



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

March 30-April 5, 2020

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester

PALM SUNDAY

Sermon Title: “Surprised by Joy: *This Unusual King*”

Notes from sermon on 3/29:

Things to Pray For This Week:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

What are the most surprising aspects of Palm Sunday for you?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. As this week unfolds, spend some time each day pondering the mind of Christ. What is the shape of his compassion?
2. Describe the image of such great love.
3. What does it feel like, physically, to be so utterly cared for?

In a time when we are reminded more than ever that you can never “cancel church” because the church is us, we thank you for continuing to grow, pray, and serve with us through the GPS

Monday, March 30: Read Matthew 21:1-11

Thank God for surprises. Thank God we do not simply get what we ask for...that the Lord is not a “great vending machine in the sky” who simply gives us everything we ask for. Even more, thank God for also not giving us what we deserve. For the past few weeks, our city, nation, and world has been immersed in uncertainty and speculation. Our illusion of control and predictability has been shattered, and we don’t know where to turn or who to believe. We want things to return to “normal” and either feel hopeless when hearing one statistic or rebellious when hearing another.

This week, our church celebrates the beginning of Christ’s sacrificial journey to Jerusalem, which will appear to end hanging on a cross but ultimately ends with the redemption of the world. Crowds gather and cheer, wanting freedom for their country and a great military leader. Instead, the world gets freedom for eternity and the great Prince of Peace. Thank God for surprises. Thank God for all of the surprises God has in store for us now, as individuals, a church, a city, a nation, and a world.

Tuesday, March 31: Read Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Perhaps the days seem to be blurring together. Many spring break vacation plans and Easter traditions had to be cancelled. We like predictability and plans, and now we don't know what comes next. Today's Psalm calls us to rejoice and marvel in the gifts of today...to wake up every morning filled with gratitude and joy for the day God has given us, imminent with the myriad of surprises it will bring. We can be both recipients and agents of this surprise. The phone call from a loved one. The unexpected act of kindness from a stranger. The words of encouragement through social media. We are called to see the light, and be the light. As we follow Christ into Jerusalem, we know we are never being called to "business as usual." We also know we are being called to ultimate victory. How can we embrace the joy of each day, knowing and sharing this?

Wednesday, April 1: Read Philippians 2:5-11

Nothing Christ did at Calvary was easy. Our salvation did not come without a cost. Our final three readings this week from the Common Lectionary bring us closer to the Passion of Christ, where we recognize the sacrifice Christ made for us, and the incredible ways we benefit from it. Today, we can at recognize the Christ within the health care workers, grocery store employees, delivery people, sanitation workers, and all other children of God who wake up every morning, pick up their cross, and walk into harm's way to save us all. Christ's self-sacrificing love began at the beginning of time and continues today. Let us recognize it, give thanks for it, and magnify it in our world.

Thursday, April 2: Read Psalm 31:9-16

Both scripture and the words and actions of Christ himself teach us that it is okay to be afraid sometimes. We are not being told not to have feelings, doubts, and moments of despair. Rather, we are told that we have a God who urges us to keep calling out to God, sharing our inmost thoughts without fear of judgment or condemnation. Just because we have dark moments does not mean we are forgotten or God is not there. "My times are in your hand," cries the psalmist. "But I trust in you, O Lord." God has given us the grace to be human and imperfect but perfectly loved and divinely saved. Let us continue to come to the Lord in prayer, both in gratitude and petition, knowing we can say anything.

Friday, April 3: Read Isaiah 50:4-9a

For millennia, Christians have recognized the character and actions of Christ in today's prophetic words, written centuries before Christ's humiliation, torture, and execution. Today, we still recognize how revolutionary, surprising...even shocking these behaviors are in a God, a Prince, a King. Compassion. Humility. The complete absence of vengeance. Self-sacrifice. Over two thousand years ago, Jesus shocked the world by saving it through humility and self-sacrifice, through God's amazing grace. What amazing acts of grace, love, redemption, and salvation can we look forward to now?

Saturday, April 4: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Psalm 118:24-25

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Save us, we beseech you, give us success!"

Sunday, April 5: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common

Confession: *Holy God, sure of your faithfulness even in your dying, comforted by your compassion toward your people in every age, we beg your mercy for our imperfect gratitude. We have looked to you for paltry favors, when you have given everything. We have withheld from your people, our neighbors, and from your creation, our Earth, the care and tending they deserve. We have rejected the cornerstone you sent to build a people of righteousness even here, today. Forgive our failings. Heal what we have broken, nurture what we have neglected, and lead us to your vision, so that we may know the peace of wholeness in you; in Jesus' name. Amen.*