



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

July 20-26, 2020

Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon

Sermon Title: “The Wonder and Power of the Kingdom of God”

Notes from sermon on 7/19:

Things to Pray For This Week:

Family Focus Question:

Describe a world that is exactly the way God wants it.

Questions for Small Groups

1. What is your “elevator speech” (i.e., 10 seconds) description of the kingdom of God?
2. This week’s reading contains five brief parables. Choose one word that characterizes or describes the kingdom of God in each parable.
3. What do these parables say about God (i.e., The King of the kingdom)? What do they also say about us (the citizens of the kingdom)?

Monday, July 20: Read Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Today we read five parables where Jesus describes the “Kingdom of God” to his disciples. When he asks, “Have you understood all these things?” they all obediently say, “Yes.” Would that be your response right now? If we are honest, many of us may need to confess that we have little idea nor grasp of the kingdom of God. That is fair. Jesus primarily used parables to describe it and as such, there is an element of mystery. Apparently, however, if we can get past the mystery, there is something so wondrous and powerful to the kingdom, that if we really understood it, we would sell everything we have to be a part of it. Why is the kingdom such a big deal? How is it that the kingdom is the centerpiece of Jesus’ message and ministry and at the same time is so elusive for us?

Take time today to read the parables slowly, then read the family focus and small group questions. Jesus seems to be describing a world where everything is exactly the way God wants it. What clues do these parables give? In a world as broken as ours is today, how can being followers of Christ help us see and build a “kingdom” that better reflects God’s original intent and ultimate plan for Creation? How do today’s readings give us a better understanding of what that would look like?

Tuesday, July 21: Read Mark 1:14-15

We are living in difficult times; there is no question of that. Jesus was living in difficult times, too. As we read in two short verses, John the Baptist has been imprisoned by the Roman government for preaching repentance, yet Jesus's response is to go into Galilee and proclaim the "good news of God," saying "The time has come...the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" What on earth was Jesus talking about? If we know our history, we know that the violence of the Roman Empire is far from over, and the years following Jesus's crucifixion will be among the most devastating and brutal in human history. What is there to rejoice? Perhaps an integral part of the Kingdom of God is what happens to people *despite* physical circumstances when they hear and accept the good news of God's grace and forgiveness through Christ. Jesus's life, death, and resurrection will give people hope, confidence, love for one another, faith in a better world and assurance of eternal reward. When we have this kind of inner peace, we can live in a kingdom that far surpasses the temporal and physical one around us. How can we live in this kingdom today, and show it to others?

Wednesday, July 22: Read Matthew 6:33-34

When times are difficult, it is tempting to do any of three things: feel helpless, try to fix everything ourselves, or just worry. Today's scripture gives us a much more excellent way: first seek the Kingdom of God, then let God take care of the rest. So...where do we begin to look? In the combined adult Sunday school class June 12th, Pete quoted author Barbara Brown Taylor as describing the Kingdom of God as being "hidden in plain sight...like a diamond necklace among rhinestones." Are we able to recognize glimpses of God's perfect love, healing, and protection around us now? The blessings God has given us today instead of the fear of tomorrow?

Thursday, July 23: Read Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus had everything many people in today's society desire and respect: a well-paying job and financial security. What he did not have was love, self-respect, integrity, honesty, and joy. One evening with Jesus changed all of that, and the world Jesus showed Zacchaeus was wonderful enough for the tax collector to give away half his possessions and pay fourfold restitution to those he had harmed. What do you think Jesus said to Zacchaeus? What would be wonderful enough for you to give up half of what you have now?

Friday, July 24: Read John 4:1-30

In our final reading of the week, we witness how an incredibly brief encounter with Jesus changed the life of a woman who previously had no interest in religion. She soon discovered, however, that she was *thirsty*. Thirsty for something more than life currently offered. Tired of the drudgery, the abandonment, the tribalism, the sexism. Jesus showed her that there was something more and that she could *be* something more. Think of a time when someone showed you a better way and showed you something in yourself that was worthy of love, respect, and hope. What would the world be like if everyone saw this in others and themselves? Would it look like the Kingdom of God?

Saturday, July 25: Scripture Memorization: Matthew 6:33

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you." (KJV)

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

Common Confession: *Lord, this week we will sing together of how we love your kingdom. Yet we confess that for all our profession, we rarely think deeply of this treasure of which the Scriptures speak. You have told us that if we could find your kingdom, we would sell all we have to embrace it. Yet in all our consumption with this world, we rarely find time to search and seek. By your grace, forgive us O Lord. Lead us to a place where we can find and be found by this treasure and this pearl you have called the kingdom, for we ask it in the name of Christ.*