



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

July 6-12, 2020

Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon

Sermon Title: “Good Soil Doesn’t Just Happen”

Notes from sermon on 7/05:

Things to Pray For This Week:

### Household Questions:

What can you/we do to ensure that we are good soil that enables the seed of the word to grow and multiply in and beyond us?

### Questions for Small Groups

1. Jesus speaks of the seed as being “The message of the kingdom” or “the word”. How would you define that?
2. Describe a time when humility made you teachable.
3. Why is it that so many people have said that pride is the worst of all sins?

### Monday, July 6: Read Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Many of us don’t know where to begin. We see horrific images on the news of black men and women murdered, marginalized, and angry. We see monuments a few blocks from our church covered in graffiti and featured in news outlets across the world. We feel confused, conflicted, guilty, defensive, and defeated. We don’t know the right words to say, the right voices to trust, or even the right things to think. If ever we needed the word of God to come into our hearts, take root, and grow, now is it. The question is, how can we ensure our hearts will be fertile soil in which the seed of the word can grow?

This week, we will explore what scripture reveals about what those right conditions truly are, and what we can do to soften our hardened hearts and distracted minds so God can start enacting true, healing, and transformative change in us. Today’s familiar and foundational parable challenges us to intentionally make room in our lives for “the message of the kingdom” to seep into our hearts, take root, and grow unhindered. Today let us examine the state of the “soil” of our hearts. How good are the conditions for a new idea...an alternate way of thinking and acting...to make its way in and flourish in our daily lives? Is our biggest problem hard soil or too many thorns getting in the way?

**Tuesday, July 7: Read 2 Peter 1:5-9**

It seems today that everyone has formed an opinion and is certain of the truth without ever having to hear any new facts or listen to any new voices. Could we be guilty of the same? When a subject comes up, do we have an automatic default setting that tells us what we think? Today's passage from 2 Peter challenges us to avoid being "nearsighted and blind" (verse 9) by doing a few things. First, make an effort. Our opinions and actions should not be easy and pre-programmed. Don't just have faith – have goodness. Then add knowledge...find out *more*. Have some self-control. Persevere. Be like God. Notice the instruction to have "godliness" comes after goodness, knowledge, and self-control, not before, meaning we can't claim to know what "godliness" means until we've done some research and hard work! And never forget mutual affection and love. When have we been lazy, incurious, and self-assured at the expense of true knowledge, self-control, and love?

**Wednesday, July 8: Read Luke 18:9-14**

The most powerful words we can pray in order to have soft, fertile soil ready to accept the word of God might be, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." None of us want to see ourselves in the character of the Pharisee in today's parable, but how often have we exalted ourselves for having the "right" views and behaviors while scorning others who have made choices different from ours? According to this parable, who is more receptive to God's justifying grace – the self-assured church-goer or the humble sinner? When we know we don't have all the right answers and haven't made all the right choices, we open ourselves up for transformational change and amazing grace. Are we ready to humble ourselves before God this way? What are we afraid to lose? What do we have to gain?

**Thursday, July 9: Read Matthew 5:1-10**

We are being called to care for the poor in spirit, the ones who mourn, the people who are hungry for righteousness. We are also being called to be these people ourselves. We are also called to be meek, which is a confusing word for us modern, independent people. Does meek mean we allow others to walk over us? Or could meek mean being open enough to admit we don't have all the answers, so need God's grace, love, forgiveness, wisdom, truth, and love to fill us? What could God do for us if we had a truly meek heart? More importantly, what could God do *through* us?

**Friday, July 10: Read Psalm 25**

If we can no longer trust in ourselves to know everything...if we have to re-examine underlying blind spots, assumptions, prejudices, weaknesses, and sins, won't that plunge us into despair, disillusion, and an overwhelming sense of powerlessness? Not if we put our trust in God instead. We can be humble without feeling powerless. We can be convicted of our wrongdoings without feeling condemned. We can let go of our certainty today while holding onto our assurance of tomorrow. When we trust in God, we can live an exciting, powerful life being shown the path...one step at a time. "Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths." Let us start every day with this mindset and this kind of open heart, ready and excited for how God will show us how to eradicate the prejudices in our own hearts, reveal truths we don't yet know, and bring forth fruit in abundance to anything we've ever seen.

**Saturday, July 11: Scripture Memorization: Psalm 25: 8-9**

"Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way."

**Sunday, July 12: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of**

**Common Confession:** *Lord forgive us. We have thought of ourselves so highly. We first think of self, then of others, and then perhaps of you. You have taught us in this parable that you multiply your seeds in hearts that are humble and hungry. By your grace change our hearts so that we can seek you first and thereby become worthy and productive vessels of your kingdom seed and message. We ask it in the name of Jesus.*