



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

July 2-8, 2018

2nd Sunday in Sermon Series: The Summer of Forgiveness

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester:

“As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us”

Notes from sermon on 7/1:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

What do you think Jesus means when he says in Matthew 18 that we must “forgive your brother or sister from your **heart**.” What does he mean by “heart?”

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. Is it harder for you to give or receive forgiveness?
2. Why is this true?
3. Why do we sometimes prefer the pain of holding a grudge to the liberation of forgiving someone?

Monday, July 2: Read Matthew 18:23-35

We begin our second week in our sermon series, “The Summer of Forgiveness,” where we take a break from the lectionary and focus on what the Bible, and more specifically, Jesus, say about forgiveness (hint: *a lot*). This topic is central to the Gospel message of God’s grace and forgives through Christ, and imperative in maintaining healthy, loving relationships with one another. So why do we struggle so much with it? Why do we so often fail to forgive others, like the slave in today’s gospel reading, even when we have received so much forgiveness by God?

All of our readings this week will highlight this integral relationship between forgiving and being forgiven. Why is God’s forgiveness of us so tightly bound to our forgiveness of others? How is our willingness or unwillingness to forgive tied to the health of our own spiritual lives and the health of our own souls? Is forgiveness as central to our congregational life as it should be? Why or why not?

Tuesday, July 3: Read Psalm 25:11-22

In yesterday's scripture, we saw how quickly the slave owing ten thousand talents forgot the fact that he had been forgiven his debts. When owed a much smaller debt, he refused to forgive. While we can easily become righteously indignant over someone else's obvious hypocrisy, we too often forget that Jesus's parable is talking about *us*. If we instead begin every day as today's psalmist, acknowledging our guilt ("for it is great") and asking for God's forgiveness, we can remain cognoscente of God's constant grace in our lives. None of us is without sin, and none of us is capable of repaying the insurmountable debts of our own trespasses against God and against each other. Only God's grace, made available to us through Christ, can wash away our sins, and we live every day in the palm of God's loving, protective hand. Like the psalmist, many of us have troubled hearts, afflicted consciences, and a myriad of "foes." Today, let us confess our sins and experience the joy and relief of laying down our burden before God and receiving God's incredible grace and forgiveness.

Wednesday, July 4 – INDEPENDENCE DAY – Read 1 John 1:5-10

We live in a culture where admitting guilt can seem fatal. We've seen the sudden and violent end of careers in politics, entertainment, and business when a single sensational sin met an unforgiving public. When we pretend that we are perfect, we are not only deceiving ourselves (verse 8), but we are refusing the greatest gift ever given us: grace. Today, let us declare independence from our self-imposed prison of appearances, secrecy, guilt, and sin and accept the amazing freedom of grace offered to us. Let us confess our sins, knowing God will forgive and cleanse us from our unrighteousness. Happy Independence Day!

Thursday, July 5: Read Matthew 6:9-15

So is that all we need to do? Ask God to forgive us, then happily go about our day? Not so fast. Christ's words are very clear: "If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Ouch! Even when teaching us to pray, we are to ask for forgiveness in the same breath as we forgive others. Do we pray this way? Are we truly able to unburden ourselves of the guilt of a sin if we are refusing to unburden ourselves of the pain, resentment, anger, and strife of unforgiveness? Are we really able to recognize and accept the joy and freedom of grace if we have not offered it to someone else? God knows our sins have both divine and earthly consequences. Can we fully live in a kingdom of forgiveness without helping create that kingdom for others on earth?

Friday, July 6: Read Colossians 3:12-15

Paul's beautiful words to the church in Colossae could easily have been written directly to Reveille UMC and all other churches today. We are a human institution, complete with different personalities, political views, ideas, and temperaments, but when we come together clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, forgiving one another as the Lord has forgiven us, we can experience the love, harmony, and peace of Christ's one body. Let us all find ways to come together in this way, rejoicing in opportunities to show one another grace and forgiveness. Let us show this exquisite picture of God's kingdom to our community and our world, thereby inviting others into it. We won't be perfect at it, but, rest assured, God will forgive us when we fall short, as we will forgive one another. Amen.

Saturday, July 7: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Matthew 6:12

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Sunday, July 8: 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.*