



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

January 20-26, 2020

MINISTRY SUNDAY

Sermon by Guest Preacher Rev. Dr. Denise Dombkowski Hopkins

<p>Notes from sermon on 1/19:</p>	<p>Things to Pray For This Week:</p>
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Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

When is it hard to keep doing the right thing? Who and what could help us?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. With what do you wrestle?
2. When has God met your needs? How has that encounter with God transformed you?
3. Do you see yourself in the story of Jacob's encounter with a stranger at night at all? Explain.

Monday, January 20: Read Genesis 32:22-32

This week we welcome guest preacher Rev. Dr. Denise Dombkowski Hopkins, Woodrow W. and Mildred B. Miller Professor of Biblical Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary. This is a perfect time to hear from someone outside of Reveille, for there is much to talk about in the Methodist church right now. Many of us are wrestling with the hard questions facing our denomination and its future. Perhaps we wish these difficult issues could be swept under the carpet or put back in a box, for they take us out of our comfort zone and present an unclear future ahead. It would be easier if things were cut and dried, if we all agreed on everything, and if our faith required nothing more than the passive acceptance of God's gifts.

This has never been our faith, however, nor has it been the faith of the Jewish people. Today we read how the very name "Israel" means "one who wrestles with God." Jacob earned this name not through passive acceptance, but through persevering, questioning, struggling, and remaining engaged even when he was scared, confused, and exhausted. This week we will explore scriptures that not only encourage us to persevere in our faith, but remind us of the reasons to do so and the resources we have to succeed.

Tuesday, January 21: Read Luke 18:1-8

The persistent widow in today's parable is a far cry from the stereotypical image of the passive, submissive Christian lady. This woman is confident in her knowledge of right and wrong, unintimidated by worldly symbols of power, unconcerned with others' opinions of her, and shrewd in using the resources at her disposal. The true key to her success, however, is that she is tenacious, holding onto her goal and never letting go. What do we have to learn from this woman today? What values, principles, or results are we allowing to slip through our fingers because of fear, laziness, distraction, or lack of faith?

Wednesday, January 22: Read Colossians 1:9-12

We are not meant to persevere alone. No one should. Instead, we are created to be part of a supportive, prayer-filled community. We are called to consistently and faithfully petition God on behalf of others and allow ourselves to be strengthened when they do the same for us. We are also called to "pray with our feet" (to quote an African saying) and offer help to those persevering through a hardship or for a worthy cause. Are we at Reveille fully using the power of prayer to help one another persevere? When we see one person struggling, do we rally around as the body of Christ and provide that miracle of support? Let us take time today to take an inventory of the resources our church can provide in helping us persevere. Let us then take another inventory of the resources we have to offer to help others. Can we pray? Teach? Mentor? Give? Join? Listen? Visit? What more could we all accomplish if we did it together...with Christ?

Thursday, January 23: Read James 1:2-12

No human being in her right mind would ever voluntarily train for and compete in a marathon unless she believed the results would outweigh the pain. In fact, very few of us would go through the trouble of going to work, cleaning our home, eating right, or even get out of bed if we did not believe the effort would yield a reward. Today's scripture gives us an incredible promise: that all of our trials encountered in the name of faith will yield incredible, eternal rewards. So much so that we should rejoice when facing them! That means every time we stand up for good when it would be easier to remain silent, every time we remain engaged in our faith when we want to turn away, and every time we choose love over hate we can do so knowing the rewards will far, far outweigh the temporary inconvenience and pain. What in our lives have we known we need to say "yes" or "no" to, but were afraid of the cost? How can today's scripture give us the strength to do the right thing?

Friday, January 24: Read Ephesians 6:13-17

Yes, we are being called to wrestle and persevere, but we are not stepping into the ring unarmed. We can face every battle clothed with the full armor of God. Today's incredible, empowering scripture tells us to "stand firm" in our battle against the evils of the world, then tells us how to do it. Always use truth, which will defeat lies. Put on the breastplate of righteousness, for leading with what's right is always better than trying to get there through the wrong means. When we make any move, do it in peace. Use faith as our shield, for if we believe, the arrows of doubt and despair can't reach us. Put on the helmet of salvation, knowing we are ultimately and eternally protected. Finally, recognize the Spirit as our sword, able to slay demons we could never dream of defeating on our own. What armor do we too often leave at home? What will change when we start putting it on?

Saturday, January 25: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Ephesians 6:13

"Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

Sunday, January 16: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *God of compassion, we are sick. We have wrestled all night with worry instead of resting in you. We have asserted our own goodness instead of awakening to yours. We have turned away those hungry for your help instead of trusting you and feeding them from your limitless supply of blessings. Forgive us, heal us, and help us to hold on to you. We call upon you, for you will answer us, O God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*