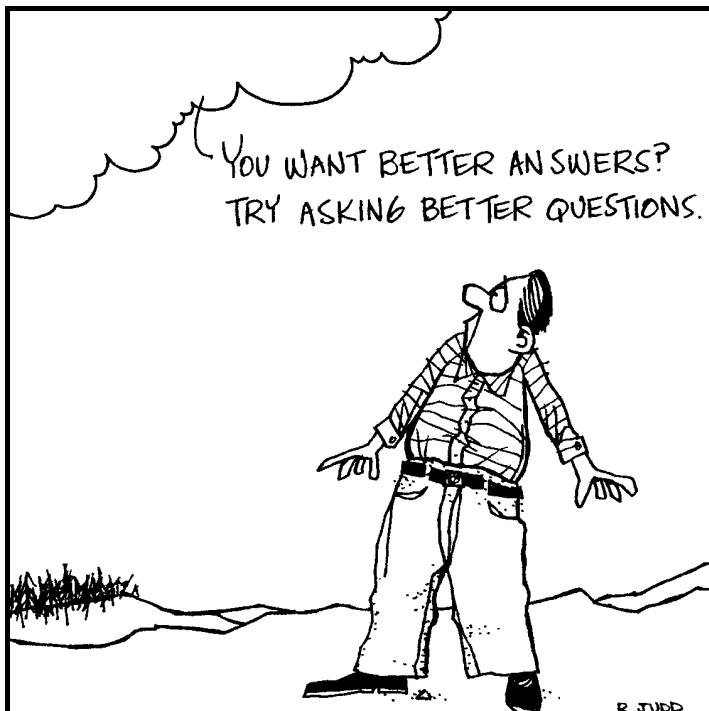


Sunday October 7 through Sunday October 14

- Pastor Robert continues his sermon series. Today, “Faith in God’s Grace” will be the topic.
- Youth will be meeting at 5 pm.
- The study group at the Parsonage will not meet Monday evening.
- The UMM meal hosted by the NOW Team will begin at 6:30 pm.
- The NOW Team’s rescheduled meeting will be Tuesday evening at 7 pm.
- Fellowship Dinner Potluck is Wednesday. Everyone is invited!
- Choir is canceled for this week
- Susanna Wesley/Wesleyan Circle will be meeting on Thursday morning at 11 am.
- UMM Pancake Breakfast begins at 7 am on Saturday.
- The Administrative Board will be meeting next Sunday at 7 pm.



Sunday October 7

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

Monday October 8

6:30 pm—The Joys of Intercession at the Parsonage canceled
6:30 pm—UMM Meeting/Meal
7:00 pm—Boy Scouts

Tuesday October 9

7:00 pm—NOW Team
7:00 pm— Girl Scouts

Wednesday October 10

6:00 pm—Prayer Team
6:30 pm—Fellowship Dinner
7:00 pm—Choir Practice canceled

Thursday October 11

11:00 am—Susanna Wesley/Wesleyan Circle

Friday October 12

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday October 13

7:00 am—10:00 am UMM Pancake Breakfast

Sunday October 14

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

Faith in God's Grace

Genesis 3:20-24

Last week, in Sunday School, I was honored to teach. The lesson was on the third chapter of Genesis. We were looking at what we often call the "Fall of Humanity." We fell in such a way that we no longer reflected God's image. We fell into sin which means we became separated from God's mercy, grace, and Agape. Fear of God separates us. After years of study and prayer, I now see this story is God's first act of Preventive Grace. All these years, I was blinded by fear.

Fear has the power to separate us from God, and one another. Like Adam and Eve things happen that cause us to run from God, and neighbor. We sometimes express our fear by standing our ground to fight. Maybe the least recognized response to fear happens when we freeze, play dead, or fall into apathy and hopelessness. Fear drives the world; we are created to Love. (Agape)

Before we can overcome such fear we must become aware of God's ways. (Repentance: turn to see life from God's perspective. Prayer teaches us how to stop and turn to see situations from God's perspective!) Often times we overlook what God is doing in the midst of "The Fall." God asked Adam and Eve a lot of questions. Explore God's questions and you will see God's Preventive Grace. God's questions were designed to get Adam and Eve to face their fear and see that God was with them. (Mercy) Indeed, Adam and Eve were too fearful to receive His mercy. The questions and God's placement of the angel and flaming sword to "guard" their way PREVENT Adam and Eve from remaining eternally separate from God. Sin is powerful. It has the illusion of safety, happiness, and comfort. Sin is a sanctuary built not by God but human hearts and minds filled with fear. Every sinful action comes through a word spoken into being through fear!

Therefore, in Sunday School, I taught about the United Methodist's doctrine of Grace. It is broken down into 3 forms to show its Holiness. Preventive Grace is God at work in the midst of our sin. Preventive Grace is God's way of getting our attention for the express purpose preparing us to be delivered from evil. Justifying Grace delivers us from evil and brings us into a Holy and Righteous relationship with God. Sanctifying Grace is God's never ending cycle of leading us not into temptation but delivering us from evil until at last we die and rise to be fully present with God in Heaven. By the time we reach our death bed sanctifying grace will have taught us that God never takes but always receives. Grace is us just like the old hymn says: "Just as I am, Without One Plea." Grace is the free gift of God's Agape. Grace received gives Praise and Thanksgiving, not a single plea.

Listen carefully to Genesis 3:22. Listen for God's Preventive Grace: "And the Lord God said, 'The man has become like ONE of us, knowing Good and Evil.'" Which "One" is God saying we are like? The answer is in the Apostle's Creed. "I believe in Jesus Christ...who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. On the third day he rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father." The One is Jesus. The Son of God.

As Paul says in II Corinthians 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Or in Ephesians 1:4, For he chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." Now, the "He" spoken of in Ephesians is the "One" in Genesis 3:22. His name is Jesus. He was with God before the foundation of the world.

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly die. But God demonstrates his Agape for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ dies for us." This is Preventive Grace. Grace that prevents us from eternally living in fear of God.

(Such fear is the cause of weeping and gnashing of teeth. It feels like a consuming fire. Too often it makes us feel and think we are trash to be carried outside the city gates of Jerusalem, and placed in the dump named Gehenna to burn eternally. Sin takes everything that God says is "very good" and turns it into rubbish. This is why Jesus says, weep with those who weep and laugh with those who laugh. Or in another place He says, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Grace delivers us from weeping and gnashing our teeth to discover the comfort of seeing that even in the valley of the shadow of death He is with us.)

One in Christ,

Robert

1. Who is the "One" Adam and Eve became like? _____
2. Who is the flaming sword who guards our way to the Tree of Life? _____
3. What is the Tree of Life? _____

Answers: Jesus; Holy Spirit; The Cross