisted into a tool for power, exclusion, and control. And we're often watching this happen publicly in the name of Jesus. **Page 5**

Book Club News



As we approach the 250th anniversary of the United States, our attention is already filling with arguments about history, patriotism, politics, identity, and

the meaning of America itself. Some voices will insist that the story of our nation is simple. Others will insist it is

hopelessly broken. Most of us, meanwhile, are left trying to make sense of the noise and wondering whom to believe.

We begin our summer at Asbury with a new worship series called *Truth*.

Each week, we will explore questions that sit at the center of both faith and public life. Along the way, we'll also look at what happens when truth becomes flexible. The reality is that when truth bends, trust breaks.

To accompany our series, our Book Club will be reading *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written* by Walter Isaacson.

Many readers know Isaacson through his bestselling biographies of figures such as Leonardo da Vinci, Steve Jobs, and Benjamin Franklin. In this recent work, however, Isaacson turns his attention to a single sentence from the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..."

Rather than treating the sentence as untouchable mythology, Isaacson explores both its brilliance and its contradictions. He examines how those words emerged, why they mattered, and how generation after generation has struggled to live up to them.

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Asbury Staff



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Terry Kinze	Ops Manager/CDC
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
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	South Flint Soup Kitchen

Leadership in Worship & Service



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

Upcoming Worship Series — “Truth”

The bending of the truth for personal gain by those in authority is not new. The prophet Isaiah described a similar moment long ago: “Truth stumbles in the public square, and honesty finds no place” (Isaiah 59:14).

This summer at Asbury, we invite you to join us for a new worship series called *Truth*. Over six weeks, we will explore some of the deepest questions facing our nation, our communities, and our faith:

What happens when people stop trusting one another?

What does Scripture say about truth in an age of manipulation and outrage?

What becomes of a society that proclaims equality while practicing exclusion?

What could happen if we allow Christian nationalism to replace neighborly love?

How do followers of Jesus remain faithful when political movements demand unquestioning loyalty?

This series is inspired in part by Walter Isaacson's latest book, *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*. In his book, Isaacson reflects on the enduring and often controversial words of the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...”

Those words have inspired generations. They have also been ignored, distorted, and denied throughout much of our history. And “these truths” are, once again, under attack. This tension is not new.

When Jesus stood before Pilate, a political leader more concerned with preserving power than pursuing truth, Jesus declared that He came to speak about truth. And Pilate responded with a question that still echoes today: “What is truth?” (John 18:37-38).

We continue to live with the consequences of that question.

What is new is how openly deception, grievance, and the pursuit of power have begun reshaping public life — often with religious language wrapped around them. The result is a culture that is growing more cynical, more divided, and less capable of recognizing the truth when it appears.

When truth bends, trust breaks.

And when trust breaks, communities fracture. Democracies weaken. Churches lose credibility. Human beings made in the image of God become easier to dismiss, fear, or dehumanize.

Yet Scripture points us toward another way.

Upcoming Worship Series — “Truth”

No more lies, then! Each of must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:25

The prophet Zechariah writes: “Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace” (Zechariah 8:16).

And perhaps that work begins with a simple but difficult commitment: “No more lies, then! Each of you must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the body

of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:25).

Scripture calls people of faith in another direction.

Jesus did not call his followers to dominate culture. He called them to embody truth through humility, courage, mercy, justice, repentance, and love of neighbor. In a world filled with noise, distortion, and outrage, Christians are called to become trustworthy people again.

This series will not ask whether America was ever perfect. It wasn't. Nor will it pretend our divisions are simple.

Instead, we will ask harder questions: What truths are worth holding onto? What kind of people are we becoming? And what does faithfulness require from us now? We hope you will join us this summer for *Truth*.

From the Sunday following Memorial Day until the Sunday after our celebration of 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, we'll celebrate our mutual anniversary by looking at the truth of what is arguably the “greatest sentence ever written.”

<u>Episode</u>	<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
One	May 31	Us	1 Corinthians 12:12–27
Two	June 7	Evident	John 18:37–38
Three	June 14	Equal	James 2:1–9
Four	June 21	Dignity	Acts 17:22–28
Five	June 28	Pursuit	John 10:10
Six	July 5	Together	Ephesians 2:14–22

Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. We share our weekly episodes on [Facebook](#) and our [YouTube channel](#), and go live at 10:30 a.m. You can find these links and more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our [website](#), FlintAsburyChurch.org.

