



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

April 30- May 6, 2018

6th Sunday of Easter

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

Notes from sermon on 4/29:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Question (before sermon):

In our Gospel lesson this week, Jesus speaks of his extreme love for us, calls us his friends, and says that he makes known to us everything that he hears from God. How does thinking of Christ as our friend and lover— or Lord and Master— affect our daily living?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. How can Jesus be both our Lord and our friend?
2. How do Christian friendships differ from other friendships you may have?
3. What are the primary characteristics of "Christian friendship?"

Monday, April 30: Read John 15:9-11

The word "friend" has come to mean many things in our modern society. It's even become a verb, as in "to friend" someone on social media. We may have school friends, church friends, Facebook friends, family friends...each with its own set of boundaries, time spent together (if any at all), and levels of intimacy. But what does it mean to have Jesus as a friend? What does friendship really mean to Jesus?

Our first clues to these questions may be found in the very opening verses of this week's readings. Christ's use of the words "love," "joy," "abide" and "commandments" jump out at us immediately. Immediately, we know that any relationship with our Savior is founded in the perfect love that comes from God. We also learn that Christ doesn't want us some of the time, or just on Sunday mornings, but wants us to *abide* in him. In addition, our friendship involves obedience – for the sake of our own ultimate joy and well-being. The friendship Christ is offering is something deeper, holier, and more eternal than our common early experiences and definitions. How can we become this friend to Christ?

Tuesday, May 1: Read John 15:12-17

Twenty years ago, the week after youth Sunday, a member of Doug Forrester's church wrote him a letter arguing that Jesus was proclaimed in that service in a way that was too familiar. "Jesus is not my buddy or pal. He is my Lord," the letter said. In today's scripture, Jesus calls his followers his friends, not his servants. In other parts of the Bible, however, we are taught to fear the Lord, revere Christ, and have every knee bow. We obviously still struggle with how to rectify these two seemingly contradictory images of our Lord. Perhaps if we focus on the sacrificial nature of the love Jesus describes in today's scripture - and demonstrated for us all on the cross- we can better picture this version of Christ's friendship. We can imagine how devoted we would be to a friend who sacrificed everything to save us. How sure we would be of his or her love for us. As Christians, we have the privilege of having a friend who gave his life for us, who took away the eternal consequences of our sin, and repaired our broken relationship with our Creator. He did this fully loving us as we are, broken and sinful, right now. What does he ask in return? That we love God, and love one another, as he has loved us.

Wednesday, May 2: Read Acts 10:44-48

So who qualifies to be Jesus' friend? Who is worthy of our friendship? This argument is as old as Christianity itself, yet was answered on the day of Pentecost. God the Holy Spirit chose to fall upon, and abide in, both Jews and Gentiles alike. God did not withhold God's gifts from anyone according to race, nationality, education, or religion. If they loved Christ and desired to follow his commandments, being baptized in his name, they received the gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit. Imagine the level of friendship two believers can have when they allow the Holy Spirit living inside both of them to come together in love and obedience to God's Word? Have we sought Christian friendships based in the power of the Holy Spirit? Have we allowed ourselves to experience the power of friendships that challenge us to abide in Christ, obey his commandments, and love one another unconditionally and even sacrificially?

Thursday, May 3: Read 1 John 5:1-6

"To love the parent is to love the child." We cannot love Christ without loving each other. We cannot say we are obeying Christ's commandments unless we love his lambs (see Christ's words to Peter in John 21:17). Being a friend to Jesus means more than just feeling like we have a buddy by our side, no matter what. It calls us to love one another. It enables us to conquer evil, temptation, and even death. It enables us to be one family, with God as our Father; one flock with Christ as our shepherd.

Friday, May 4: Read Psalm 98

As we read today's psalm of praise, we are called to make a "joyful noise" to the Lord, singing a "new song," for God has "done marvelous things." These words describe an intimate, ongoing relationship where we come together with all of creation. Our ability to come before God has nothing to do with our talent (nothing is ever said about our joyful noise being *pretty*) or better than anyone else's. We don't need to fear losing God's love, for his love is "steadfast" and "faithful." This is true Christian friendship: joyful, eternal, constant, faithful, and sacrificial...for the praise of God and the betterment of all God's children, now and forever.

Saturday, May 5: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: John 15:9

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love."

Sunday, May 6: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in prayer our Prayer of Common Confession: *Lord we confess that we suffer today because of sin, both the sins we have chosen and the sins committed against us. We have done things we should not have done, and we have neglected to do those things we should have done. Save us from ourselves; save us from the forces of Evil in this world. We do not have the power to undo what has already been done, so grant us grace to bear present burdens and courage to change things that can be changed. Teach us how to live as those prepared to die and dwell eternally with you and your Boy Child, our Savior, Jesus Christ.*