



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

June 25-July 1, 2018

1st Sunday in Sermon Series: The Summer of Forgiveness

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester: "Seventy-Seven Times"

Notes from sermon on 6/24:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

Why does the Lord's Prayer tie our forgiveness to how we forgive others?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. Is it generally more difficult for you to forgive another person or to receive forgiveness?
Why?
2. This week's reading from Matthew 18:15-22 is one of the rare places where Jesus uses the word "church." Why is it so important for the church to be a place of forgiveness?
3. In Matthew 18, Jesus says, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Many people do not know that this statement is made in the context of conflict and forgiveness. How does this fact change how you understand this verse?

Monday, June 25: Read Matthew 18:15-22

Today we begin our preparation for Reveille's July sermon series focusing on *forgiveness*. This topic was of utmost importance to Jesus, as we will discover through many scriptures, and is a major theme throughout the Bible. While most of us recognize the fact that forgiving someone is the nice, "right" thing to do, we may not know exactly how to do it, or the depths of what forgiveness means for our relationships with God, others, and our selves.

Today's text from Matthew deals in very specific terms with the actual mechanics of forgiveness. How often do we actually deal with the transgressions of others in the way Jesus prescribes here? What would happen if everyone's first response to a perceived wrongdoing was to go directly to the person to work it

out, never mentioning it to anyone else? Why is it so important that the church be a place where people find unlimited forgiveness and freedom from strife, gossip, and grudges? Is it that way today?

Tuesday, June 26: Read Psalm 130

Perhaps one of the reasons we find it so hard to forgive others is because we find it so hard to believe that we can be forgiven. Each of us comes before the altar weighed down with secrets, regrets, and painful memories of our sins. Today's psalmist comes to God painfully aware of his iniquities, yet puts his trust in God as the source of his forgiveness and, subsequently, his freedom. Learning to forgive begins with learning that God forgives us. The entire Bible is a story of God's continual and unlimited forgiveness of a beloved people who are almost constantly failing God. All of us struggle with the pain of sin. All of us seek forgiveness and redemption. How can we make our church a place where every person who enters our doors will see God's open arms and capacity to forgive anything?

Wednesday, June 27: Read Ephesians 4:25-32

Today's passage from Paul's letter to the church of Ephesus gives a lot of guidance for how we can use the power of the Holy Spirit, of whom we have already been "sealed," to avoid giving an "opportunity to the devil" to create discord within the body of Christ. First, always have honest, open communication, recognizing that we are all one body and belong to one another. Second, "do not let the sun go down on your anger" (verse 26), thereby preventing "the devil" from allowing resentment and anger to grow and morph. Make sure we are all doing our part to give to, not just receive from, the church. Always use our words to give grace, not judgment, to others. And forgive one another, as Christ has forgiven us. Which of these comes most naturally for us and could be demonstrated more often as an example to others? With which do we struggle the most?

Thursday, June 28: Read Matthew 5:23-24

It can be so easy to go through the motions of religious observance while underneath, we are teeming with resentment and anger. How often have we arrived at church having bickered with our family for the entire ride, only to smile and put on a holy countenance as soon as we see someone in the parking lot? Today's words from Christ show that God is not interested in our holy acts of worship without our engaging in holy acts of fellowship and love for one another. When we are in strife with someone else, it stands in the way of our relationship with God and robs us of the peace, love, and joy Christ died to give us. Who do we need to be reconciled with today? Can we follow the words of Christ from our first gospel reading this week in carrying it out?

Friday, June 29: Read Psalm 32

This psalm beautifully and tragically paints a picture of what happens to us when we are weighed down with the secret shame of our own sin. How many of us have wasted away, felt weighed down, and lost strength when keeping silent about our transgressions? And when have we experienced the joy of the psalmist when unburdening ourselves by confessing our sins and receiving forgiveness? Confession is an integral part of forgiveness. Is there anything we need to confess to God today? To someone else? Is there anyone whom we know needs to confess something to us, but needs to better see that they will receive God's love and forgiveness through us? Let us pray today for God's grace to work in us to spread the Good News of God's grace, forgiveness, and redemption through Christ through how we seek and accept forgiveness ourselves and offer it, freely and unlimitedly, to others.

Saturday, June 30: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Ephesians 4:32

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ forgave you." (ESV)

Sunday, July 1: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common

Confession: *Almighty and all-loving God, through your Son Jesus Christ, you have reconciled the world to yourself. Help us now to be reconciled with one another, that again we might dwell in the warmth of your*

love. Inspire us with your Holy Spirit to put aside the cloak of pride and put on Christ, that we might forgive and be forgiven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.