

THE FIRST WORD for September 15, 2024



First Baptist Church Eden

A Place of Grace to
Believe, Belong, and Become

101 Burleson Street (325) 869-3681

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Sunday Small Groups 9:30 am

Sunday Worship 10:45 am

Pastor: John Curry (432) 923-2163 edenpastor@frontier.com

Worship Ministry Leader: Mike Turner conchospringsgolf@yahoo.com

Youth Ministry Leader: Loren Briggs (325) 656-3234 loren3484@hotmail.com

Children's Ministry Leader: Pam Young (432) 413-3205 Pamela Young jeunejoven@gmail.com

Adult Ministry Leader: Teresa Escue (325) 450-7279 edenfbsec@frontier.com

**FBC Eden exists to bring glory to God by becoming a "3E community":
Embracing God in worship, Encouraging one another in love to become
fully-devoted disciples, and Engaging the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ.**

September 16: 2:00 pm Card Making Class

September 22: 3:00 pm Nursing Home Ministry
3:45 pm Deacons Meeting

September 25: 7:00 am See You At The Pole
3:00 pm Cell Phone Assistance for Seniors (Eden Cisd)

September 28: Fall Fest

September 29: Praise & Worship

September 30: Fun Day Monday

October 2: Fields of Faith

Today's Message:
Leaving the Wilderness of Sin

Exodus 17:1

James 4:7-10

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Thanks to Tina Briley
for her article for this
week's First Word.



A Journey of Transformation

Several years ago, my son awakened me at 1:00 in the morning with the words, "Mom, hurry up, and bring your camera!" I followed him to his tree house where he had been watching a cicada climb from the ground to a high point in the tree house. When the cicada stopped climbing, its shell began cracking open. As we sat and watched, the hard-shelled creature transformed into a majestic, winged being and took flight. It is one of my favorite memories of my son's youth for so many reasons.

The greatest blessing of that evening was the spiritual lesson I learned. Philippians 3:21 says, "...the Lord Jesus Christ will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body." A cicada was not created to spend its entire life encased in a hard shell and living underground. At some point, it is destined to break free from those things that bind it and to fly. In much the same way, we are not to spend our lives encased in a hard shell of sin. In Hebrews 12 we are encouraged to "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

What is that race? Some people believe that our ultimate goal is to get to heaven. For them the race is just making it through this life, and the goal or finish line is heaven. That would be the same as saying the cicada climbed out of the ground just to reach the top of the tree house. I tend to believe that this journey we call life is not a journey to a *destination* but a journey to a *transformation*. "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory," 2 Cor. 3:18. Our goal is not to get to heaven, our goal is to become like Jesus. Peter said, "Christ left you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When I compare myself to Jesus, I realize I have a long way to go in this transformation process.

There is nothing I can do to earn salvation. It is the gift of God. His salvation gives me an opportunity to serve him. The top of the tree house was not the goal of the cicada. It simply gave him the opportunity to break out of his shell and fly. It was his starting point. It wasn't until he broke out of the shell and spread his wings that he was able to soar.

God saved me and promised me eternal life with him. Salvation was my starting point when I began the journey of transformation. My prayer is that one day I can say in the words of Paul, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." May the Lord bless you so that in each day of the journey you are transformed a little more into his image. And quite honestly, while your transformation won't be as quick as the cicada's, it should be just as dramatic and just as life changing.