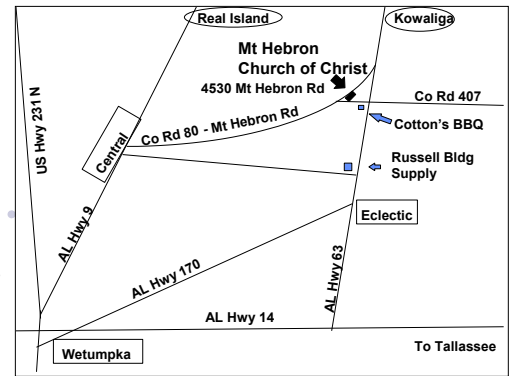


Neighborly News

Brought to you by your friends at the Mt. Hebron Church of Christ.



Three gardens and three trees

What is the Bible all about? What's its major theme? Roy Deaver once answered that question as follows: "It is the glory of God and the salvation of man, through Christ Jesus our Lord."

That is an excellent answer, in my estimation. But, what if we were to be even more concise? No doubt there are other words that can be used to express the overall theme of God's word, but here is brilliant way that only requires five words: three gardens and three trees. Allow me to elaborate upon that for you.

The first garden and first tree are found in the very beginning: The Garden of Eden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is, of course, where sin entered the world and mankind fell spiritually (cf. Gen. 3). God created everything--including the possibility of choice for mankind. Alt-

though they were commanded not to partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were led astray by the devil and their lust. Death consequently entered the world because of their disobedience and there was now a need for a savior (cf. Rom. 5:12).

The second garden and second tree are found in the culminating acts of Jesus' sacrifice for all the world: The Garden of Gethsemane and the cross of Christ. Jesus prayed and wept in the garden that the Father's will would be done, and that will was done when the Lord voluntarily offered Himself up for the sins of the world on that wooden cross that had been fashioned from a tree (cf. Matt. 26:36ff; Gal. 3:13).

The third garden and third tree are found at the very end of that which is temporal and passing away: The garden of God

(Heaven) and the tree of life. At the great and final Day of Judgment, everything physical will be destroyed (cf. II Pet. 3:10,11). All will stand before God and either be blessed with a heavenly home or suffer His eternal wrath and vengeance in flaming fire (cf. II Cor. 5:10; II Thess. 1:8,9). May it always be our aim to be faithful and true to Almighty God that we may one day eat of the tree of life in the heavenly abode (cf. Rev. 22:2)!

Dear friends, this succinct summary hits the beginning, middle and end of human history, and it addresses three of its most pivotal moments. Three gardens and three trees--that's one way of telling the story of the Bible, in a nutshell.

-Stephen R. Bradd

Mt. Hebron Church of Christ

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Come and visit us

Sunday
Bible Classes 10:00 AM
Worship Services
11:00 AM & 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Bible Classes 7:00 PM

A joyful heart is good medicine—Proverbs 17:22
An usher was passing the collection plate at a big church wedding. A well-dressed lady looked up, most puzzled. Without waiting for her question, the usher nodded his head, "Yes ma'am, it is unusual; but the father of the bride requested it."



Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Golf course religion

A few years ago I was talking to a fellow about his lack of church attendance. When asked why he didn't attend, he responded: "Sunday is my only day off so I spend it playing golf. Besides, I can worship Him on the golf course."

I then said to him, "yes in a way, you can worship God on the golf course...but do you?"



He was silent for a moment. Then, almost in a whisper, he said, "No, my mind is on the game."

"If your mind was on God where would you be on Sundays?" I asked.

That ended our conversation for that day. But the next Sunday he was back at church and confessed his sin of unfaithfulness.

While a person can pray to God and sing His praises outside the meeting of the congregation, if he is truly spiritual, he will assemble with the saints unless providentially hindered.

Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:25)



"Doing an injury puts you below your enemy; revenging one makes you but even with him; forgiving him sets you above him."

--Benjamin Franklin

forgive, and you will be forgiven (Luke 6:37)

How will you spend your 75 years?

Statisticians tell us that the average life span is now around 75 years. A few years ago, someone went to the trouble to research what people do with their time. If we live to be 75, most of us will have spent:

- 3 years, 24 hours a day, acquiring an education —grade school, high school, college.

- 7 years eating, 24 hours a day — some more, some less, obviously.

- 14 years, day and night, working.

- 5 years riding in automobiles or air-planes.

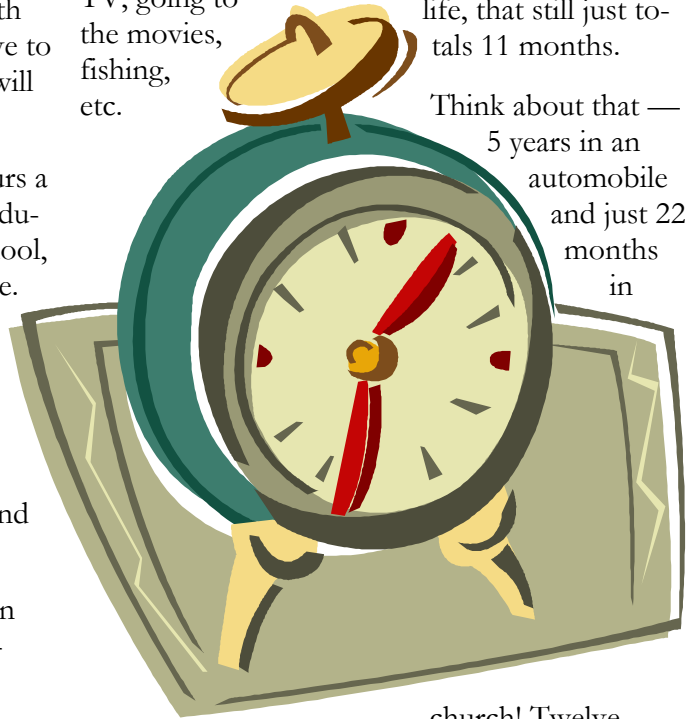
- 5 years talking with each other — again some more and some less.

- 1 year sick or recovering from sickness.

- 24 years of our life sleeping!

- 3 years reading books, magazines and newspapers.

- 12 years amusing ourselves — watching TV, going to the movies, fishing, etc.



Let's double it because you have always attended two Bible classes a week. If you have never missed a Bible class in all your life, that still just totals 11 months.

Think about that — 5 years in an automobile and just 22 months in

church! Twelve years amusing ourselves in front of a TV, and just 22 months in church. And that is if you have always attended and never missed! That tells us a little bit about the brevity of time and our priorities in life.

- by Melvin Newland (edited)

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)

That totals to 75 years. As I looked at these statistics I began thinking. Let us suppose that you spent every Sunday of your life, for 75 years — through infancy, childhood, adulthood, old age — worshipping during two church services each Lord's day. Now if you did, how much time would you have spent worshipping God? Figure it out — the answer is less than 11 months.