



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

April 16-22, 2018

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester: *One Flock, One Shepherd*

Notes from sermon on 4/15:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Question (before sermon):

What does it mean to lay down our lives for one another (1 John 3:16)?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. Think about people who have been “good shepherds” for you, sharing the love and showing the way of Jesus Christ. Who has helped to lead you in right paths or walked with you in dark valleys?
2. Who has given you comfort and calmed your fears?
3. Who has shown you hospitality and grace, making a place at the table for you, even when you felt surrounded by enemies? How have you done these things for others?

Monday, April 16: Read John 10:11-18

Who do we follow? To which voices do we listen? In this day and age, if we do a quick inventory of our podcasts, twitter feeds, Instagram posts, favorite cable news channels, and bloggers, we can become quickly overwhelmed by how many people and voices we have chosen to “follow,” and what effect they may be having on our thoughts and decisions. Christians are no exception; in fact, the body of Christ seems more scattered and splintered than ever, following different and deeply divided politicians, social policies, and theologies.

Christian author, speaker, and activist Shane Claiborne wrote, “Jesus is returning, and he is looking for a bride, not a harem.” If we look around us today, the body of Christ- his church- does not represent the single, unified body of believers intended by Christ when he called us his one “flock” that follows the voice of our one good shepherd. Are we all truly listening to Christ’s voice above all others? Are we helping open the gates of hospitality, tolerance, and understanding so all can be invited into the flock?

Tuesday, April 17: Read Acts 4:5-12

“By what power or by what name did you do this?” In the earliest days after Christ ascended to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to his followers at Pentecost, “many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.” (Acts 2:43). The Jewish leadership arrested Peter and John, demanding to know who they were following, and where they got their power. Peter’s answer should be a guide for us all. The singularity of the earliest Christians’ voice and mission stands in stark contrast to the complicated hierarchy of power and politics that characterized Roman Palestine in the 1st century. Whereas the Sadducees had to fight for power with Pharisees, Essenes, Herod, Rome, et cetera...the followers of Christ had one Lord, one voice, one cornerstone. Who do we resemble more today- the Sadducees or the apostles?

Wednesday, April 18: Read 1 John 3:16-20

So, what is the key to becoming one flock in unity under one voice? *Love*. As we read in today’s passage, the entire reason we have been brought together is because of greatest act of love ever performed on Earth: Christ laying down his life for us. We are called, therefore, to lay down our lives for one another. When God’s love “abides” in us, through the power of the Holy Spirit brought to us at Pentecost, we are capable of this degree of Christ-like love for one another and for God. Are we showing unconditional, sacrificial love for one another at Reveille? For all Methodists? What about for all Catholics, Presbyterians, Southern Baptists, Pentecostals? What about for all races, religions, socioeconomic groups? Can we begin listening more closely to Christ’s voice every day, through prayer, worship, and scripture, so we can better allow the Holy Spirit to enable us to love like this? What would our church and our world look like then?

Thursday, April 19: Read 1 John 3:21-24

In today’s scripture we are called to not just follow Christ, but *abide* in him. What does this mean? How do we do this? Our reading provides us the first step: obey his commandments. What were they? To *love* God and to *love* our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40). There is no mention of dogma, ritual, politics, or complicated theology – the things that separate Christians from one another today. There is only love. When we love God and love one another, we put on Christ, allowing Christ’s heart to become our heart. Our human nature fights against unity, selflessness, and obedience. Our God-given Holy Spirit craves it.

Friday, April 20: Read Psalm 23

Today we read one of the best known scriptures in the entire Bible, but we are challenged to read it differently, perhaps, than we usually do. In addition to reading it from the perspective of our single, lonely voice crying out to God in our time of need, what if we also read it as a single body of believers who is abiding in Christ and therefore can be the face of the Good Shepherd to others? As Christ’s love makes us lie down in green pastures, can our love help others do the same? Can we lead others in right paths, as we are led? Are we willing to be with people through their darkest valleys, as Christ is there for us? When others face disgrace and isolation, will we prepare a place for them at our table? Can we all invite one another in to dwell in the house of the Lord together, in unity, now and forever?

Saturday, April 21: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Read 1 John 3:23

“And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of the Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has loved us.”

Sunday, April 22: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in prayer our Prayer of

Common Confession: *Lord, have mercy on us. We talk about love, but our actions betray us. We talk about love, but we neglect the poor. We talk about love, but we fail to love one another. Lord, have mercy on us. Forgive us, and abide in us by the power of your Spirit so that our lives may show our love for Jesus Christ, in whose body we live and in whose name we pray. Amen.*