



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

April 27-May 3, 2020

Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester

4th Sunday of Easter

Sermon Title: "The Thief and Abundant Life"

Notes from sermon on 4/26:

Things to Pray For This Week:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

Acts 2:42-47 describes what life was like in the early church.

How do these words guide today's church?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. What does Jesus mean by "abundant life in John 10?"
2. How does our society define "abundance?"
3. How do you define "abundant life?"

Monday, April 27: Read John 10:1-10

"Abundant Life" – what does it mean? We love the final verse of today's gospel scripture, and hopefully will have it committed to memory by the end of the week if we haven't done so already. But this famous statement of Jesus comes after a rather puzzling passage about gates and sheep, indicating that abundant life does not have to do with unlimited freedom and self-reliance...the very things some may associate with "abundance." Rather, abundance is somehow related to obedience, protection, and boundaries. How can that be?

We are living during a time when we have less external freedom that we have ever experienced in our lives. We cannot travel, visit, work, play, touch, shop, eat, worship, or even mourn like we want. Yet, within the confines of a protective quarantine, some of us are finding freedoms we have never before experienced. Freedom from long commutes, overloaded schedules, separation from college-aged children, and distractions. Perhaps some of us are finding solace and clarity within this freedom. Perhaps we are

finding abundance. Are we listening for Christ's voice during these times? If we follow it, what could we find?

Tuesday, April 28: Read Acts 2:42-47

The apostles' year was not turning out as planned. They entered Jerusalem expecting a great victory over Rome by their beloved Savior, and in one short week, found themselves hiding for their lives as the followers of an outlawed and executed "revolutionary." Then, they found themselves the Holy Spirit-empowered apostles of a risen Son of God, able to perform miracles and experience love, community, and communion like never before. In the midst of seemingly hopeless scarcity, death, and instability, they found unimaginable blessings and abundance, thanks to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Our year has not turned out as planned. Are we ready to find unimaginable abundance through Christ, too?

Wednesday, April 29: Read 1 Peter 2:19-22

Abundant life does not mean an absence of pain. It doesn't mean life will be fair. Today's scripture recognizes that we will be forced to endure things beyond our control, through no fault of our own. Perhaps one of the most difficult things we are enduring right now is separation from one another, the most tragic being when people must endure sickness and even death alone. Within today's passage, however, lies a promise: that we have God's "approval" and Christ's empathy. We are not alone at all, but in communion with a God and Savior who sees us, loves us, and enters into our pain with us, as Christ did on the cross. Even in our greatest pain and isolation, we are brought into the greatest love and promises.

Thursday, April 30: Read 1 Peter 2:23-25

One of the hardest things about our current crisis is the worry about the future. What will the next school year look like? Our 401(k)s? Our summer plans? Our business? Our career trajectory? Our retirement? Next winter's flu season? We can worry and lash out at the frustration that we can't control anything or even know how to react. Today, we can find guidance and peace in a Savior who did not lash out at his circumstances, even when they were at their most horrific and unjust, and in doing so, won the victory for our eternal future. Through Christ, we can both better endure our current trials and let go of the fears of the future because we know we have a good shepherd who is leading us into green pastures.

Friday, May 1: Psalm 23

There is never a time when we do not need the 23rd psalm, but in times like these, we need it more than ever. Here, we have the promise of healing and protection now, and the promise of better times in the future. Abundance is not just something we can hope for, it is something we can experience right now, in the arms of a loving God and shepherd who is leading us all toward safety, while giving us blessings of abundance all along the way, if only we listen for his voice and follow him through the gates.

Saturday, May 2: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: John 10:10

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.
I came so that you may have life, and have it abundantly." (NRSV)

Sunday, May 3: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common

Confession: *Holy One, we confess to you and to one another that we have not always followed Christ's example. When we have been abused, we have been abusive in return. We have gone astray. Lead us back into your fold and guard our souls in Jesus' name. Amen.*