Pastor Tommy

*The series concept and some content come from: Walter Isaacson. *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2025.*



“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**

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:

*Do not worry about tomorrow. It will have enough worries of its own.
There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings.*

Mathew 6:25-34

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Mathew 6:25-34 and this week's Circuit Rider article titled Worry free.
2. This week, challenge yourself to take one simple step toward the kind of life Jesus describes.
3. Try setting aside intentional quiet each day instead of immediately reaching for your phone. Try resisting an unnecessary purchase.
4. How can your group members help you be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God this week? Pray for one another to be blessed by the Holy Spirit with greater courage.



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The book does not ask readers to worship the founders. It asks us to wrestle honestly with the ideals they claimed.

That is precisely why it makes such a meaningful companion for this series.

As Christians, we believe truth is more than a slogan, a political strategy, or a social media weapon. In Scripture, truth is connected to faithfulness, integrity, justice, mercy, and trustworthiness. Truth shapes relationships. Truth shapes communities. Truth shapes whether people can live together at all. But when truth bends, trust breaks.

Over these six weeks, we will explore themes such as shared humanity, equality, dignity, liberty, and the common good. Along the way, we will ask difficult but important questions: What truths still hold us together? What happens when trust collapses? And what does it mean for followers of Jesus to live truthfully in a world filled with distortion, outrage, and fear?

You do not need to agree with every conclusion in the book to participate. In fact, thoughtful disagreement is part of the point. Our hope is not simply to revisit American history, but to reflect together on the moral and spiritual values necessary for any community to flourish. We hope you'll join us this summer for *Truth*.

Here is a suggested reading schedule:

<u>Sunday's</u>	<u>Chapter(s)</u>
May 31	We
June 7	Self-Evident Truths
June 14	All Men & Created Equal
June 21	Endowed by Their Creator
June 28	Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness
July 5	Common Ground & Going Forward

We'll have a few books available for purchase at \$11 each. Additional copies of the hardcover edition are available through Amazon for \$11.64. It appears that this book isn't available in paperback. It may be too new for this book to be available at the local library, but it's worth asking.

Our Book Club does not meet as a group. However, our weekly messages reference that week's chapters or themes. You can anticipate spoiler alerts unless you keep up with the pace. You can 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

Walter Isaacson. *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2025.

Scripture reminds us that this is a recurring story. In Egypt, the people of God lived under a system that required constant production. Pharaoh used loyal supervisors with whips to maintain control and ensure ever-increasing quotas were met. There was always more to make, more to build, more to prove.

And when God set the people free, one of the first gifts God gave them was the Sabbath. It was a command to stop. Not because there wasn't work to do, but because the work would never end on its own.

And it's past time for you and me to ***tune out the noise*** and ***tune into God's rhythm***.

That's because this truth still holds. Systems like the one in ancient Egypt don't disappear when a particular ruler is gone. They continue as long as people participate in them. And if we're honest, many of us feel caught in something similar. There is always another task, another demand, another expectation. Even our rest can feel like an attempt to catch up rather than truly stop.

Every generation faces the temptation of Egypt. Any society that depends on endless production, widening inequality, and exhausted people begins to echo

Pharaoh more than God. And if we are honest, we can hear some of those echoes in our own society.

In our own time, we are also shaped by forces that go deeper than schedules and workloads. Every day, we are being formed—by advertising, by algorithms, by a steady stream of messages telling us what we need, what we lack, and what will finally make us feel whole. These messages don't just sell products; they train our desires.

They create noise inside the soul. They teach us to confuse wanting with living, consuming with belonging, and accumulation with peace. They quietly teach us to believe that more—more success, more comfort, more possessions—will eventually be enough. But it never is.

We were not created to be satisfied with things. At our core, we are made for connection with God, with one another, with the world around us, and within our own souls. When those connections are weakened or neglected, we don't simply stop longing. We try to fill the gap.

We substitute consumption for communion. We reach for what is available instead of what is life-giving. Over time, that pattern can begin to look a lot like addiction—an endless cycle of reaching and never quite being filled. This is why Sabbath matters so much.

If we do not choose God's rhythm, the world will choose our pace for us.

Sabbath is more than rest from activity; it is resistance to everything that tells us we are what we produce, what we own, or what we achieve. In a world that depends on our constant motion and constant desire, stopping becomes a quiet but powerful act of trust. It is a way of saying that our lives are not defined by the system around us, but by the God who created us.

By the time of Jesus, many people had forgotten what the Sabbath was truly for. The rhythm God created to give life had become, for some, another source of pressure and performance.

