



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

October 16-22, 2017

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester

“Defying Gravity: When We Get it Right”

Based on *Defying Gravity: Break Free from the Culture of More* by Tom Berlin, Ch. 4

Notes from sermon on 10/15:

Prayer requests:

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

Jesus says, “You cannot serve God and wealth.” How are we to interpret this today?

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

1. What are the “true riches” Jesus references in Luke 16:10-13?
2. What does Jesus mean by “dishonest wealth?”
3. How can I best serve God with what has been entrusted to me?

**Monday, October 16: Read Luke 16:10-13**

This week, we come to the end of our sermon series based on Tom Berlin’s book, *Defying Gravity: Break Free from the Culture of More*. We also come to the end of Reveille’s fall stewardship campaign, in which we are being asked to make a commitment to generosity of our gifts of time, talent, and monetary resources to make a difference in God’s world (the last part of Reveille’s mission statement).

We can hold our breath, make an easy pledge, and get back to our regularly scheduled lives, and lectionary readings, next week. Or, we can have our lives radically changed for the better by living a life generous in every way, thereby aligning ourselves to the will of God and all of the blessings that come with it. As we’ve explored during this entire series, this kind of generous life offers freedom and a lightness of being that defies logic, common understanding, and popular culture. This type of generosity allows us to break free of our enslavement to a master who will never fulfill us or give us eternal peace or purpose. Today, we commit to serving God as our master and God’s kingdom as our calling.

**Tuesday, October 17: Read 1 Chronicles 16:23-29**

As we read these ancient words from the Hebrew scriptures telling us to sing to the Lord, tell of his salvation, declare his glory, praise him, and put him above all gods, are we reading it as if we should only be doing this in word, rather than deed? Are we only to put God first and praise God with our mouths, or with all of our beings and resources? When we look at how we are spending our time, energy, and money, are we doing it in a way that praises God? Helps tell of God's glory? Helps build God's kingdom? If not, what will it really amount to in the end? In *Defying Gravity*, Tom Berlin asks us to consider if our current spending habits are changing lives, giving hope, spreading love, or uplifting spirits. If not, can we really consider it a good investment?

**Wednesday, October 18: Read 1 Chronicles 16:30-34**

Many passages in the Old Testament are devoted to the rules and protocol of bringing sacrifices and offerings to God. While this practice was always considered a divine privilege that led to blessings, too often we approach generosity as purely sacrificial; something we do out of obligation for fear of negative consequences if we do not. Look today, however, at the pure joy that accompanies generosity and praise. Berlin speaks of this in this week's chapter of *Defying Gravity* when describing his wife's joy and excitement in offering what he then considered an exorbitant amount of money into the offering plate after receiving her first teacher's paycheck. For him, it took a while before sacrifice turned to joy, but when it did, it laid the foundation for an entire lifestyle of discipleship centered around generosity. Are we ready to let go, latch onto God, and let our entire lives be transformed through generosity?

**Thursday, October 19: Read Matthew 22:15-22**

Our final two readings for the week come from the regular lectionary readings, yet fit in beautifully to our theme of stewardship and generosity. In this gospel passage, the Pharisees are trying to use logic and law to entrap Jesus. The bait? Money. As always, Jesus rises above the small-minded legalism of his culture and promotes obedience, generosity, and love over any practice of score-keeping that we so often cling to in assuring ourselves that we are "doing enough." Pay to Caesar what is Caesar's. Forgive 70 times 7 times (Matthew 18:22). Give away all you have (Matthew 19:21). Jesus knew that radical generosity that puts its trust first and foremost in God is the way to have treasure in heaven, peace on earth, and goodwill to all humankind. Where are we keeping score and holding back on our generosity, not only in our money but in our patience, time, forgiveness, love, and hospitality?

**Friday, October 20: Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**

How wonderful if we as individuals and a church can become beacons of God's grace, power, and peace as were these recipients of Paul's letter in Thessalonica. How amazing if our words and deeds will be remembered as work producing faith, labor always prompted by love, and endurance inspiring hope. We cannot become this church without radical generosity prompted by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to use our gifts to change the world while also changing our lives...for the better. Let us rejoice as a people called to do amazing things with our gifts, knowing that we will in turn be blessed beyond measure. Let us defy gravity in our call to be faithful stewards of our neighbors, our earth, and all of our gifts, excited for what the year will bring in our hearts, our communities, and our world.

**Saturday, October 21: Scripture Memorization: Luke 16:13**

"No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

**Sunday, October 22: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of**

**Common Confession:** *We are reluctant, O Author of Love, to set aside our hurt, our anger, our disappointment. Heal us with your tender touch, that we might be cleansed of all unclean thoughts, all schemes of revenge, all hope of vindictive retribution. Open our eyes to the power of love, shown to us in the unselfish sacrifice of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*