



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

April 17-23, 2017

## SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester:

*"The Gospel According to Calvin and Hobbes: The Ant Problem"*

Notes from sermon on 4/16:

Prayer requests:

### Family Focus Question (before sermon):

Jesus says, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." What are some ways, large and small, that disciples of Jesus Christ can live this teaching today?

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

Jesus says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit."

1. How has this been true in your life?
2. What does it mean for God to "prune us?"
3. How do we know when we are "bearing fruit?"

### Monday, April 17: Read John 15:1-11

So, we have just gone through 40 days of Lent and experienced the miracle of Easter. Now what? What is supposed to be *different* about us now that we have gone through 40 days of Lent and are an Easter People who know the grace of God brought to us through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ? Where are we to turn for inspiration, guidance, and wisdom? If your answer was "Calvin and Hobbes, of course" you have come to the right place! Have we got a sermon series coming up for you. If you answer is also "Jesus" then you are also in the right place, and reading the right scripture for today.

As an Easter people, we are first and foremost to maintain a relationship with our loving Savior. When we abide in Christ, staying close to his example, teaching, commandments, and love, we open ourselves up to the fruitful, joyful lives Christ died to give us. Let us take time to abide in Christ today, through prayer, meditation, scripture, and whatever else makes you feel close to our risen Savior.

**Tuesday, April 18: Read John 15:12-17**

So does this mean that being a good Christian means simply living in quiet solitude with Jesus? The answer scripture gives us and our own Methodist tradition is an emphatic “no!” As John Wesley was fond of saying, “The New Testament knows no solitary religion,” and it is readings today’s that proves his point. For Jesus, faith is always supremely manifest in community, a community characterized by self-giving love. Jesus teaches us in this story that there is often a disconnect between our faithfulness to God and our relationship with our neighbor. It is possible for us to see our relationship with God as so personal, so individualized, that it is only a relationship between God and me and not a relationship with anyone else. In our evangelical tradition, we have placed a great emphasis on a “personal” relationship with Jesus Christ and that is indeed important. However, that relationship presupposes that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ will also lead us into a Christ-like relationship with other persons.

**Wednesday, April 19: Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5**

Today, we focus on another facet of what it means to be an Easter people. We are not expected to only sometimes abide in Christ, and occasionally love one another as Christ has loved us- we are expected to live in the light of Christ always. Like the earliest Christians to whom Paul was writing in today’s passage who were facing persecution and uncertainty, we too can have a light and joy that transcends circumstances. We can love when we are not loved. We can live in peace during times of upheaval. We can be light when the rest of the world sees only darkness. We can do this through our connection with Christ and our love for one another. We may not have all the answers, or know what earthly circumstances await us, but we can have complete and ultimate faith in God’s plan for the healing and transformation of the world, and live every day enjoying and working for God’s kingdom.

**Thursday, April 20: Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26**

God’s plan involves all of us working in humility and harmony with one another. Being an Easter people is not a “holy competition” between individuals or congregations. When we recognize the Christ that is abiding in each and every one of God’s children, we will begin to understand that we are incomplete without one another. Just as Jesus taught us during his life on Earth, there is no single person who is not a vital part of the body of Christ, whether they be a Samaritan, a tax collector, a woman, a child, a democrat, a republican, an immigrant, an addict...Christ is calling us all to come together as one body, to love each other as we love our own body and selves. Let’s try to see one another today as parts of our very selves. Who do we most struggle to see as part of our own “body”? How can we connect with them?

**Friday, April 21: Read Colossians 3:12-17**

Today’s scripture beautifully wraps up the themes we have explored this week, while also recognizing that it won’t always be easy to work in perfect harmony as one body. We will need to forgive, as we have been forgiven. We will need patient, as God has been oh...so...patient with us. The key to it all? Abiding in Christ- his words, teachings, example – and with a spirit of gratitude work with each other to help us all grow in wisdom, understanding, and love. This is the joy of Easter. This is the perfect love that Christ gave us. This is the peace and power of an Easter People.

**Saturday, April 22: Scripture Memorization: Colossians 3:14**

“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

**Sunday, April 23: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer for**

**Common Confession:** *God, you have made known to us the ways of life. Yet, too often, we put other things above you and turn away from the ways of life and toward the ways of death. Forgive us and guide us back into your presence, that we may know the fullness of joy. Amen.*