



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

April 20-26, 2020

Sermon by Rev. Stephen Coleman

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter**

**Sermon Title: "Real Presence"**

Notes from sermon on 4/19:

Things to Pray For This Week:

### Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

Why do you think the disciples could not initially recognize Jesus in Luke 24:13-35?

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

1. We have not celebrated Holy Communion at Reveille in over a month. How is it with your soul?
2. How does Holy Communion help us to understand who Jesus is?
3. Why do you think it was the case in Luke 24 that the disciples only recognized Jesus when he blessed, broke, and gave bread to his disciples?

### Monday, April 20: Read Luke 24:13-27

We had plans for this month, but when we look at our original calendars, they bear no resemblance to the April we have been living. When we look into May, and even beyond, we have no idea what to expect. We have experienced real pain; real loss. Our illusions of order, safety, and control have been shattered.

Our gospel reading today actually starts off in a similar place. The followers of Jesus had plans: their Messiah was to conquer Jerusalem from the Romans and restore the Jewish people to their rightful place of honor and power. They had established rituals, laws, and habits that gave them a sense of security and order. Now everything had changed.

But God had some surprises in store – some amazing ones. Jesus, unrecognizable to the disciples at this point, reinterprets the events to show God's healing power at work. They still don't fully understand. We still don't fully understand. But as we will read this week, we can have faith in God's eternal plan to redeem, renew, empower, and improve...all while bringing us together again to break bread and love.

**Tuesday, April 21: Read Luke 24:28-35**

Our reading today picks up at the point where the still-unrecognized Jesus and the disciples would naturally part ways- they had reached their planned destination. Instead, the disciples pause and “urge [Jesus] strongly, saying ‘stay with us.’” It is when they invite Jesus into their home and break bread with him that their eyes are opened and they recognized him. Why did they recognize Jesus then, and not before? What is the power of interrupting our plans and extending hospitality to another? Throughout his life on earth, Jesus demonstrated his incredible willingness to be interrupted. Look back into the gospels- Jesus is always on the road to somewhere when [insert interruption here]. Could it be that we find Jesus best when we let our plans be interrupted...not by material distractions but by relationships, conversations, people? We see the power of breaking bread together, and know that God’s plans are to call us together again. Will our new schedules leave more room for hospitality, interruptions, and breaking bread with one another?

**Wednesday, April 22: Read Acts 2:14a; 36-41**

Peter’s speech today to the children of Israel seems pretty harsh. Wonder how it would go over today? Yet the listeners were “cut to the heart” and repented- over 3000 of them. “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation” Peter “exhorted.” Today, we are also called to listen to Peter’s words, as difficult as they seem. In the midst of this giant reset button we are experiencing, what is God calling us to change? From what habits and mindsets do we need to repent? What corruption exists with which we have been complicit? How can we welcome a message such as Peter’s today, and what surprising changes could it bring to our lives?

**Thursday, April 23: Read 1 Peter 1:17-23**

“Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart” (verse 22). How does repentance and purification from Christ help us love more genuinely and deeply? Perhaps it’s through gratitude of our own forgiveness that we can learn to forgive others. Maybe by removing the distractions and temptations of our previous lives, we are now better able to focus on others. Just possibly, when we surrender to Christ, we allow his perfect divine love to take the place of our flawed, limited capacity. As we ask God to forgive and heal us, let us now also ask God to fill us up with more genuine, deep, perfect love with one another. What would the world look like if we all did this?

**Friday, April 24: Read Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19**

Whether we can confidently feel delivered from the “snares of death” at this point, or are still struggling with fear, we can take comfort and strength in today’s psalm which guides us to a mindset of gratitude and joy. We know that when we go through trials, we can emerge more joyous, grateful, and connected to one another than ever before. Today, we give thanks to a Savior who calls us to break bread together; who desires for his body to love one another perfectly so that we can fully know him and be fully known. We can give thanks for the times in the past when we have been delivered, and give thanks in hope and confidence for the times in the future when we can be not only healed, but transformed.

**Saturday, April 25: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: 1 Peter 1:23**

“You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.” (NRSV)

**Sunday, April 26: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of**

**Common Confession:** *Almighty God, our world is filled with corruption: power disguises itself as truth; convenience masquerades as goodness; selfish pleasure imitates love. We confess to you, O God, that we have been caught in the web of the world’s sin. By the power of the Holy Spirit, save us from these deceptions and free us for glad obedience, that we may see the joy of Jesus’ resurrection and receive the promise of everlasting life. Amen.*