



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

August 17-23, 2020

Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon

Sermon Title: "Commitment or a Cross?"

Notes from sermon on 8/16:

Things to Pray For This Week:

Family Focus Question:

How can we keep the many commitments we have as individuals and as a family but still be centered in and focused upon our relationship with Jesus? To use Paul's word imagery, how can we be "living sacrifices" when we are so involved with so many other things?

Questions for Small Groups

1. I want to try harder to be more obedient. How can I instead become the kind of person that would naturally do the things that Jesus calls us to do and commit to the things that really matter as a simple extension of who I am?
2. Name a time when you had to decide between your commitment to your faith and your other commitments.
3. How has God changed you into the kind of person that does reflect the Sermon on the Mount?

Monday, August 17: Read Romans 12:1-8

We church folks are pretty good at using the word "commitment". It isn't a bad word, of course, and is a word that is commonly used today. We are busy people and have become very adept at negotiating and adjusting our commitments to make our way through this contemporary world. The challenge is that Jesus didn't speak of our relationship with him as being a commitment as much as he called us to take up his cross, to lose our life in his. That understanding is critical to discern Paul's call to believers to become a "living sacrifice". How do we burn for Christ in singular commitment in the face of the call to commitment to so many other things? It doesn't happen by just trying harder. There is another way.

This week, we get to park in some of the most robust and beloved passages of the Bible – the exquisite and often-quoted opening to the 12th chapter of Romans, and the entire Sermon on the Mount. This does not mean these scriptures are easy. We are being called to approach our entire way of life differently...as a living sacrifice. This is a complete transformation, not a simple adjustment of priorities. It requires surrender, not strategy. Let us surrender ourselves to the journey on which scripture will take us this week and ask God to renew our minds to find a more excellent way of living.

Tuesday, August 18: Read Matthew 5:1-8

Pete has issued a special challenge to all of the readers of the GPS for how we approach the remainder of this week's scriptures. Instead of asking ourselves, "Can I obey this law of Jesus?" ask ourselves "How can I become the kind of person who lives the life described in this sermon?" We start today with the Beatitudes, then will read the entire three chapters of the Sermon on the Mount in the following days. Here, we find some of the most radical and world-changing commandments from Christ – ones that are tempting to water down or explain away using our "modern" lens. Instead, let's imagine a world where the poor, meek, mourning, hungry, merciful, pure, peacemaking, persecuted, and honest are blessed. Let us envision ourselves as those who are blessed, and those who help bless. What would that take? What in our hearts, minds, and behavior would need to change for that to happen?

Wednesday, August 19: Read Matthew 5: 9-48

Here are the questions we might be pondering as we read the remainder of chapter five today: What needs to change for us to be salt and light to the world? How can we brighten peoples' day, lighten their path, and make everything more delightful for them? Do we need to start with our family when we finish working for the day? Our neighbors and community members who are living in despair? What would it be like to more faithfully follow the commandments of the Bible? What problems would go away? What does it take to be someone who does not get angry or lust after another, turn the other cheek and love my enemies? What is the secret? What would change in my life if I became this person?

Thursday, August 20: Read Matthew 6

Who do we know who demonstrates the humility, piety, and peace described in this chapter? Someone who worries about nothing, but prays about everything? Those who never crave recognition, material excess, or attention? What do they have in their lives that allows them to forego these things so many of us desperately seek? What is missing in our lives that's preventing us from being like them? Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Bible's most famous passage on prayer is in the midst of these commandments. What strength and resolve would we gain if we resolved to strengthen our prayer life?

Friday, August 21: Read Matthew 7

Christ's commandments seem to be coming at us at warp speed now. Do not judge. Ask, seek, and knock. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Enter through the narrow gate. Beware of false prophets. Don't be deceived, or deceive yourself. Be doers of the word. This is quite a checklist, and one that can cause anxiety and a focus on our own good deeds if we try to attempt it as a "to-do" list. Let's go back to the original challenge from Pete: How can I become the kind of person who could obey all of these things? Let us turn our eyes to the cross – Jesus's sacrifice that has made all things possible. What does the cross have to do with our transformation into people who can be doers of God's word today?

Saturday, August 22: Scripture Memorization: Romans 12:1-2

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Sunday, August 23: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *Lord I have tried to be a living sacrifice for you and most of the time I fail. I am consumed with other things and living for different priorities. My will is simply not enough. Fill me once again with your grace to make me into the person that you desire. Mold me into the person who naturally lives for you and reflects your love, grace, and kingdom. I cannot do this on my own but you can. In Christ I pray, AMEN*