

# Three Trees



## **SERMON & SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION GUIDE**



**Week 1:** January 11, 2026 (Baptism of the Lord, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Epiphany)

**Text:** Genesis 2:15-3:7

**Topics:** Deceit, obedience, punishment, relationship, sin, temptation, testing

**Core Values:** Obedience

**Theme:** How the Bible uses trees to reveal spiritual truths about humanity and God: Man is given moral agency through the tree of knowledge of good and evil (verse 16).

*Beginning thought...* "Trees are not randomly placed in Scripture. They mark the most important events, including the Creation, the Fall, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. This is not a coincidence. The Bible is one interwoven book, written by one God." (Sleeth)

**Bible Study Questions:**

1. What other tree was planted next to the tree of knowledge of good and evil and what does it symbolize?
2. What does the tree of knowledge of good and evil symbolize? (Make a list).
3. How did Adam and Eve react when they were caught eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?
4. Obviously, Adam and Eve did not physically die the day they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What type of death did they suffer?
5. What was/is the impact of their action then? Now?

**Group Discussion Questions:**

1. What makes forbidden things so tempting?
2. If, simply put, the tree of life symbolizes good and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil symbolizes bad, what is God trying to tell us by planting the trees side by side in a very visible location? [In answering this question, it might be helpful to visualize the tree of life as Jesus and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as Satan.]
3. Can you recall the circumstances surrounding the first time you knowingly sinned? What were the repercussions?
4. Do you think God was too harsh with Adam and Eve? In other words, was God too exacting with Adam and Eve, or do you feel that they got off lightly?
5. Was humanity the only thing impacted by sin entering the world?

*Prayer: Creator God, thank you for making trees. Thank you for using trees as a symbol throughout your Word to point us towards great spiritual truths. Help us to mindfully act on ways we can restore relationship with you so that once again you might walk with us in the garden in the cool of the day. Amen.*





**Week 2:** January 18, 2026 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany)

**Text:** Acts 5:27-32; John 19:16b-20; 38-42

**Topics:** Believers, crucifixion, steadfastness, testimony

**Core Values:** Faith, hope, love

**Theme:** How the Bible uses trees to reveal spiritual truths about humanity and God: Jesus hanging on the cross is the image of a man who took on all the world's sin and sorrow.

*Beginning thought... Jesus was nailed to a dead tree.*

**Bible Study Questions:**

1. How were the apostles brought before the Sanhedrin? (Acts 5:25–27)
2. How had the apostles disobeyed the council? (Acts 5:28)
3. Why did the high priest avoid mentioning the name of Jesus? (Acts 5:28)
4. What reason did the apostles give for their disobedience? (Acts 5:29)
5. What made the Jewish elders furious? (Acts 5:29–32)

**Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Read Isaiah 53:2-3. From images you may have seen of Jesus on the cross, can you describe what he looked like?
2. What does a dead tree make you think of? What might the dead tree cross symbolize?
3. Are dead trees good for anything?
4. "Like trees, Jesus gives life. Fallen humanity, however, has a habit of choosing the things that take life away. We reject Jesus, we disobey God, and we walk away from the tree of life." (Sleeth) Are you choosing the dead tree cross or the tree of life resurrected Jesus?

*Prayer: Dear Father God, we adore your son Jesus. Thank you for teaching us through your Word about the tree of life and the dead tree cross. We know it was foretold in Isaiah 11:1 that "there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit." We are that fruit. Help us to bear witness to you and your loving son. Amen.*



**Week 3:** January 25, 2026 (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany)

**Text:** Jeremiah 17:5-10; Revelation 22:1-7

**Topics:** Beauty, blessings, healing, heaven, trust

**Core Values:** Perseverance, goodness, faith

**Theme:** How the Bible uses trees to reveal spiritual truths about humanity and God: “The Bible tells us to be like a fruitful tree. Grow, make the world better, and bear fruit.” (Sleeth)

*Beginning thoughts...God likens a righteous person to a tree (Jeremiah). God’s throne faces a tree (Revelation).*

**Bible Study Questions:**

1. What is the outcome of trusting in people? (Jeremiah 17:5–6)
2. What is promised to the person who trusts God? (Jeremiah 17:7–8)
3. What was Jeremiah’s, and God’s, perspective on the human heart? (Jeremiah 17:9)
4. What sight did John’s heavenly “tour guide” show him? (Revelation 22:1)
5. How did John describe the appearance of the river of life? (Revelation 22:1)
6. How did John describe the location of the river of life? (Revelation 22:2)
7. What was growing on each side of the river of life? (Revelation 22:2)
8. When did the tree that John saw in the city bear fruit? (Revelation 22:2)
9. Of what value are the leaves on the tree of life? (Revelation 22:2)
10. What will be missing from the new heavens and new earth? (Revelation 22:3)
11. What will God’s people do in heaven? (Revelation 22:3)
12. What kind of relationship will God have with His people in heaven? (Revelation 22:3–4)
13. Where will the inhabitants of heaven get their light? (Revelation 22:5)
14. How long will God’s people reign? (Revelation 22:5)
15. How did the angel assure John? (Revelation 22:6)

**Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Who is the most trustworthy person you have known, and why do you consider that person trustworthy?
2. How do you interpret the images “tree of life” and “river of life”?
3. What is the significance of the water of life and tree of life being in heaven?
4. What does this passage tell us about God?

*Prayer: Almighty God, we long for the day when we can see your throne room in all its glory and see you face-to-face. The tree of life with twelve kinds of fruit each month sounds amazing. Until then, help us to place our trust in you. Until then. Amen.*

Source: Sleeth, Matthew (2019). Reforesting faith: What trees teach us about the nature of God and His love for us.