Mark tells a story about a time when Jesus and His disciples were walking through the grain-fields on the Sabbath. As they go, the disciples begin to pick heads of grain. It is a simple, human moment. They are hungry, and they eat.

But the Pharisees see something else. They see a violation. According to their understanding of the law, this action counts as work, and work is forbidden on the Sabbath.

It's important to recognize that the Pharisees are trying to be faithful. Over generations, they had built careful interpretations of the law to ensure that God's commands were honored. In their desire to protect the Sabbath, they had surrounded it with detailed expectations. But in doing so, something essential had been lost.

Jesus responds to their concern by telling a story they would know well—the story of David, who in a moment of need, ate the bread that was reserved for priests. It is a surprising move, but a deliberate one. Jesus meets them within their own tradition and reminds them that even within their Scriptures, human need was never meant to be ignored.

Then Jesus widens the conversation. "The Sabbath was made for the good of humankind," He adds, "Humankind was not made for the Sabbath."

Jesus does not dismiss the Sabbath with His response. He restores it. Jesus does not loosen Sabbath; He deepens it. He pulls it away from legalism and reconnects it to human flourishing.

The Sabbath is not a burden placed on humanity. Nor is Sabbath a test of religious performance. It is a gift. Sabbath exists for our sake. It is part of God's design for human flourishing, a rhythm built into creation itself.

This is where the misunderstanding often happens. When we hear that the Sabbath was made for us, we can be tempted to treat it as optional, something to be set aside when life feels too full. But that misses the point. If Sabbath is truly made for us, then ignoring it does not make us free. It leaves us vulnerable to exhaustion, to distorted priorities, and to the relentless demands of a world that never stops.

The Sabbath was made for the good of humankind. Humankind was not made for the Sabbath.

Mark 2:23-28

Then Jesus says, "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

This is not simply a conclusion to the conversation; it is a declaration of authority. Jesus is not just offering an interpretation of the law; He is revealing His authority over it. He is the one who defines what Sabbath truly is, because He is the one through whom life itself is given.

If Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, then He is also Lord of the rhythm it represents. The invitation to rest is not merely good advice; it is a call to trust. It is a reminder that we are not sustained by our constant effort, but by the grace of God.

Sabbath, then, is not about restriction. It is about restoration. It is not about what we are forbidden to do, but about what God is seeking to renew within us. In a world that constantly pulls us toward more—more work, more consumption, more striving—Sabbath draws us back to what is enough.

And in that return, we begin to remember who we are—and whose we are.

From the beginning of creation, God established a rhythm for life. There is movement and stillness, work and rest, giving and receiving. Even the natural world reflects this pattern. Hearts beat and then pause. Lungs inhale and exhale. The tides move in and out. Seasons change and return again.

A healthy life depends on rhythm, just as music does. A symphony is not just sound; it is sound shaped into harmony, balance, movement, and rest. Without rhythm, music becomes noise.

And without Sabbath, life can become noise as well.

Much of our struggle today comes from resisting that rhythm. We have learned how to accelerate, but not how to stop. We carry devices that keep us connected to work, news, entertainment, and anxiety at every hour of the day. Even moments that once belonged to rest are filled with noise.

We hurry through meals, rush through conversations, and often treat silence as something uncomfortable rather than something holy.

In music, the rests matter as much as the notes. Without pauses, there is no beauty, no breathing room, no meaning.

Yet many of us are trying to live lives with no rest at all.

This is why Sabbath is more than physical rest. Sabbath restores rhythm to the soul. It interrupts the illusion that our value comes from constant productivity and reminds us that we are human beings, not machines. In a culture that rewards exhaustion and praises busyness, Sabbath becomes an act of resistance. It declares that our lives are not sustained by endless striving, but by the grace of God.

In *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer describes Sabbath as resistance because it interrupts the systems that train us to believe our worth comes from productivity and consumption.

This resistance is not loud or dramatic. It begins with simple practices that reconnect us to what is real. We stop working. We set aside the need to produce. We rest. We pray. We share meals. We spend time with people we love. We walk outside and pay attention to creation. We remember that the world continues even when we are not in control of it.

Sabbath also exposes the false promises we have learned to trust. The world tells us that more is always better—more money, more possessions, more success, more achievement. But our appetites cannot be satisfied by accumulation alone.

We were created for deeper things. No purchase can replace communion with God. No amount of entertainment can fully quiet the loneliness of the soul. No level of achievement can give us the peace that comes from knowing we are loved apart from what we accomplish.

