



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

August 27-September 2, 2018

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Sermon Series: *God Unbound*

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester: *"Human Approval or God's Approval?"*

Notes from sermon on 8/26:

Prayer requests:

**Family Focus Questions (before sermon):**

In what ways are you seeking human approval over God's approval in your life right now?

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

1. How can we serve Christ and please the people around us?
2. Is it possible to please both God and people while remaining a servant of Christ?
3. How can we be sure that we do not "pervert the gospel of Christ," remaining true to its original form and message?

**Monday, August 27: Read Galatians 1:1-9**

Imagine you are the pastor of a brand new church. Now imagine that you have had a personal encounter with the risen Christ that informs your sermons, an encounter that set the trajectory for your life and ministry. Now imagine preaching about this experience to your brand new congregation. Got it? Good. Now imagine someone coming into your faith community behind you and teaching everyone the exact opposite of what you just taught them, and doing so again and again. Now you understand what Paul was dealing with in Galatia.

This week we begin preparation for a new sermon series that will take us through Paul's epistle to the Galatians, and using Dr. Elaine Heath's book *God Unbound: Wisdom from Galatians for the Anxious Church*, we will explore the many similarities between the life of the church as Paul experienced it and our own experience as modern United Methodists.

**Tuesday, August 28: Read Galatians 1:10-12**

*Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval?* This is a question for the ages. Sometimes, being a Christian forces us to push against the cultural tide. It can lead to us being scorned, excluded, and dismissed, just as Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount. Other times, it is the best hope for this bitterly divided and wounded world. Doug's sermon on Sunday will serve as encouragement for those who feel their faith is making them an outsider, and what it means for us to worship a God who meets us on the margins. As we prepare for this Sunday, let us ask ourselves this same question – do we seek human approval or God's approval, even in when trying to do God's work through Reveille? Do we find ourselves pushing up against popular culture, or pushing against the teachings of Christ? How do we effectively "fish for people" in today's culture without trying to "please" them? Dr. Heath's book *God Unbound* is a fabulous resource for addressing this last question, and many more. If you haven't yet picked up your copy, stop by the resource desk in the Welcome Center.

**Wednesday, August 29: Read Matthew 5:1-11**

There is no better place to go to than the Beatitudes for studying what Christ teaches us about the "currency" of the Kingdom of Heaven. What are the behaviors and attitudes most valued by Christ, and most powerful for helping to bring about God's kingdom on earth? Do we see these behaviors modeled in our leaders and cultural idols today? Why not? How can we more effectively model these behaviors ourselves as individuals and a church? How can we more passionately seek out and help bless those in our society who are poor in spirit, meek, hungry and thirsty for righteous change, and in need of mercy?

**Thursday, August 30: Read Matthew 5:10-11**

We live in an interesting and challenging time in the life of our church, where we can find ourselves as much at odds with the beliefs and actions of other Christian faith communities as we do with the secular culture at large. Some in the Christian community in the United States feel under attack for their beliefs...but how should they respond? How do we stay true to the gospel and remain poor in spirit, meek, pure in heart, and a peacemaker? How do we resist the temptations of popular culture or false prophets who may lead us away from Christ's teachings, but also resist entrenching ourselves in practices and viewpoints that may be more entrenched in human tradition than Christ's pure gospel, hindering our ability to reach today's lost sheep?

**Friday, August 31: Read Psalm 96**

Today's psalm begins with declaring we should sing to the Lord a *new* song. How can we do that at Reveille this year? How can we proclaim all that we hold sacred, including all of the sentiments of this exquisite psalm, but in a new way? If we read Dr. Heath's book, we will see that one of the ways to renew our faith is to not look for new-age beliefs, but go further back into our own tradition and look for the "belief behind the belief," as reading Old Testament scriptures can do for us when we read through the light of the gospel. As we prepare for Reveille Day and the launch of a new academic year, let us come together to compose a new song that will bring the Good News of Christ and God's love to our community and world.

**Saturday, September 1: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Galatians 1:10**

"Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ."

**Sunday, September 2: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of**

**Common Confession:** *Loving, righteous God, our hearts are defiled with the wickedness you hate. You have called us to yourself, but we have gone away. Forgetting your living Word, we cling to dead traditions. Deceiving ourselves, we abandon your commandments. Hypocrites, we honor you with our lips while our hearts are far from you. Cleanse our hearts from evil intentions; cleanse our tongues from evil words*