



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

January 29-February 4, 2018

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester:

“Come and See: Possessed”

Notes from sermon on 1/28:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Question (before sermon):

What does Paul mean when he says that he became all things to all people so that he could save some (1 Corinthians 9:22)?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. In 1 Corinthians 9:16-23, what does Paul do right?
2. What can you learn from Paul's example in that text?
3. What does it mean for us to have faith like children?
Does it mean a simplistic faith, or something else?

Monday, January 29: Read Mark 1:29-39

What are we searching for? Where are we expecting to find it? Most of us seldom ask ourselves these questions. Even fewer of us seek guidance from scripture in determining what we really need, and where we will truly find it. Last week, we explored the sobering truth that many of us are battling personal and societal demons and idols, often seeking fulfillment and truth in the wrong places. We explored the truth that our identify, self-worth, and salvation come through Christ alone, through God's grace, and Christ can cast out the demons in our lives, just as he does for the people of Galilee in today's gospel.

In fact, throughout today's reading, people are constantly seeking Jesus...but are they seeking him for what they really need? True, Jesus could heal the physically sick, but was that what he believed was people's greatest need? The answer lies in Christ's words in verse 38: "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also, for that is what I came out to do." According to Christ, what we really need is the truth of God's love, forgiveness, redemption, and grace. We need the teachings Jesus shared, the example of his life on Earth, and the eternal life brought through his death and resurrection. This is what we should seek first, and when we find it, everything else will be added (See Matthew 6:33).

Tuesday, January 30: Read I Corinthians 9:16-23

Today we change our focus from what we need to how we can give others what they truly need, and search for. Yes, throughout the Bible we are called to heal the sick, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, give to the poor, and visit those in prison. We know, however, that people's needs go deeper than that. They need to be loved, accepted, understood, forgiven, redeemed, empowered, included, respected, and needed. They need this despite what they are or have done, not because of it. *They need the gospel.* The apostle Paul's writing today focuses clearly on not only the urgency of sharing the good news of God's love and grace for all through Christ, but the means through which we can share it. Perhaps "becoming all things to all people" does not mean changing our personality, values, or beliefs, but finding touchpoints of empathy with each person we encounter. Rather than preaching the gospel from a place of superiority or perfection, we can share how God has healed and guided us through the same weaknesses, trials, and circumstances others share. Just as Christ became human and shared in our weaknesses (see Hebrews 4:15), so we too can humble ourselves before others in to help them find what they truly seek.

Wednesday, January 31: Read Isaiah 40:21-26

Much of humanity would deny that they need God, much less seek God. Instead, they might say, what they and the world truly needs is justice, equality, healing, purpose, kindness, environmental sustainability, or love. What the today's prophet in Isaiah might say to them, however, is, "Who created these?" (verse 26). At our most primal core, we are all seeking God. "Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?" the prophet says. Throughout the world, we are all desperately searching for the very things God is and is trying to give us, yet usually looking for it in any other form, or by any other name. Let us spend time today boiling down our wants and needs to their very essence. Do they not all have their foundations in the character and Word of God?

Thursday, February 1: Read Isaiah 40:27-31

If we're just smarter, stronger, wiser, more determined, more lucky, more....anything...then we will finally get what we want/be happy/feel loved/feel worthy/stop hurting/have meaning/be healed. We work, consult self-help books, make to-do lists, and make resolutions, yet our happiness is fleeting and the emptiness and aching returns. What if we stopped and simply allowed God to give these to us? We aren't being called to be complacent or lazy, but trusting that God intends for us to have love, joy, peace, and purpose, and these are gifts freely given through grace, not earned. The words of the prophet tell us that God gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless, and those who wait on God shall renew their strength (vs. 30-31). What if we all stopped long enough to absorb the incredible truth that *God is seeking us* so that we can be freely given exactly what we are searching for? That God sent his only son to earth so that we could have everlasting (now and always) life? That is incredible good news. That is the Gospel.

Friday, February 2: Read Psalm 147:1-11

Today's psalm covers a lot of ground in all the things for which we should praise God, and perhaps most relevant to this week's focus are verses 3 and 5, which praise God for healing the brokenhearted, and for his understanding. While we praise God for the material blessings we all enjoy, knowing that we are deeply understood and loved cuts to the core of what we are all seeking. How can we more fully accept these gifts from God? How can we more effectively share them with others?

Saturday, February 3: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Isaiah 40:31

"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Sunday, February 4: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *Great Lord, please help us follow the example of Jesus. We need help in figuring out what is important to you. We have not done our best to help people that are poor and needy and to treat all God's creature's fairly. Help us to walk in the Lord's path, to be more helpful to our Moms, Dads, brothers, and sisters, to live a joyful life, to tell the truth and to be grateful for all that we have. Guide us to love you and follow you every day. Amen.*