



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

August 24-30, 2020

Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon

Sermon Title: "Holiness and Love: They Do Match"

<p>Notes from sermon on 8/23:</p>	<p>Things to Pray For This Week:</p>
-----------------------------------	--------------------------------------

Family Focus Question:

We are about to hear a lot of election advertisements on TV. Most of them will not be kind or loving. How can we let that not be our example and how can we do better when there is so much division around us?

Questions for Small Groups

1. When we hear the word "holy" perhaps we think of God or of us as separate or set apart. When we hear the word "love" we think of being together. God puts the two words together. How?
2. The first part of the New Testament reading (vss. 9-13) is about how we love one another in the church community. Describe that love.
The second part of the New Testament reading (vss. 14-21) describes the way we love those who are not in the church. Describe that love.
How is it the same or different from the previous question?

Monday, August 24: Read Romans 12:9-21

Many of us can't see how the holiness of God can go with the love of God. We tend to put them in different boxes. We correctly view holiness as being "set apart" for God, and view love as a "pulling together" by God. Therefore, in our singular, binary, and limited way of thinking, we often find ourselves ripped apart from one another in our quest to be "holy" and "righteous." Never has this phenomenon been more apparent than in the current political crisis, and with the upcoming election season it's likely to become even uglier. More than ever before, we need some guidance on how we can maintain holiness and offer love in this unholy time.

As our readings show this week, however, there IS no conflict between holiness and love in God's economy. They go hand in hand. In today's scripture, Paul speaks of the importance of living in a church and outside of it. "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one

another in love...if your enemy is hungry feed him...do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." There are no "buts" or "however's" in Paul's words – love and holiness go together seamlessly. Where is the breakdown for us? Which do we find more difficult: holiness or love?

Tuesday, August 25: Read Exodus 3:1-15

In today's ancient scripture, Moses is surrounded by evil and has escaped to the holiness of a simple life with Zipporah and his father-in-law Jethro, far away from Pharaoh. We meet him today in a most holy place – Horeb, the mountain of God – where he must take off his sandals and hide his face. Rather than calling Moses to a life of quiet reflection and asceticism, God calls Moses to action due to God's love for God's people. "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt...so I have come down to rescue them...." When we have holy moments with God, do they lead us to deeper love, empathy, and action? Does our holiness bring out our compassion rather than our judgment?

Wednesday, August 26: Read Romans 5:6-8

Our world, our nation, and even our religion tend to separate people into "us" and "them." People are right or wrong, ignorant or woke, Republican or Democrat, saved or doomed, worthy or unworthy. Christ did not make that distinction, however. Christ died for all of us while we were still sinners. God loves us while we are *all* still sinners. This is the one great thing we all have in common. None of us has all the answers, but we are all called to grow closer to Christ's example and love and grace every day. Are we ready to recognize ourselves both in Christ and in our fellow sinners, allowing us to grow in both love and holiness simultaneously?

Thursday, August 27: Read 1 John 4:16b-21

Today's incredible passage gets to the heart of why so many of us struggle with love: Our own fear of judgment. The best way to feel better about our own shortcomings, we think, is to feel better than someone else. Instead of focusing on perfection and judgment, we should focus on confidence and love. We have confidence because God loves us. We love because God first loved us. We cannot love God without loving one another. God is love. God is love. God is love.

Friday, August 28: Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

We cannot hear today's familiar passage often enough. It should be our benchmark for holiness, for love is...everything. When we find ourselves entrenched in dogma, politics, rhetoric, propaganda, and positions devoid of love, let us hear the noisy gongs and clanging cymbals in ourselves and others and turn toward the voices of beautiful harmony. This does not mean we do not stand up for justice or allow evil to reign. Rather, we are called to lead each other toward holiness in love, not judgment or hatred. Without love, we are acting without God. How wonderful to know that God's work on earth is leading us toward love and holiness simultaneously. We must hold onto that hope and live in that kingdom, working to bring others – all others – into God's grace and love.

Saturday, August 29: Scripture Memorization: 1 John 4:18

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

Sunday, August 30: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *Lord, you have told us that our "love must be sincere." Sometimes when I speak, I act loving but don't feel it. You have told me to "live at peace with everyone" but it is easier to just ignore those with whom I don't get along. You are holy and often I am not. You are love, and so often, I am not. Forgive me for my failure to do what you do so well, to be both holy and loving in all circumstances. By your grace, guide me into this better way during this complicated political season in the name of Jesus.*