



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

March 11-17, 2019

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent

Sermon: *Courage to Believe: "Conformed and Transformed"*

Notes from sermon on 3/10:

Prayer requests:

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

How has your faith transformed your life?

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

In Luke 13:35 Jesus says, "And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

1. To what sort of "seeing" does Jesus refer?
2. Is Jesus calling for more than a verbal declaration that he is the Messiah?
3. How might I live so I become a testimony that Jesus is truly the one who comes in the name of God?

**Monday, March 11: Read Philippians 3:17-4:1**

We are afraid, though we often don't even know why, or of what. We believe we have strong convictions until they are tested, then find ourselves doubting everything. We have a nagging feeling that we are supposed to be better...*more*...but don't know what that would even look like.

We continue our journey into Lent fully aware of the weakness of our human condition, or as Paul puts it in today's scripture, "the body of our humiliation" (vs. 21). We begin with confession and repentance, knowing we, too, have been "enemies of the cross" by valuing consumption over sacrifice and showering glory on many things that should bring us shame (vs. 19). Then we will explore through the scriptures this week how to "stand firm in the Lord" by allowing ourselves to be conformed and transformed into courageous, visible witnesses to our faith in a world that is increasingly uninterested in it. *What do you believe we need to "stand firm" against today?*

**Tuesday, March 12: Read Luke 13:31-35**

Perhaps the most fundamental tenant of our faith is the identity and power of Jesus Christ, yet this is often the very thing with which we find ourselves struggling in the face of an increasingly secular and modern world. In this gospel reading, Jesus is drawing nearer to the agony of his sacrifice on the cross while predicting the devastation of a Jerusalem that refuses to accept and follow God's Son. If we've read any history about what happens to Jerusalem in A. D. 70 and beyond (utter destruction, slaughter, famine, and nearly constant war), it is easy to weep with Christ over his beloved city. What about the violence, waste, discord, and loss we see in the countries, cities, and lives around us today, though? What pain could have been avoided, or *can* be avoided, by recognizing and accepting Christ's power to transform us and redeem us? What would the world look like if each person on earth was transformed into a creature of hope, joy, peace, and love, and acted the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, as is made available to us through belief and acceptance of Jesus Christ? *Why aren't we fighting harder for a world like this?*

**Wednesday, March 13: Read Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18**

So how do we begin to be conformed to Christ's image and transformed into this creature of love, joy, peace, and love? Yesterday's gospel pointed us to the truth that we must begin with Christ, and our scriptures for the rest of the week give us additional guidance. We begin with faith. There is perhaps no better example in history of faith in God than that of Abraham who, as an elderly man married to an elderly infertile woman, had enough faith in God's promise that Abraham would become a father of nations (thus become "Abraham") that he was willing to leave everything he knew and follow God. The key to Abraham's faith may be found in verse 7: "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur...to give you this land..." We trust people who have proven themselves trustworthy before. What has God already given you in this life? When has God been faithful to you in the past? When we take time to remember all that God has already done for us, it helps us have faith in God's promises for our future. It helps us accept the gifts and the challenges of a life following Christ.

**Thursday, March 14: Psalm 27:1-6**

This week's psalm is so rich in beauty and wisdom that we are taking two days to read it. In a world so dominated by fear and blind loyalty to anything that promises us protection and a sense of worth, turning to God as our stronghold is increasingly ridiculed...and rare. What happens when we rely on earthly things, however, to give us protection and identity? When has relying on God made all the difference?

**Friday, March 15: Read Psalm 27:7-14**

The tenacity and singlemindedness of the psalmist in seeking God's presence, wisdom, beauty, and protection gives us a wonderful example of how to take the next step in our faith journey. When we are tempted to look for fault and weakness in others, we can instead seek God's face in them (verse 8). When finding ourselves bitter about the shortcomings of our own earthly parents, we can instead rejoice in the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father (verse 10). Instead of first turning to Facebook, peers, or the loudest voice in the room for direction, we can open our Bibles (verse 11). All of this takes courage...courage to wait on the Lord...but that is what our Lenten journey is all about, and we have the guarantees of the promises of God that it will all result in eternal joy and victory.

**Saturday, March 16: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Philippians 3:21**

"He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself."

**Sunday, March 17: SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession:** *Merciful God, you have made us citizens of heaven, but we confess that we have set our minds on earthly things. We have let our desire for security restrain our commitment to serve the poor. We have let our fear of danger curb our obligation to love our enemies. We have let our love of things dull our generosity to the needy. We have let our craving for public status prevent our honesty about hidden sins. Yet, you know the desires of our heart and nothing is hidden from you. By the power of the Holy Spirit, conform our sin-weakened bodies to the glory of Christ, that we may be the body of Christ for the world. Amen.*