When Jesus declares Himself “Lord of the Sabbath,” He is inviting us into a different way of living. He is not calling us to escape the world, but to live within it differently. Sabbath teaches us to trust that we do not have to carry everything ourselves. It teaches us to receive life as a gift rather than treat it as a race we are constantly trying to win.

Jesus Himself modeled this rhythm repeatedly. Again and again throughout the Gospels, Jesus steps away from the crowds, the demands, and even the urgent needs to pray, rest, and reconnect with the Father. If even Jesus refused to live at the pace of constant demand, perhaps we should pay attention to the rhythm He practiced. And perhaps that is one of the deepest truths of Sabbath: we can stop because God remains faithful.

The world around us is constantly asking for more. More work. More speed. More attention. More consumption. The pressure never fully disappears because the system depends on our restlessness. It depends on us believing that what we have is never quite enough and that who we are is never quite sufficient. Sabbath sings a different song.

Tune out the noise. Tune into God’s rhythm.

Sabbath reminds us that our lives are not measured by productivity. We are not valuable because we are busy. We are not loved because we succeed. Before we achieve anything at all, we are already created in the image of God and held in the care of the One who made us.

That is why Sabbath is both resistance and restoration. It resists the forces that try to reduce human beings to consumers, workers, and statistics. And it restores us to the relationships for which we were created—relationship with God, with one another, with creation, and with our own souls.

This does not mean life suddenly becomes easy. There will still be responsibilities to carry, bills to pay, and work to do. Jesus never promises a life without labor. But He does offer a different rhythm within it. A rhythm grounded not in fear and striving, but in trust. In the end, Sabbath is not really about losing a day. It is about recovering a life.

It is about learning to stop long enough to notice what truly matters. It is about remembering that enough is not found in endless accumulation, but in the presence of God. It is about trusting that the world does not rest on our shoulders alone.

And perhaps most importantly, Sabbath reminds us that freedom is not the ability to do more and more without limits. True freedom is the ability to rest in the love and faithfulness of God.

In a world filled with noise, hurry, and endless demand, Sabbath invites us back into rhythm—the rhythm of grace, trust, worship, rest, and enough.

The world will always push us toward a faster pace. But the invitation of Jesus is different:

Tune out the noise. Tune into God's rhythm.

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.

This is a reminder that we publish a weekly newsletter called the Circuit Rider. You can request this publication by email by sending a request to FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com, or let us know when you send a message through our [website](#). We post an archive of past editions on our website under Connect - choose [Newsletters](#).

Pastor Tommy

Some content comes from John Mark Comer. *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. Colorado Springs : WaterBrook, 2019. ISBN 9780525653097.



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The crowds have gathered because word about Jesus is spreading quickly throughout Galilee. Some come hoping to be healed. Some are curious. Some are desperate. Some simply want to hear whether this teacher from Nazareth has anything meaningful to say to people struggling to survive under the crushing weight of empire, poverty, uncertainty, and religious division.

And Matthew remembers Jesus sitting down among them and beginning to teach.

What we now call the Sermon on the Mount was not originally delivered inside a church sanctuary. It was spoken outdoors to ordinary people carrying ordinary burdens. People worried about feeding their families. People living under taxation and political oppression.

People wondering who — or what — could be trusted. People trying to survive in systems that constantly demand more from them while offering very little in return. In some ways, this was the ultimate reality show, featuring ordinary people living close to the edge.

Families trying to survive. Communities struggling under competing pressures. Systems demanding allegiance. Religious voices competing for authority. People searching for hope while carrying anxiety about tomorrow. And Matthew is not simply preserving this moment as ancient history.

The audience is us.

Those of us who hear our own lives reflected in the worries of we just talked about... those of us carrying anxiety about the future... those of us exhausted by the endless demand for more... those of us wondering if there is a better way to live...

Jesus is speaking to us.

Then, in the middle of this sermon, Jesus says something that cuts directly to the heart of human anxiety: **"No one can serve two masters."**

Jesus isn't talking just about serving dictators, would-be kings, or bosses. But He is talking about whatever exerts control over us. And it's hard enough to serve two masters when both desire the same thing. But most of us know from experience that this is rarely the case. Conflicting loyalties eventually force difficult choices. Two competing voices eventually pull us in opposite directions.

And Jesus understood that human beings are always being shaped by whatever power, value, or promise commands our attention.

The world offers no shortage of competing masters.

