

The Weekly Message from Darren Brandon
February 25, 2026
“Whittling Down”



Over the weekend I rewatched the documentary “*Look and See - A Portrait of Wendell Berry*.” I’m pondering how his idea of farming also applies to life,

“Farmers begin with a vision of perfection. Every year in the course of the seasons and the work, this vision is relentlessly whittled down to a real result by human frailty and fallibility, by the mortality of creatures, by pests and diseases, by the weather. The crop year is a long struggle ended not invariably by the desired perfection but by the need to accept something less than perfection as the best that could be done.”

I keep thinking about that phrase: **relentlessly whittled down.**

We begin with plans and hopes for our families, our work, our health, and our faith. But over time, so much gets whittled away: time, certainty, illusions, control. We adjust.

Lent does not ask us to pretend otherwise. Lent tells the truth. We are not in control of the weather—outside us or within us.

And yet, Lent is also a season of grace.

The question is not only, *What has been whittled away?* The deeper question may be: *What remains?*

What remains is mercy. What remains is love that has endured and a chance to be grateful.

There is blessing in accepting “something less than perfection” as the best that could be done—and offering it to God with open hands.

This is not giving up. It is trust.

It is trusting that God does not love us because we produced a perfect crop. It is trusting that, somehow, in God’s hands, “the best that could be done” is enough.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace

Darren