



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

February 13-19, 2017  
Sermon by Pastor Stephen Coleman  
“An Upside-Down World”

Notes from sermon on 2/12:

Prayer requests:

**Family Focus Question (before sermon):**

How do you define Love and how does Christian love differ from other loves in the world?

**Questions for small groups (after sermon):**

-Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord?

-What sort of “perfection” does Jesus intend when he says,  
“Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect”?

-Is it possible to struggle for justice and to love your enemies at the same time?

**Monday, February 13: Read Matthew 5:38-48**

Do not resist the evildoer. Turn the other cheek. Walk the extra mile. Love your enemies. Be perfect. We begin this week in what seems like an “upside down” world. Not only does it seem next to impossible to accomplish any of the ideals Jesus challenges us to do in today’s gospel reading, we don’t even *want* to do them because they seem the very opposite of what is normal and reasonable. We live in a world where we feel compelled to fight our enemies in order to protect our families. We stand up for our honor by not allowing anyone to put us down. We fight for our rights so no one treats us unfairly or asks us to do more than they do of others. This is our world, and we’ve been conditioned to its rules. What kind of world is Jesus living in? The answer to that question is precisely the focus of Pastor Stephen Coleman’s sermon this Sunday: the characteristics of the Kingdom of God. Jesus is preparing us to live in a world that is completely different from the broken one in which we have learned to survive – a world of all-inclusive love. *It says in the apocryphal writing known as the Acts of Peter: “Unless you make what is right left and what is left right, what is above into what is below and what is behind into what is front, you will not learn to know the kingdom.” How can we turn everything we know upside down today to help bring about this kingdom?*

## **Tuesday, February 14: Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-11**

The overachieving perfectionist in all of us will try to approach yesterday's challenge of living in an "upside down world" through sheer effort and ability. We will try...so...hard...to love our coworker that is sabotaging our career. We will just...try...harder to do more, be more, resist more, walk more. We will vow before we even get out of bed in the morning that this day, we will be patient, righteous, even perfect. Then our feet touch the ground. Today's passage reminds us that this approach not only futile, it is unholy. Until we place Jesus Christ and God's grace as the foundation for everything we think, say, and do, we are doomed to live in the "real world" with our natural, human reactions. However, with the power of the Holy Spirit brought to us by grace through Jesus, we can allow our words, attitudes, and lives to be turned upside down. Through God's power working in us and through us, our "natural" actions and reactions will be transformed into one who lives comfortably, joyfully, and powerfully in the kingdom of God, here on earth.

## **Wednesday, February 15: Read 1 Corinthians 3:16-23**

So, what part of ourselves really needs to be turned "upside down?" Today's words from Paul make it clear: *all of it*. Our bodies and our minds belong to God, and when we begin to treat them otherwise, we are cutting ourselves off from the majesty of the healing power of God. We cannot live fully in the kingdom and at the same time follow our "natural" instincts by overindulging in alcohol, drugs, sex, food, cigarettes, soft drinks, and sugar. We also cannot cut God off from leading our decisions or being given the credit for our successes. When we give our bodies and our intellect over to God, we can begin to be transformed into a holier, happier, wiser creature we ever could have imagined being. Is any of this what the world would call "natural"? No. It is far greater than that – a fact that others will quickly recognize as we let God's light shine.

## **Thursday, February 16: Read Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18**

It's hard for us to fathom how revolutionary today's principles were at the time they were written. In a world filled with war, human sacrifice, Baal worship, and angry, competing gods, the Lord said to Moses, "You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy." In a land where every square inch of a farm or vineyard was precious, the Hebrews were to leave part of the harvest behind for the poor. Unimaginable. Business dealings should be founded on honesty, not power. Incredible. Law should be based on justice, not might. Mindblowing. These principles should sound familiar, because our culture was founded on them. But how common are they, really? What forces in our culture work for and against these ideals? How can we embrace or resist them?

## **Friday, February 17: Read Psalm 119: 33-40**

With the power of the Holy Spirit, we can live a life like the one described in today's psalm. We can "delight" in the commandments of God, even while the world laughs at the idea of loving *any* rule, let alone God's. When we regularly engage in what John Wesley called "act of piety" and "acts of mercy," we put ourselves directly in the pathway of God's grace, allowing ourselves to be transformed into the image of Christ, longing for God's precepts, trusting in God's Word, and walking in liberty. Just as we can learn to love exercise or healthy food with enough practice, we as recipients of God's grace can grow into a people who love our enemies, turn the other cheek, long for God's commandments, and ask to walk the extra mile. Together, let's turn the world upside down through the power of the Holy Spirit in each of us.

## **Saturday, February 18: Scripture Memorization: Matthew 5:48**

**"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."**

## **Sunday, February 19: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer for**

**Common Confession:** *Holy God, your law shows us the way of righteousness but we forsake your commandments. We have not provided for the poor or aided the disabled. We have not been truthful in our daily business; we have been unjust in our judgment of others. We have sought vengeance against our enemies; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us our sins and rouse in us sincere repentance. By the power of your Holy Spirit, free us to live as your holy people with Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*