



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

August 19-25, 2019

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester

Sermon Title: *What is Faith?* "Hope for a Better World"

<p>Notes from sermon on 8/18:</p>	<p>Prayer requests:</p>
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Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

What in your life is in need of God's purification?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. When are times that you are not open to God's healing?
2. How does the knowledge of God's love and care for you open you more to God's healing?
3. How do you seek God as a refuge in your daily life?

Monday, August 19: Read Hebrews 12:18-24

There is a joke that says that the optimist believes that we are living in the best of all worlds and that the pessimist fears the optimist is right. Is this world all there is, or is there a world to come, one we can look towards, one that gives us hope, one where God truly rights the wrongs of this world? If so, how can we find hope in this world and make it known to people today?

If God's kingdom on earth resembled the opening of today's scripture, we certainly would have cause to worry. Here, the writer of Hebrews describes the terror the Israelites felt in the book of Exodus when they were at the base of Mt. Sinai. Here, God seems unreachable and harsh. "But you have come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God," the writer of Hebrews declares. Here, through Jesus, "the mediator of a new covenant," we are able to join the "assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven."

Are we going through life at the base of Mount Sinai, worried that we are one misstep away from disaster and judgment, or are we living as ones who are approaching Zion, where our sins are forgiven and forgotten and we are welcomed with open arms?

Tuesday, August 20: Read Hebrews 12:25-29

Having faith does not mean going through life thinking nothing bad will ever happen here on earth and we will never experience loss. It also does not mean we can take on the complacent outlook that no matter what we do, everything will turn out alright in the end. Today's scripture warns against the real consequences of turning our back on God's grace through Christ. Fear, insecurity, and loneliness have reached epidemic proportions in our society, leaving so many of us feeling "shaken." Then there are those of us who exhibit calm within storms, integrity amongst corruption, and self-confidence despite ambiguity. These are the people who are secure in who they are in Christ (forgiven, beloved, and imperfect sinners) and where they are headed (to Zion). Let us spend time seeking out these people in our lives and ask them to share their faith with us. If we are one of these people, let us follow the advice of 1 Peter 3:15, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is in you. But do it with gentleness and respect."

Wednesday, August 21: Read Luke 13:10-17

So, are we to just have faith that everything will be great once we go to Heaven, but be resigned to the fact that the world is a messed-up, terrible place? Today's scriptures answer that question with an emphatic, "No!" This gospel passage shows us a Savior who is constantly at work, noticing the marginalized, the downtrodden, the sick, and the hopeless. Our Savior is one who goes beyond the self-imposed limits of man and even religion to love, heal, and give hope. When we become pessimistic about our abilities as individuals and a church to "solve the world's problems," we must remember that we are filled and guided by One who sees all, loves all, and wants to help all. We can have faith in God's kingdom-building here on earth, and never give up on ourselves or others to be healers and to be healed.

Thursday, August 22: Read Jeremiah 1:4-10

An enemy of hope and faith is the feeling of helplessness. Jeremiah felt too young. Many of us feel too old. Almost all of us struggle with feeling too insignificant. When we remember that we were created by a loving God who has great plans for each of us, we can begin to see the opportunities God puts in front of us each day to speak truth, pluck up someone in need, pull down an injustice, destroy an evil (especially one within us), overthrow something oppressing (especially one within us), build something wonderful, and plant seeds that the Holy Spirit will grow. Perhaps these will be great things everyone will notice, but most likely, these opportunities will be small and nearly invisible to others. But not invisible to God.

Friday, August 23: Read Psalm 71:1-6

We are not called to have hope and faith in ourselves. That's a recipe for disaster. We can't even place our hope and faith in others, for they, too, are human and will stumble and fall. Our faith must lie in God. Today's psalm gives us words upon which we can meditate, helping us to praise God for being the refuge, fortress, rock, hope, and loving parent we all need. Let us speak these words aloud today and thank God for the continual and ultimate work God has done, is doing, and will do for us and for the world.

Saturday, August 24: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Hebrews 12:28

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe."

Sunday, August 25: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *God of Life, you come to us as a consuming fire, and the one who has consecrated us before time. You promise us a kingdom that cannot be shaken and call us to serve you with praise and thanksgiving. But we forget and yield to fear. We trust in the tangible rewards of this world and neglect your promises. We confess that we are a divided people; we foster separations and widen rifts in our families, our communities, and in the world. Open us to your healing. Free us from all that distances us from your presence. Give us your grace and inspire us to serve you with courage; through Jesus Christ, who comes to save. Amen.*