



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

January 7-13, 2019

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester

“Baptized in Permanent Purple Ink”

Baptism of the Lord

Notes from sermon on 1/6:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

What if our baptisms gave us a visible “birthmark?” Would we live differently?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. How may I live in the power of the Holy Spirit this day?
2. What in my life is like chaff that the Holy Spirit burns away in order for me to live as a free and faithful child of God?
3. What would God’s abundant life look like in my life?

Monday, 7: Read Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

This time of year, a lot of us are concerned with keeping our New Year’s resolutions. Books like Charles Duhigg’s *The Power of Habit* advise us to create new “triggers” in our daily routine to prompt us to act. We can publicly state our resolution and ask others to hold us accountable. Most powerfully, we must have faith that our goals are attainable and celebrate the small successes we make toward them every day. This week, we prepare for a sermon that will challenge us to a lofty goal for 2019: a life of ministry. Achieving this goal will not require us enrolling in seminary, quitting our job, or living as a martyr. Rather, it requires us to first remember that we are already qualified. As we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord, we also celebrate the power of our own baptism, which by the grace of God through Christ sets us apart for ministry. To quote Barbara Brown Taylor’s essay on vocation, too often we think that clergy are the only ones with credentials for ministry, and God help us if the clergy are the only Christians with “credentials.” She goes on to wonder what would happen if all believers, clergy and laity, were required to live our faith visibly, as the clergy are. What if we were baptized in permanent purple ink, so the claims we make, and our status as claimed people were always visible? Would we live differently? Why or why not?

Tuesday, January 8: Read Isaiah 43: 1-3

But what about everything we've done wrong in our lives? What about all the ways we will stumble and fall in the days ahead? What about everything we don't know yet about the Bible, Methodism, or God? Today's words from Isaiah assure us that we have nothing to fear- we are claimed by God and are fully known...flaws and all. Just as our name was called during our baptism, God has called each of us by name into God's plan for the healing and transformation of the world. We never have to worry about doing it alone, for God is with us every step of the way. What spiritual gift do you possess that you have felt God's calling on to use? How can you draw closer to God's presence in prayer, scripture, worship, service, or fellowship with other Christians to get the support, encouragement, and guidance you need to more fully use these in ministry?

Wednesday, January 9: Read Isaiah 43:4-7

Not only will God be with us as we begin to use our gifts for ministry, God will magnify our efforts. If we do our part, having faith in God's power and providence, God takes care of the rest. God's loving and empowering words in today's scripture can speak to us today, gathering all of us into God's presence with an assurance of ultimate success and glory. We don't need to know the ultimate plan of where our efforts will lead, for that's not our job- it's God's. We do know that God's plan will always involve using us to draw others closer into God's loving and healing presence, helping them recognize their own beloved status and value in God's eyes. What can each of us do to help God gather others into God's presence? Can we invite a friend to church? Tell neighbors about Bible Boot Camp or Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat? Sit quietly with someone going through a crisis? These moments can form the beginning of our renewed ministry in 2019.

Thursday, January 10: Read Acts 8:14-17

Perhaps the easiest way to begin a life of ministry is to first recognize and support others who are already engaged in it. Sometimes, the sources of this ministry may surprise us. In today's scripture, we read how Samaria, the very region so reviled by Jews they were discouraged from ever entering it, has accepted the word of God. Peter and John's response? Travel there and help them. We can find people doing ministry in the line at the grocery store, in our HR departments at work, mopping floors at our parents' nursing homes...anywhere. By taking the time to look up from our phones, take a minute to engage in conversation, and take a chance to make a real connection, we can allow God's Holy Spirit to weave us together into a powerful web that can change the world.

Friday, January 11: Read Psalm 29

Psalm 29 brings us home to the most central tenant of a life in ministry – to constantly bring glory to God. A life in ministry isn't about a pulpit or saving the world or being holier than everyone else. It's about "ascribing to God" everything that is good in the world. This is the main difference between ministry and charity work. Ministry deflects attention away from our efforts and toward God's power and love. Ministry therefore empowers all who encounter it to join, not just receive. When we read today's psalm, let us meditate on all the things we can be "ascribing" to God in our daily lives, and how this practice will change *our* daily life, as well as the lives of others.

Saturday, January 12: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Isaiah 43:1b

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."

Sunday, January 13: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *We are precious in your sight, yet we often forget that we are your beloved. We confess that our love is fickle and inconstant. We follow selfish goals and deny that our way of life harms others and hurts your world. We are sorry and we want to change. Create in us a clean heart, strengthen our resolve, reconcile us one to another, and bless us with your peace. Amen.*