



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

August 7-13, 2017

Sermon by Guest Preacher David Hindman:
Good News for Tough Times: The End of the Law

Notes from sermon on 8/06:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Question (before sermon):

Romans 10 says, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
How do you bring good news?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. In Matthew 14, Why did Jesus send the disciples ahead while he stayed to pray alone?
2. How do you spend time alone with God?
3. How do times of turmoil and anxiety affect your trust in God?

Monday, August 7: Read Romans 10:5-15

Broken families. Broken hearts. Broken promises. Broken relationships. Broken dreams. Broken systems. Broken laws. Broken people. As we continue our sermon series on good news for tough times, we prepare this week for a sermon from guest preacher David Hindman in which we begin by being painfully aware of the brokenness we can see and feel around us and often within us. Brokenness is the gap between the people we strive to be and the fallible people we are. It is the gap between God's perfection and our imperfection. It is the divisions we create and perpetuate between all of us in God's creation. We can try to follow laws to save us from ourselves, but we always break them or use them to judge one another. We are given families, tribes, and nations, only to turn on one another or misplace our loyalty as an excuse to vilify the outsider.

This week, we will see all of this human brokenness in the scriptures, but we will also see something even greater: God's grace. In today's words from Paul we are reminded that good works cannot save us, for no human has the capacity to save herself. Only God, only grace, can set us free and release us from our condemnation. Grace repairs the brokenness we feel, brought to us by Jesus who restores what was broken, fulfilling God's promise of salvation, fulfilling the law.

Tuesday, August 8: Read Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Thirty-seven chapters into our Bible, we are already reading about gossip, jealousy, deceit, slavery, and attempted murder...and that's all within the founding family of God's chosen people! Not only is the dysfunction and enmity between Jacob's sons grossly evident here, but notice the casual mention of the "caravan of Ishmaelites" in verse 25, reminding us how just two generations earlier, Abraham cast out his firstborn son, Ishmael, due to Sarah's jealousy and insecurity. If we read this passage with a focus on humankind's innate capacity for love, joy, and peace, we will become depressed, jaded, and disgusted. But if we change our focus to see the existence of God's healing grace, steadfast love, and kept promises, our entire paradigm changes. We see Ishmael's descendants flourishing, just as God promised in Genesis 21:13. We see Joseph spared and on his way to Egypt where he will eventually be able to save all of his people from starvation. We read the names of Joseph's would-be-murderers, famous not for this one horrible act of youthful weakness, but for being the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel. God's grace is so much more powerful than any human weakness in this story or any of ours today.

Wednesday, August 9: Read Matthew 14:22-33

So how do we access this grace? How do we enjoy this eternal love, peace, life, and joy that can transcend our circumstances and save us from our own sin and weakness? Through faith in our Savior Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote in Romans 10:10 from our text on Monday, "trusting in the heart leads to righteousness, and confessing with the mouth leads to salvation." The power of trusting in the power and glory and healing of Jesus can heal us in amazing ways. The power of confessing that faith aloud so others can hear and also be saved can heal the world in ways unimaginable. We are called today in the scriptures and in God's loving spirit in our hearts to confess our faith in Christ aloud and to the world, so all can have the hope of God's grace made available to us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, saving us from trying to save ourselves.

Thursday, August 10: Read Deuteronomy 26:5-11

This week we add an extra scripture passage to our regular lectionary readings. We find this passage in the midst of chapters and chapters of Hebrew laws in which God's chosen people were given 613 commandments in order to set themselves apart and "Be holy, as God is holy." (Lev. 11:44). Those of us who are not observant Jews may be tempted to skip over chapters like these, but if we do, we miss out on seeing evidence of God's grace and love of all people laced throughout the scriptures. Today's words show us that it's not in following the law that we are saved, but in remembering what God has done for us. We learn that we follow God's commandments not to be better than others, or to figure out "who will go to heaven" and who will go down into the region below" (see Romans 10:6-7), but so that we can be instruments of God's love and peace and grace for all.

Friday, August 11: Read Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22

Psalms like these were meant to be sung aloud in public so all would remember God's faithfulness, love, power, and grace. Today, let us read the psalm once, as is, praising God for what God did for the Hebrew people and in preserving the earthly bloodline of our savior, Lord Jesus Christ. Then let us rewrite the psalm in our own words. What wondrous works has God done in our lives? How will we "sing" them to others so all can live in the joyful assurance of God's grace?

Saturday, August 12: Scripture Memorization: Romans 5:15 (and Isaiah 52:7)

"How beautiful are the feet of those who announce good news."

Sunday, August 13: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Opening

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, we call upon you. Save us! We are intimidated by our circumstances, distracted from your purposes, drowning in doubts and fears. We are presumptuous about your will, belittling others and magnifying ourselves. We envy the blessings of others, secretly despising their dreams. We have hardened our hearts to the suffering of our brothers and sisters, feeding ourselves in the face of the injustice that holds them captive. Lord Jesus, who searches our hearts, lift us from sin and help us to walk with you in faith, humility, and love. Amen.*