



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

March 12-18, 2018

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Sermon by Rev. Stephen Coleman: *"A New Covenant"*

Notes from sermon on 3/11:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Question (before sermon):

This week's passage from Jeremiah is part of his book known as the "Book of Comfort". What comfort, hope, good news – if any- do you find in these words from Jeremiah?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

What is new about the new covenant that Jeremiah describes in this passage?

With the new covenant written on our hearts, does that make it easier to follow; impossible to escape?

What constitutes a clean heart? What does it mean to have a new and right spirit within us?

Monday, March 12: Read Jeremiah 31:31-34

"The days are surely coming..." begins our scripture today. As we grow ever closer to Easter in our Lenten journey, we get a real sense of urgency in our scripture passages. Our need for deliverance and forgiveness is urgent; the harsh reality of what Jesus went through to save us is looming. Today's scripture from Jeremiah is part of his book known as the book of comfort. The Hebrew people have been taken into exile in Babylonian. Most likely they are wondering if the covenant with God has ended, if this is God's final word to them? Jeremiah offers comfort that judgment will not be the final word. God will make a new covenant with the people, one written on their hearts and not on stone. The heart has played an important part of Methodist theology. We talk a lot about holiness of heart and Wesley's heart was strangely warmed on that important day at Aldersgate. Stephen's sermon on Sunday will focus on the new covenant that is different from the old and written on our hearts. It will focus on God changing us now from inside out and what that means for us.

Tuesday, March 13: Read John 12:20-26

How nice it would seem if following Jesus just involved obeying some laws, having nice feelings toward one another, and doing some good deeds. Today's scripture smashes that sentiment, as Jesus lets his disciples know that his journey, and the journey of all true disciples, requires true sacrifice.

Foreshadowing his own journey into death for three days before his resurrection, Jesus uses the analogy of a single grain producing a harvest only when it dies. As we near the end of our Lenten journey, what still needs to "die" in us in order for our lives to produce a harvest? What have we been holding onto that is preventing us from true discipleship and bearing fruit?

Wednesday, March 14: Read John 12:27-33

"Father, save me from this hour." How easily Christ could have asked this and avoided the torture, humiliation, and death he went through to give us joy, peace, and life. How many times have we asked this, or simply run in the other direction, when faced with pain, sacrifice, or even inconvenience on the behalf of another? When we allow ourselves to be used by God for the sake of others, as Christ emptied himself to save us all, we are also allowing ourselves to be changed. God's covenant with us through the Son, written on our hearts, can transform us into disciples who can begin joyfully putting others ahead of ourselves. Let us ask God today to give us the courage and obedience to be fully used by God to glorify his name. When we die to self this way, we know we will experience life more fully than ever.

Thursday, March 15: Read Hebrews 5:5-10

Our Lenten journey is meant to bring us closer to Christ, ever transforming us to become more Christ-like. Today's scripture shows us, in no uncertain terms, that a Christ-like life is one of humility and servanthood. Jesus himself did not seek the glory and honor he so rightly deserved, but instead chose obedience and suffering...thereby bringing eternal salvation to all who believe in him. Today, let us focus on the amazing new covenant that God made with us through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son, allowing us to be transformed not through rigid obedience to laws but through a relationship with Jesus.

Friday, March 16: Read Psalm 51:1-12

We can feel the urgency, pain, and genuine repentance in today's psalm, asking God to have mercy, forgive, and wash us clean. Let us all pray this psalm today, having the courage to fully confess our sins and accept God's forgiveness. Let us all recognize that we are children of a new covenant, written on our hearts, where we can accept God's mercy and embrace the eternal life God is offering us because of the blood of the Lamb, not because of any deeds we have done or laws we have obeyed. Let us empty ourselves before God so we can be filled up with Christ. Let us ask God to change us from the inside out, creating in us a clean heart and renewing a right spirit within us. Amen.

Saturday, March 17: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Psalm 51:9-12

"Create in me a clean heart O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit."

Sunday, March 18: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in prayer our Prayer of

Common Confession: *Redeeming God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart, and we have not loved our neighbors as we ought; we have strayed from your commandments. Do not remember our sins but forgive our iniquities. Create in us a clean heart and put a new and right spirit within us. Through Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.*