



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

October 1-7, 2018

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester:

The Next Faithful Step: "Gideon-The Weakest of the Least"

Notes from sermon on 9/30:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

What do you think God saw in Gideon (Judges 6) to make God call him into service to God's people?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. God promised Gideon to be with him. How can we know God is with us?
2. In what ways is God "with us?"
3. What is the next faithful step God is calling you to take in faith?

Monday, October 1: Read Judges 6:1, 11-24

What holds us back from giving our utmost to God – from taking risks for the sake of God's kingdom and thereby fulfilling our potential as a beloved, empowered child of God through Christ? The answer for almost all of us is fear – fear that we are not enough, and fear that we are alone. We see such huge problems in the world and assume that our meager gifts could never make a difference, so why bother? Let God call someone older, younger, wiser, more energetic, richer, smarter, or from a more prominent background. Surely God can use them more.

All of these thoughts are natural, but they are definitely not based on God's promises found throughout scripture. The Bible is full of stories of God using the weakest and the least to do God's work. Today we read the story of Gideon in the time before King David in which the Hebrew people were struggling to establish a home in Canaan...the land promised them by the Lord. God called Gideon, the "least" in the weakest clan in Manasseh, to lead the Israelites to victory over the Midianites (just read chapters 7 and 8!) Gideon was so unsure of God's calling he demanded a miracle to prove God's presence and power over this plan. What might God be calling us to do in our lives that we are shrinking from for fear that we are too weak and too alone? How are we selling short the power God truly has over our lives and our efforts?

Tuesday, October 2: Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-14

Few institutions were more persecuted, disjointed, and impoverished than the early church. Led through occasional letters from a man frequently in prison and plagued with most of the human shortcomings we face today, these earliest followers changed history forever. What was their secret? According to today's scripture, the churches of Macedonia had "abundant joy" and "extreme poverty" that "overflowed in a wealth of generosity." Were these super humans? No. These were ordinary people with extraordinary eagerness to partner with Christ and a faith in God's grace and transformative power. These two qualities lead to an outpouring of generosity. Today, let us take a deep look at the work our church is trying to do for God's kingdom. Do we have faith in God's ability to empower the Swansboro community? To heal the homes and hearts of children at UMFS? To guide our children and youth to walk in holiness, peace, love, and joy into adulthood? To bring quality healthcare and the love of Christ to Honduras? To reveal Christ's love and healing to all those in our community who are lost, lonely, hurt, and desperate? Let us then eagerly answer God's call to each of us to partner with our Creator, Savior, and Holy Spirit.

Wednesday, October 3: Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-11

The best news of all about following God's call on our lives is that we do not have to be perfect. In fact, it is in our weaknesses that God's strength and power can best be revealed to the world. Today's scripture describes us as "clay jars," and the more we are cracked, the more God's light shines through. We cannot approach God's work as if it all depends on us. This is what author Max Lucado calls "functional atheism." When our focus remains on God's glory and God's power, we can empty ourselves in order to make room for God's plan to take root in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. What do we need to "pour out" right now in order to make room for God? What "cracks" in our façade have we been so desperately hiding that could be instead used to show God's light to the world?

Thursday, October 4: Read 2 Timothy 1:6-9

"Rekindle the gift of God that is within you...for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline." Paul's words to Timothy could be written directly to us and our church today, encouraging us all to recognize the power of the Holy Spirit that lies within each of us...right now. We have already been given gifts of power and love and self-discipline. We just need to start using them. Each of us has spiritual gifts that will be blessed by God when we begin to use them. We don't have to have a solid plan or a strong vision. We just need to take that next faithful step toward God by offering up the gifts we've already been given...then let God set the course.

Friday, October 5: Read Psalm 116

So often it's the times when we have felt the lowest, the most helpless, when God's love and power most visibly manifests itself in our lives. Today's powerful psalm speaks to the joy and gratitude we feel when we have recognized God's deliverance and intimate presence in our lives. When we look back on all the times God delivered us from dangers and torment, we can more boldly take the next step forward toward God's call, for we know we are walking into the loving, protective arms of an all-knowing, all-seeing Lord.

Saturday, October 6: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Psalm 116:12

"What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?"

Sunday, October 7: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *You gave us commandments, God of love, because you know the hardness of our hearts. You have created us to live in community, and still we oppress others and separate ourselves from each other and from you. Jesus loved the children, but there are still children in the world who live in hunger or fear, rejected and unloved. Forgive us, and call us to faithfulness. Bind all your children together as sisters and brothers, and nurture us with your love and forgiveness, that we might share what we have been given, and receive your kingdom with the wonder and gratitude of children. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*