



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

April 8-14, 2019

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

Sermon: *Courage to Believe: "The God Who Needs"*

Notes from sermon on 4/07:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

What have you learned about yourself this Lent?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. The events of Holy Week make up the central story of our faith. Can we see the suffering of others in our world in the passion of Jesus?
2. What are some ways that the daughters and sons of humanity are crucified today?
3. How are we called to respond?

Monday, April 8: Palm Reading: Read Luke 19:28-40

We are entering our final week before Holy Week, and the scriptures are demanding more of us – more time and more faith. Today's gospel description of Jesus's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem begins a journey to the cross for all of us that requires faith not only in our God and Savior, but in others. "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" This text requires more faith than it may seem at first glance, as it requires the disciples to not only trust Christ, but trust others that Christ is working through.

Can we trust God enough to trust others around us? It's so tempting to keep our faith just between ourselves and God. We want God to speak directly to us from the sky, but do we trust the voice of God speaking to us through our church, other believers, and the voice of a stranger? Are we willing to trust God to work through the human instruments and institutions around us? God brought us the miracle of Easter through actions of the Roman Empire and the Sanhedrin. What could God bring us today?

Tuesday, April 9: Palm Reading: Read Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

God has the power to transcend human frailty: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." God also works through human actions: "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." As children of the cross, we are called to both celebrate the presence of God's goodness and light in others, as we do on Palm Sunday when Jesus is celebrated by the people of Jerusalem, and have the faith to see God's goodness and light *despite* the action of others, as we will during our readings of the Passion of Christ. God is always at work bringing about God's kingdom, even when human behavior gives up whiplash due to its fickleness and disobedience. Much of the time we are more disgusted by our own behavior than anyone else's. Perhaps our journey through Lent has not gone as smoothly as we had hoped. Perhaps we discovered doubt and weakness in our souls where we had hoped to find steady growth and holiness. Today we can rejoice that God is still at work in us and through us, because and despite us, and it is never too late for us to travel to the foot of the cross and receive the incredible blessings of a Lenten journey and Easter Miracle.

Wednesday, April 10: Passion Reading: Read Psalm 31:9-16

The contrast between today's psalm and yesterday's is striking. It also perfectly illustrates how our God's power and faithfulness transcends our circumstances and emotions. In the blink of the eye, we go from celebration to mourning, just as Christ will journey from king to criminal in seemingly an instant. Today, let us have enough faith in God to be able to admit and confess the areas of our lives where we feel distress, grief, sorrow, weakness, horror, dread, scorn, and terror. When do we feel like a "broken vessel"? "My times are in your hand," the psalmist says to the Lord. Let us all trust God to redeem our dark times in due time, knowing we are fully known, loved, and redeemed through Christ's blood.

Thursday, April 11: Passion Reading: Read Luke 22:14-23:56

Our final two readings of the week are long. They require discipline, time, and commitment. In today's reading, we travel with Jesus into the Upper Room for the Last Supper, a ritual that has been faithfully repeated in Christ's church millions of times for over two thousand years. Christ's church, built upon the rock of Peter...the very person who betrayed Jesus three times in this very reason. Today's scripture both comforts us and makes us uncomfortable. It brings to mind some of the best moments of organized religion while reminding us of the human weakness that has often plagued our church throughout time and today. Most of all, though, it reminds us of how perfectly and divinely loved we are by a Savior who gave up everything for us and willingly submitted to Pontius Pilate and the cross to save us all.

Friday, April 12: Passion Reading: Read Luke 23:1-49

Next week, we will read the Passion of Christ according to the gospel of John. Today, we read Luke's account, with its wide cast of characters ranging from those ridiculing and betraying Jesus like Herod, Pilate, the crowds, and one crucified criminal, to those who risk public condemnation by supporting and believing in Jesus's true identity, such as Joseph of Arimathea, the other crucified criminal, and the centurion. Where would we have been in this cast? Are we willing to risk what others think of us for the sake of the gospel?

Saturday, April 13: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Psalm 118:21

"I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation."

Sunday, April 14: PALM SUNDAY: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our

Prayer of Common Confession: *God of heaven and earth, we give you thanks for sending us Jesus Christ in your name. Even though we profess to follow him, we confess that in times of trial we too often deny him. Forgive us and heal us, we pray. Help us to put our faith not in the princes of this world, but only in the Prince of Peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*