



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

May 7-13, 2018

## Ascension Sunday

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester: "Miracle Drug"

Notes from sermon on 5/06:

Prayer requests:

### Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

In Ephesians 1, Paul writes "you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints." What does this mean for you in your own spiritual life? What brings you hope?

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

The Ascension of Christ to be seated at the right hand of God is a grand liturgical celebration in the life of the church. It marks forty days of celebrating Easter and God's triumph over the powers of oppression, depression, and our fear of death through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is one of many images we have for Christ: good shepherd, suffering servant, great physician. How does the image of the ascended Christ affect your understanding of who he is?

What are the strengths and weaknesses in this image of Christ for you? Why do you think Ascension Sunday is such a grand celebration in the life of the church?

### Monday, May 7: Read Ephesians 1:15-19

This week we celebrate a passing of the torch. When Christ ascended into heaven, he left his ministry in the hands of his church to continue his work. How could the earliest believers be up to the task? How were they supposed to know what to do? How are we, today, to accomplish the work Christ has left for us? What is that work?

Today's passage from Paul's letter to the Ephesians echoes many of the words of Christ in giving us the start to our answer: *faith* and *love*. When we have faith in the Lord Jesus and love toward others, we

become a blessing to Christ's church and all of God's creation. Then, through the power of the Holy Spirit, as we grow closer to Christ we will be given wisdom and revelation. Let's start with faith and love.

**Tuesday, May 8: Read Ephesians 1:20-23**

We have power- God's power - which God "put to work" in Christ through his resurrection and ascension, and which Christ gave to us. Through God's grace, we do not have to view Christ's ascension as an abandonment or loss, but a gift. This week we not only celebrate the living Christ who is now and forever seated at the right hand of the Father and glorified by all Creation, we can also marvel that we have been named heirs to God's power, working through the Holy Spirit in us. How are we celebrating Christ's power in our daily lives?

**Wednesday, May 9: Read Luke 24:44-53**

So many gifts were bestowed upon Christ's followers, witnesses to his ascension, in these few short verses. First, Christ opened their minds to understand his relationship to the Hebrew scriptures - that Jesus was the true Messiah bringing forgiveness of sins and a chance to repent, or turn away, from destructive behavior. Next, Christ hints at the coming gift of the Holy Spirit, which will arrive at Pentecost. He then blessed them before allowing them to witness his ascension to heaven. All of us reading these holy scriptures are blessed to also be "witnesses" of Christ's love, power, and glory. Will we respond as Christ's apostles, with joy, worship, and continual blessings to God?

**Thursday, May 10: Read Acts 1:1-11**

Today's passage gives a more complete description of the moments after Christ's ascension, and ends with an almost comical image of the apostles staring (probably open-mouthed) at the sky. What was going through their heads? Well, they didn't have too much time to stand and think, for "suddenly" two "men in white robes" ask them why they are just standing there, for there's work to do- Jesus will be coming back! This Sunday, we will be challenged to both take a moment to "look to the sky" as witnesses to our risen and ascended Christ, but not to just stay there...we have work to do. From our first reading this week, we know that whatever we are called to do will be grounded in faith and love. We know that with every moment we spend growing closer to God in prayer, worship, scripture reading, and any other means of God's grace, we will be given wisdom and power to do God's work.

**Friday, May 11: Read Psalm 47**

Joy. Gratitude. Praise. Witness. Love. Today's psalm demonstrates them all. We can use this psalm to allow God to transcend our earthly emotions that may pull us into depression, fear, self-loathing, and hopelessness, and instead live every day as joyful witnesses to Christ's love and power. When we feel down, we can "shout to God with loud songs of joy." (vs. 1) As Christ taught us, we are all beloved children of God and heirs to his throne, so we find comfort in the fact that "he chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves." (vs. 3) When we become self-absorbed or lost, we can always "sing praises" to our King.

**Saturday, May 12: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Ephesians 1:15-16**

"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers."

**Sunday, May 13: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in prayer our Prayer of**

**Common Confession:** *God, lover of humankind, you have asked us to proclaim your name to all people. We confess that we have held back from doing that, shy and self-conscious. Forgive us, we pray, and empower us in Jesus' name. Amen.*