Consumerism tells us peace can be purchased. Celebrity culture tells us significance comes through recognition and influence. Political systems promise security if only the "right" people gain power. Wealth promises independence. Technology promises control. Endless advertising tells us fulfillment is always one step away — one

more purchase, one more achievement, one more upgrade, one more carefully constructed version of ourselves.

Meanwhile, the gap between the wealthy and the struggling continues to widen. More and more people feel trapped between rising costs, growing uncertainty, and systems that seem designed to keep people anxious enough to keep consuming.

The false promises never stop. And perhaps what makes these modern "gods" so dangerous is that they are rarely presented as evil. They are presented as salvation.

They promise comfort. Control. Security. Importance. Escape from fear.

But unlike the kingdom of God, these powers ultimately serve themselves. They always demand more than they give. That is why Jesus' warning matters so much: "You cannot serve both God and wealth."

Jesus is not condemning money itself, or even shopping for a new outfit. He is exposing the spiritual conflict hidden underneath our anxiety. Whatever we trust most eventually becomes the thing organizing our lives.

And that is why the next word Jesus speaks is so important: "Therefore..." In other words, Jesus directly connects worry to worship. The question beneath our anxiety is not simply: "How do I stop worrying?"

The deeper question is: "What or who am I trusting to save me?"

Because fear has a way of turning our hearts toward whatever appears strongest in the moment. Human nature clings to whatever seems capable of protecting us, providing for us, or giving us control over an uncertain future.

That is why Jesus speaks directly about food, clothing, and daily necessities. These are not shallow concerns. Like us, they know that the cost of food is rising faster than they can afford. Jesus is speaking to ordinary people living under political oppression and economic uncertainty. They understood instability far better than most of us do.

So when Jesus says, "Do not worry about your life..." He is not asking people to ignore reality. He is inviting them to trust that the kingdom of God offers something the false promises of this world never can: a life no longer ruled by fear.

Jesus points to the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, not because life is easy, but because creation itself still rests in God's care.

Do not worry about tomorrow. It will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings.

Matthew 6:25-34

And then Jesus gives the invitation that stands at the center of this entire passage: "Seek first the kingdom of God..." Not first consumption. Not first accumulation. Not first status. Not first fear.

Seek first the kingdom.

Because whatever we seek first will eventually shape the kind of people we become.

And perhaps that is where simplicity begins. Not with owning less for the sake of owning less. Not with abandoning responsibility. Not with pretending the world is safe. Not with disengaging from society altogether.

Simplicity begins when we stop allowing fear and greed to organize our lives. It begins when we realize peace cannot be purchased. It begins when we stop measuring our worth by what we accumulate, control, consume, or display.

It begins when we discover that enough is not found in endless accumulation, but in learning to trust the God who already knows what we need.

The kingdom of God invites us into a different rhythm. A life where possessions no longer possess us. A life where anxiety no longer dictates every decision. A life where generosity becomes possible because fear loosens its grip. A life where we can enjoy what God provides without making those things our master.

And maybe this is the deeper freedom Jesus is offering: Not freedom from all uncertainty. But freedom from living as though fear gets the final word.

One voice says: Acquire more. Protect more. Fear more. Consume more. Control more. And another voice — quieter, steadier, deeper — says: "Seek first the kingdom of God."

Not because responsibilities disappear. Not because uncertainty vanishes. Not because life suddenly becomes easy. But because Jesus knows that whatever we place at the center of our lives will eventually shape who we become.

And perhaps that is the invitation before us this week. Not to abandon wisdom. Not to stop preparing responsibly. Not to disengage from the world around us. But to ask an honest question: What has become the organizing force of my life? Fear? Consumption? Accumulation? Control? Status? Anxiety about tomorrow? Or the kingdom of God?

Maybe simplicity begins there. Maybe simplicity is less about decluttering our homes and more about decluttering our hearts. Maybe it begins by refusing to let fear make every decision for us. Maybe it begins by learning to recognize the difference between what we truly need and what our culture constantly tells us we should want.

And maybe one of the most practical spiritual disciplines available to us is simply learning to say: "This is enough." Enough outrage for one day. Enough scrolling. Enough accumulation. Enough noise. This week, challenge yourself to take one simple step toward the kind of life Jesus describes.

Perhaps that means setting aside intentional quiet each day instead of immediately reaching for your phone. Perhaps it means resisting an unnecessary purchase. Perhaps it means practicing gratitude before anxiety takes over.

