

Sunday September 9 through Sunday September 16

- Pastor Robert's Fall Sermon Series begins today and the focus will be Faith in Judgement. The entire series outline is available.
- UMYF will be meeting this evening at 5 pm.
- At 7 pm tonight, the Administrative Board will be meeting.
- UMM meeting and meal hosted by Susanna Wesley/Wesleyan Circles will be Monday at 6:30 pm.
- Wednesday at 6 pm Prayer Team will meet.
- Choir Practice will be at 7 pm on Wednesday.
- Pastor Robert will continue his Fall Sermon Series. This lesson will focus on Faith in Fear.



Sunday September 9

- 10:00 am—10:45 am Sunday School
- 11:00 am—12:00 pm Morning Worship
- 5:00 pm—UMYF
- 7:00 pm—Administrative Board Meeting

Monday September 10

- 6:30 pm—United Methodist Men Meeting
- 7:00 pm—Boy Scouts

Tuesday September 11

- 7:00 pm— Girl Scouts

Wednesday September 12

- 6:00 pm—Prayer Team
- 7:00 pm—Choir Practice

Thursday September 13

No Scheduled Activities

Friday September 14

- 9:00 am—MEOC

Saturday September 15

No Scheduled Activities

Sunday September 16

- 10:00 am—10:45 am Sunday School
- 11:00 am—12:00 pm Morning Worship
- 5:00 pm—UMYF
- 5:00 pm—Asbury Circle

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil: Faith in Judgment

Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-13

Only a fool would refuse to teach a child the difference between Good and Evil. These skills are essential for surviving life on planet Earth. However, they do not teach us how to fulfill God's will, bring Heaven to Earth, forgive self or neighbor, and live here and now in the Kingdom of Heaven. As the Apostle Paul says, we must learn how to "live in the world, but not of the world!"

Looking at our culture, we see what happens when parents fail to teach their children right from wrong. A fool will place a gun in the hands of child who has no knowledge of right and wrong, respect for life, or ultimately to love as God loves. We teach our children to know good and evil so they will learn how to avoid injury and death. "Do not play with fire." Remember the Gatlinburg fire? We teach our children to give snakes a wide berth. Handing me a handgun or rifle my uncle always said, "You never point this at a person." Knowledge of Good and Evil equips us to survive in a dangerous world but survival skills do not teach us how to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Survival is not the same as Life! Too many of us are merely surviving.

In eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, it seems that Adam and Eve were more focused on Survival than living in communion with God and one another. The Bible tells us that after eating the forbidden fruit, "the eyes of both were opened, and they realized they were naked..." Their eyes were opened. They now have eyes to judge good and evil, right and wrong, and good and bad. What did the eyes of judgment do to their hearing?

God enters the Garden in the cool of the evening. We know that God's coming in the evening signifies the beginning of a new day. "And there was evening, and there was morning —the first day." Genesis 1:5 This new day is the day Adam and Eve made, not the Lord! It is the first day of sin. Sin is the death of the relationship between God and humankind and then one another.

Relationships are made of love. Love "desires" patience, kindness, generosity, trust, hope, and the ability to deny self. To deny self means we suspend our judgment of the other in hope of restoring the relationship to reflect love. Love never insists on its own way. This is why all of The Law and the Prophets hang on Unconditional Love.

Upon entering the Garden, God asks Adam and Eve four questions.

- "Where are you? "I was afraid, so I hid." (shame)
- "Who told you that you were naked?" "The woman you put here with me " (Guilt is defensive. Adam makes it God's fault.)
- "Have you eaten of the tree I commanded you not to eat?" "— she gave me some of the fruit..." Blame judges the other.
- "What have you done?" In an effort to appear good, Judgement makes the other person evil.

Adam and Eve's answers to these questions reveal the nature of the death God said that they would "surely die." It is a slow, steady, spiraling, and painful death that creates estrangement, divorce, violence, and wars and rumors of war. Sin leaves us with survival skills void of the joy of life.

Have you considered that God asked these questions from a place of Unconditional Love? Notice what happens when they are heard and seen from this perspective!

- "Where are you?" God invites Adam and Eve to _____. God invites Adam and Eve to turn away from their _____ to listen to Him.
- "Who told you that you were naked? Stop. Did God tell Adam and Eve they were naked? No! Our answer to this question helps us identify the true _____ of Life. Our Lord is the one we give our _____ to listen.
- "Have you eaten of the tree I commanded you not to eat?" God invites Adam and Eve to _____. Yes, it is hard to say, I chose to play judge, jury, and condemner.
- "What have you done?" Confession always names, and _____ what I have done. Blame separated Adam from Eve from God and one another. Confession is the first step to _____.

Answers: Repent, Fear, Lord, Ears, Confess, Owns

One in Christ,

Robert