



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

January 28-February 3, 2019

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester
“Why Church? The More Excellent Way”

Notes from sermon on 1/27:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

Why do you think Paul placed his discourse on love immediately after his discourse on unity in the church?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. How can you apply 1 Corinthians 13 in your life today?
2. How can we apply 1 Corinthians 13 in our church today?
3. How can we apply 1 Corinthians 13 in our world today?

Monday, January 28: Read I Corinthians 13:1-3

This week, we prepare for the next installment of the sermon series, “Why Church?” by reading the passage in Corinthians that immediately follows Paul’s description of church members being different members of one body – the focus of last week’s sermon. As we continue to explore why we should spend our hard-earned free time, attention, and resources on church when we have a myriad of other options in our day and age, we can narrow it down to one word: *LOVE*. All week, we will read of God’s love for us, the power of our love for one another, and the danger when religious institutions divorce themselves from this primary mission.

Today, we stop early in our reading of this very familiar passage often relegated to weddings to ask ourselves if we as individuals and a church have ever resembled a “noisy gong or clanging cymbal” when pursuing good works or piety in the absence of love? What barriers to church have you experienced when something other than love greeted you at the door? Are we at Reveille first and foremost sending the message of love to each other, our guests, and our community?

Tuesday, January 29: Read I Corinthians 13:4-13

So how do we know we are truly acting in love and projecting it to others? Well, today's scripture provides perhaps one of the best rubrics known to man. This is how we are to love one another. As we questioned last week, are we also extending this love to others of different religions, denominations, political parties, socioeconomic statuses, and nationalities? Are we continually exploring ways to grow in maturity so our love will grow deeper, stronger, and wider? Are we making concerted efforts to better get to know people different from ourselves in order to more easily love them? Are we making concerted efforts to better get to know Christ in order to more powerfully harness his example and the gift of the Holy Spirit to love more fully?

Wednesday, January 30: Read Jeremiah 1:4-10

If we go to church, we may be asked to do things. We may be called out of our comfort zone, compelled to change, and driven to sacrifice. How can we trust the voice, or voices, that are bound to interfere with what we originally had planned? Again, we can narrow it down to one word: *LOVE*. God's intimate, unconditional, and infinite love for us based on God's complete knowledge of our innermost being. Just as Jeremiah was not called to the difficult task of prophesying to Israel without first being assured of God's love for him, we, too, can first find love and acceptance from our Creator and Lord when we begin to seek God. We can also offer this love to others by getting to know and love them as Christ has taught us.

Thursday, January 31: Read Luke 4:21-30

Today's gospel reading shows us what a religious community without love can look like. Jesus, having returned to Nazareth, goes into his home synagogue to teach and is met with derision, rage, and attempted murder. Hardly the homecoming one would expect from a loving congregation. Let us imagine how we would like to be greeted when returning to Reveille after a long absence. What if we had changed? Grown? Found great success? Experienced a humiliating failure? Suffered an unspeakable tragedy? Or maybe we had even sinned. All of us would want to be received with open arms, helping hands, and words of encouragement and love. Let us pray today that every soul that enters, or returns, through our doors feels empathy, not judgement; love, not indifference; and support, not skepticism.

Friday, February 1: Read Psalm 71:1-6

We take refuge where we find safety, comfort, and peace. We run to those places we do not feel judgement or shame. The "rocks" in our lives are steadfast, dependable, and unchanging in their support. Today's psalmist praises God for being his refuge, rock, fortress – strong words that depict an unmovable, mighty God. Yet notice what else he says to God: "It was you who took me from my mother's womb." God's hands are as gentle as they are powerful. How can we be the gentle and steadfast hands of God for one another? How can our hands that greet and care for the newly baptized infant in our congregation also serve as a refuge for the awkward adolescent, the rebellious teenager, the estranged father, the single mother, the recovering addict, and all of us sinners in the world? How can we make Reveille a refuge of unconditional love?

Saturday, February 2: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."(NRSV)

Sunday, February 3: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have reveled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (Confession from the Communion liturgy)