



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

April 9-15, 2018

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester: *Show Them Your Hands*

Notes from sermon on 4/8:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Question (before sermon):

How has God ever healed your body, mind, or spirit?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. When Jesus appeared to the disciples, "he opened their minds to understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45). What is it to "understand" God's word?
2. What helps you to understand the word of God?
3. How does understanding feed your faith? In the coming week, take note of one new understanding that comes to you from something you hear or read or realize through another person.

Monday, April 9: Read Luke 24:36-43

We struggle to believe. We struggle to understand. Even when we do have faith and revelation, we struggle in trying to share them with others. Our scriptures this week address the ongoing struggle followers of Christ have had since the earliest days after the resurrection, and the trouble even the most devout Jews sometimes had in maintaining hope and faith in God's promises. They also give us wonderful insight into how God can give us faith and understanding, and use us to help others gain them, too. Our gospel reading today describes the first moments of Jesus appearing to his disciples after his resurrection. How did he convince them of his authentic presence? Not by arriving in splendor and glory, but by showing them his wounds. By showing them his humanity.

Sometimes the best thing we can do to testify to the presence of Christ in our lives is to do what he does in today's text: to show the world our wounds. Why? Because our wounds are often the places where we can reveal how God has most intimately healed us. The cracks, as it were, are what lets the light shine through.

Tuesday, April 10: Read Luke 24:44-48

It is not our job to open people's minds and make them understand (our version of) God's holy mysteries. That's God's job, as we see in today's scripture. We are not called to be sages or theological authorities; we are called to be *witnesses*. Witnessing means sharing what we have experienced personally – how Christ has been present in our lives, examples of the “God moments” we experience, the times when the Holy Spirit accomplished things we know we could not have done ourselves. Furthermore, when we immerse ourselves in God's Word, we can also be effective witnesses to the truth and the power of scripture. When have we been healed, comforted, empowered, convicted, directed, and enlightened through scripture? Most likely, those occasions were connected to times of hardship and confusion. Can we share both our wounds and God's healing Word with others?

Wednesday, April 11: Read Acts 3:12-19

It's so easy to attribute the blessings in our lives to something other than God. In today's scripture, the crowds are amazed at Peter's healing of a man lame from birth. What the crowd failed to understand was that Peter did not heal the man on his own power, but “in the name of Jesus Christ” (see Acts 3:6). How often are we like the crowds, rejecting and denying the very presence and power to whom we owe everything? How often do we put our faith in ourselves, our earthly leaders, or only in tangible matter? When we put our faith in the name and power of Jesus, we not only open ourselves up to healing, but can be incredibly effective witnesses to God's healing power for others.

Thursday, April 12: Read 1 John 3:1-7

Everyone understands loneliness. All of us need to feel loved. We all crave a sense of belonging. Our human condition of sin has created barriers of intimacy between one another and God. Christ's life, death, and resurrection demolished those barriers, purified us, and brought us all into the loving family of God. When we see us all as brothers and sisters of the same God and share this love of God with others, it tears down the facades of perfectionism and competition that keep us apart, and allows us to be authentic, whole, and at peace with one another.

Friday, April 13: Read Psalm 4

If we simply read verses 7 and 8 of today's psalm, it may sound as if the psalmist never experienced doubt, distress, or shame. When we read verses 1 and 2, however, we see otherwise. If we don't read verses 7 and 8 closely enough, we may think these are the words of a naturally happy and peaceful person. When we notice the words, “you have *put* gladness in my heart”, however, we realize that this peace and joy is a gift from God, not a personal strength. As an Easter people, we can celebrate being beloved, healed, and forgiven children of a God who understands our weaknesses, has endured our trials, and has heard our cries. We can show our wounds to each other and to God, and Christ himself showed his wounds to us. Through faith, we can enjoy God's intimate presence in every moment of our lives and point the way for others to enjoy it too.

Saturday, April 14: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Read 1 John 3:4a

“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God;
and that is what we are.”

Sunday, April 15: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in prayer our Prayer of Common Confession: *Good and gracious God, we are creatures of dust, ignorant of your revelation, misunderstanding your life, death, and resurrection among us, needing forgiveness. We repent of our failure to give as you have given to us. We beg your mercy for our fallen world. We seek your Word, that we may live with the faith of Jesus. Be our solace in this life and always. We ask this as your own children, holy and incomplete. Forgive us and lead us. Amen.*