



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

May 13-19, 2019

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester

5th Sunday of Easter

Sermon: *What the Bible Does Not Say:*

“Pray as if Everything Depended on God; Live as if Everything Depended on You.”

Notes from sermon on 5/12:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

As God called Joshua, God commanded him “to be strong and courageous.” Where is God calling you to courage?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. Does God still speak to humans?
2. Does God speak through humans?
3. How is God speaking to you?

Monday, May 13: Read Jeremiah 1:1-10

We may have heard the expression, “Pray like everything depends on God; live like everything depends on you.” This is meant to motivate us to roll up our sleeves and take on the world’s problems, for if we don’t do it, no one will, right? While the urge to save the world certainly has merit, we will explore this week how this approach is not based in scripture and can actually cause stress and misguidance.

Every scripture reading this week shows us we do not have a God who creates us, then expects us to figure it out on our own. We also do not have a God who is simply on standby in case everything fails. Rather, as we see in today’s reading, we have a God who calls us to do God’s work, then stays by our side every step of the way so we are never alone. Prayer and action can be simultaneous, with God calling us, guiding us, and giving us grace when we don’t do everything perfectly. What an incredible relief...and incredible challenge! Let us each explore this week how we can wake up every morning, excited for not only what God will call us to do, but for God’s continual presence and guidance every minute of the day.

Tuesday, May 14: Read Joshua 1:1-9

The book of Joshua chronicles the Hebrew people's entrance into and conquering of the land of Canaan – the Promised Land. Here, we do not read of detailed battle plans and intricate long-term strategies put together by a military genius; we read of a deeply faithful and trusting leader who follows God's call and commandments to the letter. Yes, Joshua was strong and courageous, and it was because the Lord was with him wherever he went – not because everything depended on Joshua alone. How much stronger can we all be when we know we are doing things in obedience and partnership with God? How much stress could be replaced with peace if we began every morning with prayer instead of a "to do" list? Following God's commandments in our lives takes both faith and discipline, for we must continually seek God through study and prayer, then trust God's guidance in our heart, conscience, gut, and circumstances.

Wednesday, May 15: Read Exodus 3:7-12

In one of the most famous call stories in the Bible, God speaks to Moses through the burning bush, calling him to do the impossible and the terrifying: To confront the most powerful leader in the world and take away his entire slave workforce. Notice two very important things about this story: it was neither Moses's idea to do this, nor was Moses expected to do it alone. This is not a story of a great leader with a great dream ("Who am I?" says Moses), but of a great God able to do great things through ordinary people. In fact, never in the Bible does God call someone who is qualified. How excited can we all be to know that at any minute, God could call us to something new and be with us every step of the way! Is God calling you to do anything right now?

Thursday, May 16: Read Matthew 14:13-21

When we read the famous story of Jesus feeding the five thousand, a few things jump out at us. First, Christ had compassion. He felt the people's suffering and hunger. Second, he turned to his disciples and gave them a command. Third, he prayed. As an Easter people filled with the Holy Spirit, we can allow God's compassion for others to stop us in our tracks, calling us to action as we simultaneously pray for God's power and guidance. We may not feed five thousand, but we might be able to feed one. How many daily miracles could take place with this divine formula?

Friday, May 17: Read Acts 9:1-12

We end our readings this week with not one call story, but two. Saul, the zealous persecutor of Christians and Jesus's least likely ally, becomes the apostle Paul, writer of much of the New Testament and spreader of the gospel to Gentiles. Ananias, a disciple terrified of Saul, becomes the first Christian mentor and ally to the man whom God would use to spread Christianity like no other. Neither wanted to do it at first, and neither had any sort of plan for this. The entire book of Acts is like this – confusion, followed by obedience; not great goals followed by flawless execution. How peaceful and exciting to know God wants to partner with us, guide us, and use us to heal God's world. What a relief to know we are not expected to do this alone.

Saturday, May 18: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Joshua 1:9

"I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed,
for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Sunday, May 19: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *God of mercy, your command to love one another across all differences opens us to new horizons, yet we often respond with fear and judgment that hinders your goal for humanity. Forgive our sins, we pray, and give us a true repentance that leads to life for all creation. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*