



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

May 11-17, 2020

Sermon by Pastor Stephen Coleman

6th Sunday of Easter

Notes from sermon on 5/10:

Things to Pray For This Week:

Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

If someone asked you to describe God, what would you say?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

- 1) What does Psalm 121 tell us about God?
- 2) What does Psalm 121 tell us about humankind?
- 3) What helps you to cope in the midst of the transitions of life?

Monday, May 11: Read Psalm 121

The only constant in life is change. Our lives are a journey involving lots of hellos and goodbyes; comings and goings. How are we to function, must less thrive, when we feel we cannot control anything; cannot rely on anything to stay the same? How can we have confidence in the future when we don't even know if the next months will be recognizable to what we've experienced in the past?

Our scriptures this week, beginning with the exquisite Psalm 121, will lead us back to the Great Constant in our lives – one who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the all-knowing and all-powerful. Nothing surprises God, and in the midst of all the changes in life, God is our protector, preserver, and guard.

As we go through the week and prepare for Stephen's sermon on Sunday, let us find strength in the ancient and divine wisdom that teaches us to trust God in all circumstances in our lives. For thousands of years, through unimaginable changes and hardships, God has been the constant protector, confidante, and champion of God's beloved children. Yes, this a period of incredible change and uncertainty, but it is

not anything God has not foreseen, and nothing beyond God's control. Where are we looking for the "constant" in our lives? God, or our present circumstances?

Tuesday, May 12: Read Genesis 12:1-4

We reach certain milestones in our lives with expectations of what they should look like. Seniors in high school should go to prom, sign each other's yearbooks, and walk across a stage in front of all their friends and family. College students should be living in dorms, cheering on their sports teams, and preparing for summer internships. Retirees should be enjoying grandchildren, travel, or time with friends. Abraham and Sarai were 85 years old and certainly had different expectations for this season in their lives than packing up everything and following God into the unknown wilderness. The journey for them did not turn out to be easy, and it included loss. God was with them through all the hardship and changes, however, and Abraham's faith in God as the true constant and guiding light in his life yielded incredible, unexpected rewards which we all benefit today.

Wednesday, May 13: Read Romans 4:1-5; 13-17

Our ability to withstand and even thrive in change does not depend on our actions; it depends on our faith. The book of Genesis is full of incredible stories of heroic acts such as those of Abraham, but as Paul writes in today's passage, what mattered was not Abraham's works, but his faith. When we have faith that the end has already been written by a loving and powerful God, we can see new hardships as temporary and surmountable, and believe they lead to more positive lasting change. Without this faith, our works become short-sighted and desperate; even our acts of heroism seem pointless. How much easier will these days and months ahead become when we live in faith that God is leading us to something wonderful and healing? When we can begin to focus not on what we have lost, but what we will gain?

Thursday, May 14: Read Matthew 28:16-20

The disciples wanted Jesus to stay with them on earth forever. They believed all of their plans and hard work were leading to an earthly kingdom where God restored Israel ruled by the promised Messiah-Jesus. They were right, but very wrong about the "when" and the "how." First, Jesus had to die on the cross for this to happen. Then, he rose. Then, he left them again, ascending into heaven, but not before revealing how God's kingdom would be spread throughout the earth...through them. Today we read the "great commission," launching the ministry of the apostles and the beginning of the miraculous, exponential growth of the church. What seemed an end was a beginning. What wonderful things are beginning for us, in May of 2020?

Friday, May 15: Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

We so often fear change, but then we realize that change is one of God's greatest gifts to us. When we've had a bad day, we can go to sleep and the next day will be different. When we think we can't stand one more day of winter weather, we see daffodils pushing up through the ground and feel that first, glorious warm day of Spring. When we are mired in pain and grief, one day we wake up feeling a little better. Our life is full of seasons, as today's famous passage tells, and we can live each one as a gift, knowing that even during the most difficult ones, God is close to us, protecting and guiding us to the next season around the corner. That next season always, always comes. Let us praise God for all of the seasons in our lives, and ask for the grace and faith to live each one to its fullest, ready for the surprising blessings God has for us today, and in the future.

Saturday, May 16: Scripture Memorization: Psalm 121:12

"I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth."

Sunday, May 17: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *Almighty and most merciful Lord, you know the thoughts of our hearts. We confess that we have sinned against you and done evil in your sight. We have transgressed your holy laws. We have disregarded your Word and sacraments. Forgive us, revive us and reshape us in your image. Help us to trust*

*you and follow where you lead that your name may be glorified in all the earth. In Christ's name we pray,
Amen.*