



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

October 9-15, 2017

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester

“Defying Gravity: Tethered to God”

Based on *Defying Gravity: Break Free from the Culture of More* by Tom Berlin, Ch. 3

Notes from sermon on 10/8:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Question (before sermon):

What does it mean to “Store up treasures in heaven?”

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

What is the relationship in my life between my heart and my treasure?

What is truly the most important thing in my life?

How does my relationship to money reflect my priorities?

Monday, October 9: Read Matthew 6:19-21

This month, we have been preparing for a lifestyle more free of the gravitational pull of earthly desires and material possessions. First, we discovered the existence of this gravity in our own lives and recognized the ways it can rob us of joy, peace, and an authentic relationship with God. Next, we attempted to break free of the black hole of financial wants and burdens by considering ourselves stewards, rather than consumers, of God’s blessings.

All of this sounds great, and familiar if we’re being honest with ourselves, but how can we break free of something as ubiquitous and ingrained in our human nature and culture and as material wants? In short, we can’t. Not alone. We must tether ourselves to something higher, greater, and more powerful and worthy. We must tether ourselves to God.

Today’s familiar scripture urges us to start with our heart, which is closely related to our priorities. If we put God first in our lives and schedules, our material wants and spending habits will follow.

Tuesday, October 10: Read Philippians 4:1-7

The last three verses of today's scripture reading are among the most famous passages in the New Testament, and for good reason. Who wouldn't want a life of constant joy, free from worry, and full of peace? By starting with verse 1, however, we discover the key to this life: *standing firm in the Lord*. This requires commitment, faithfulness, and, as told to us in verse 6, prayer and gratitude. How many of us are looking for joy and peace in the wrong places? How often do we turn to our selves, our possessions, or our bank account to help us sleep at night, only to grow more anxious and depressed? We can't simply turn off our need for security and meaning. We must anchor it in something worthy, steadfast, dependable, and eternal. We must anchor ourselves in God. *How will can we restructure our days, our thinking, and our habits around God so we, too, can achieve peace that surpasses understanding?*

Wednesday, October 11: Read Philippians 4:8-9

We can try to do all the right things, but if our thought patterns are not in the right place, we will soon be pulled away from God and back into the black holes of greed, anxiety, insecurity, and gluttony. If we take Paul's advice in today's reading, however, and think only of what is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise, we will simply not be able to spiral into the discontent, self-pity, and jealousy that too often weighs us down. Let us make a vow to refuse to complain, compare, and compete, allowing God to show us the abundance of His gifts and the joy of divine simplicity.

Thursday, October 12: Read Matthew 22:1-14

We can read Jesus's parable today as scary and harsh, full of violence and condemnation. We can also read it as an incredible offer of abundance and hospitality that we do not want to miss. The tragedy of Christ's teaching today lies in how many of us miss the free banquet being offered to us as we turn away, go about our (seemingly more important) business (see verse 5!), and mistreat each other. How often have we walked away from true treasure and meaningful fellowship because we were too busy taking care of ourselves? We do not need a king to bind us up and throw us out of the banquet, for we do a great job of doing that to ourselves already. Where in our lives are we "missing the party" because we are bound hand and foot, weeping and gnashing our teeth (vs. 13 in an isolated prison of our own making)?

Friday, October 13: Read Psalm 106:1-6

Today's psalm is a beautiful anthem for finding joy in God's blessings and warning us not to "exchange the glory of God for the image of an ox." Today, let us examine our lives and habits to see where we are doing this very thing, for we are all guilty of this. Are we exchanging the glory of Sunday morning worship for the image of productivity and getting things done? Are we exchanging the immortality of a generous life with the image of financial security through shoring up our bank account? Let us remember that all-important word, "*exchange*," and vow instead to exchange a life of gravity for the divine lightness of being tethered to our loving triune God.

Saturday, October 14: Scripture Memorization: Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Sunday, October 15: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *Almighty and merciful God, we know that when we offend another, we offend you. We are aware that we have often allowed the shadow of hate to cloud our souls, hiding the light from our unseeking eyes. We have said unpleasant and hurtful things to our brothers and sisters when they failed to live up to our expectations. Grant that we might find that spark of love that ever burns within us, the love that you have shown to us even when we failed you. Fan the embers of that love until it roars again in flames of love, peace, and reconciliation. Forgive us our sin and help us to forgive those who have sinned against us. Lead us into new life through your Son Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of all. Amen.*