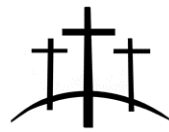


# THE FIRST WORD for .... December 8, 2024



## 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 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.**

**December 9:** MOC Meeting

**December 10:** 10:00 am Community Ladies Gathering at FBCE

**December 14:** "Let's Celebrate Jesus!" Ladies Christmas Luncheon

**December 15:** Baptism

**December 22:** Nursing Home Ministry

**December 23-27:** Church Office Closed for Christmas

**December 24:** 5:00 pm Candlelight Service

**December 29:** Paise & Worship

Bring it On Chili Cookoff, following morning worship

**December 31:** Church Office Closed

Deacon of the Month  
Loren Briggs

Today's Message  
"Peaceful Anticipation"  
Isaiah 9:6

### FOR THE RECORD ...

Worship ..... 97  
Small Groups..... 63  
Wednesday Night..... 59

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

## GOD'S AMBUSH

*Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. Isaiah 55:3*

Hiking a mountain is very doable. Traipsing over rugged terrain is very doable. Walking at a pace of 3.5 to 4 miles per hour is very doable. Combining the three along with temperatures well over 100 degrees is exhausting.

As we neared the fourth hour of a five hour mountain hiking excursion in Israel, I had reached a point of exhaustion that far exceeded the physical which made me a prime candidate for God's ambush. A very fitting description since the mountain we were hiking was Mount Arbel which translates "Mount of God's Ambush."

I became frustrated and even angry because by the time the back of the line, where I was, reached the front, the teacher was already teaching and answering questions. In fact, he was finishing his lesson as the last few of us arrived. I felt cheated and remember thinking, "The whole purpose of climbing this mountain was to get the faith lessons. I'm not getting anything but hot and tired."

Just as I was feeling good and sorry for myself, the breath of God blew over me; and God gripped my heart with the words, "You did not come to hear a man. You came to hear me." In that moment, my legs literally buckled and I fell completely to the ground. I tried to stand, but my legs would not respond. It was no more than a second or two but enough to get my attention. I was so overwhelmed that tears streamed intermingled with sweat as we continued the hike.

When we got to the most treacherous and harrowing part of the descent, one where we had to scale the side of the mountain hand over hand, most people were filled with trepidation and anxiety. I, on the other hand, loved it! My strength was renewed, my hands were not sweating, and my feet were as sure as a deer's.

As we approached the end, I could hear the teacher encouraging and applauding each person as they took the final step... "Good job Teresa. Way to go Scott." Just as I stepped down, someone asked him a question, and I stepped down without any accolades. But just as quickly, he returned his attention and said to the next hiker, "Good job, Jim, you made it."

My first thought was, "What about me?" And then I remembered God's words, "You did not come to hear a man. You came to hear me."

As you can imagine, God's ambush on Mount Arbel was one of those life-changing experiences for me. I have spent the majority of my life trying to please man. I wanted to be liked; I wanted to be appreciated; I wanted to be valued. I did a lot of the right things for the wrong reasons. I longed for recognition and commendation from people. It took God knocking my legs out from under me to make me realize that there is only one voice I need to hear. Only One I need to please. And isn't it interesting how that One already likes me, appreciates me, values me, and loves me immeasurably.

When I reach the end of my hike through this world, He is the One who will be standing there with outstretched arms to say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." I don't know about you, but for me, that is the one accolade I truly desire.