Perhaps it means creating space around the table for conversation instead of distraction. Perhaps it means giving something away as an act of trust rather than fear. Not because simplicity saves us. But because simplicity can help create room for us to hear the voice of the One who does.

And as you leave today, remember this: Jesus never promised a life free from uncertainty. But He did promise that fear does not have to become our master. Because eventually, we all serve something.

So seek first the kingdom of God. And trust that the God who sees the birds of the air and the flowers of the field sees you too.

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.

This is a reminder that we publish a weekly newsletter called the Circuit Rider. You can request this publication by email by sending a request to FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com, or let us know when you send a message through our [website](#). We post an archive of past editions on our website under Connect - choose [Newsletters](#).

Pastor Tommy

Some content comes from John Mark Comer. *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. Colorado Springs : WaterBrook, 2019. ISBN 9780525653097.

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Image via [Pexels](#)

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The Holistic Blueprint: A Comprehensive Guide to Achieving Your Best Self

The journey to look and feel exceptional involves more than just external aesthetics; it's about cultivating a lifestyle that brings out the best in you, both inside and out. Covering aspects from hair care to education, this [guide from Asbury](#) offers some actionable steps to help you present a version of yourself that exudes confidence and well-being. The goal is not just to polish the surface but to improve your life in a way that shines from within.

Pay Attention to Haircare

Quality hair care is a staple for anyone wanting to look their best. High-grade products offer nourishment and protection that can make a substantial difference. Whether straight, curly, or somewhere in between, your hair serves as a [marker of health and vitality](#). A good hair day can be a significant mood booster, and that inner happiness often reflects outward, making you more appealing to the people around you.

Prioritize Skin Protection

Sun protection is crucial for maintaining youthful, healthy skin. Implementing a daily sunscreen ritual doesn't have to be a laborious task. Many moisturizers now include SPF, streamlining the process. By making this a non-negotiable part of your daily regimen, you're taking proactive steps to [minimize sun damage](#), early signs of aging, and risks associated with prolonged sun exposure.

Eat Smarter

What you put into your body is as essential as what you put on it. A well-rounded diet [free from processed foods](#) and added sugars can transform your physical appearance and mood. Good nutrition provides the building blocks for radiant skin, robust hair, and an energized body – each vital for looking and feeling your absolute best.

Make Movement a Way of Life

An active lifestyle doesn't necessarily mean grueling hours at the gym. Purolabs notes that even [small changes can have significant benefits](#). Opt for walking over driving for short distances or choose the stairs instead of the elevator. Little actions can add up, and before you know it, you've incorporated more physical activity into your daily life, which will only serve to enhance your overall wellness.

Attend to Your Dental Health

Never underestimate the power of a brilliant smile. Cleveland Clinic explains that good dental hygiene is [crucial for overall well-being](#), affecting not just oral health but also contributing to cardiovascular wellness. Regular check-ups, daily brushing, and flossing go a long way in maintaining a confident smile, which can be a cornerstone in building overall self-assurance.

Organize Your Health Information

When you have all your information readily accessible, especially in a format as universal as a PDF, you can make more informed decisions about your health. If you want to create PDF files, plenty of online platforms can assist you in transforming your documents for easy sharing with healthcare providers. This organization can lead to better doctor-patient communication, more accurate diagnoses, and, ultimately, better health.

Bolster Confidence Through Learning

Continuing education can significantly influence how you feel about yourself. Strengthening your skill set not only makes you more marketable in your profession but also boosts your self-esteem. Whether it's learning a new language or acquiring advanced knowledge in your field, there are many avenues to gain new competencies.

Also, these days, the flexibility of online learning platforms, such as those offering degrees in psychology, makes boosting your education easier than ever! When looking for programs that are accredited and offer specialties like organizational psychology, [consider this option](#).

Cultivate Social Links

Social bonds are indispensable for mental and emotional health. Friendships and familial ties offer emotional support, [create a sense of belonging](#), and can even help in stressful situations. By actively maintaining and nurturing these relationships, you foster an environment that contributes positively to your emotional well-being.

The roadmap to a more confident and healthier you isn't merely about a curated set of practices but about constructing a lifestyle that inherently improves the quality of your life. The true essence of being your best self lies in harmonizing the physical, emotional, and intellectual aspects of well-being. This journey is a continuous process, and each positive step you take brings you closer to becoming the best version of yourself.

(Submitted by Jason Lewis at jason_lewis@strongwell.org)

Happy 15th Anniversary to **ASBURY CDC**



Here's to many more!