



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

September 21-27, 2020

Sermon by Rev. Kelley Lane

Sermon Series: 2020: What Have We Learned? Part IV

Sermon Title: "New Lenses"

Notes from sermon on 9/20:	Things to Pray For This Week:
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Family Focus Question:

Do you have any friends whose race is different from your own? What do you appreciate about your friend? How does your friend know you care about them?

Questions for Small Groups

1. How does talking about racism make you feel?
2. Do you remember when you first become aware of your race?
How has race impacted your life? Can you share this story with a small group?
3. What is your dream for the world?

Monday, September 21: Read 1 John 4:16b-19

As we continue our sermon series entitled "2020: What Have We Learned?" we come to the "elephant in the room": race. Best-selling books like Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility* give voice to something we are all loathe to admit: white people are very uncomfortable, and often very defensive, about this topic. Not a single one of us would proudly declare ourselves a racist, yet each of us has had the mirror of racism held up to us, and we have a hard time looking into it. To make things worse, we know that our religion has sometimes been used as an agent of racism. Where do we turn for answers? Where is there a safe space to ask the difficult questions and express our vulnerability in not knowing the answers?

This week, Reveille offers three places we can turn for this safe space. First, we will study scriptures this week that reveal the foundational command for inclusivity and justice in Christianity, and give us questions with which we can turn to others. Second, all of us are invited to read Latisha Morrison's national bestseller, *Be The Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation* and join us at 10am Sunday mornings for Adult Sunday School to discuss how we can better reflect God's perfect love, as described in today's scripture. Finally, we can gather next Sunday for Kelley Lane's sermon that will take a hard look at racism in the United States and how it has impacted the recent events during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Together, let us ask all the right questions, even as we don't have all the right answers. Let us admit that we are not perfect, but we can come together in the "perfect love [that] drives out fear."

Tuesday, September 22: Read John 15:9-14

“All you need is love” is a song from a *pretty* famous band from a few years ago. Yet just trying to love someone *more* is a neither helpful nor possible first step toward reconciliation. For that we have to go back – way back. We must first know that we *are* loved, and loved unconditionally. We need to feel the security of a loving Creator and Father and Savior who does not compare our worth to others, despise us for our secret thoughts and weaknesses, or make us earn our place at the heavenly banquet. Once we realize that all of our sins were nailed to a cross because God loved us *that much*, our insecurities that lead us to put down others so we can feel better about ourselves disappear. It is through abiding in that love that we can keep God’s commandments to love each other as Christ loved us.

Wednesday, September 23: Read Ephesians 2:13-22

This is not the first time in history there has been racial or political division. Nor is this the first place. The early church in Palestine experienced turmoil and division in their methods of following Jesus while paradoxically being called to unity through Jesus’s gift from the cross. Let us read today’s incredible call to unity from the same lens the original readers most likely read it: as an imperfect work-in-progress people who are facing real division but a desire to be better...to be one in Christ. Let us set Jesus as the chief cornerstone for everything we do, turning to him rather than other voices that threaten to be louder. Let us heed the call to “join together” and “rise to become a holy temple in the Lord” – one where the Spirit that lives is all of us can dwell.

Thursday, September 24: Read James 2:1-18

Every single one of us is guilty of showing favoritism and enjoying favoritism. We know that the first four verses of today’s reading describe the reality of much of this world, and we have probably experienced both sides of it. The clarity of today’s words cannot be denied- we are called to *do something* about injustice. The trumpet has been sounded- will we respond? Much talk has been made in recent months about the difference between *not* being racist and being *anti-racist*. What does that difference look like in you as an individual? What can that difference look like at Reveille?

Friday, September 25: Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Today’s scripture can almost read like a benediction to us – a benediction for reconciliation where we envision a post-racist world (one we are not yet in) where we “regard no one from a worldly view.” A world where we are all a new creation, stripped of the baggage of division, hate, “othering,” and sin. A world where our reconciliation is grounded in our reconciliation with God, the only true source of love and grace and healing. Let us be the ambassadors through whom God is making God’s appeal, helping all turn to Christ’s example of unity and love, and accept Christ’s gift of forgiveness and grace. Let us all work for the moment when we can honestly cry, “The old has gone, the new is here!” (vs. 17).

Saturday, September 26: Scripture Memorization: Ephesians 2:14

“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.”

Sunday, September 27: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *Mighty God, creator of all people, we confess that we sin against you through our thoughts, words, and deeds and by failing to do the things you require of us. At times our lives reflect only our own selfish desires and motives. Apart from your grace, we are incapable of living into the fullness of who you have created us to be. Forgive us, we pray. Through your Son, Jesus Christ, and power of the Holy Spirit, enable us to forgive like you, to love like you, and to see others the way you see them. Help us to share your love with all the world until that day the world comes to be as it is in heaven. Amen.* (Adapted from Be the Bridge, p. 81, written by Cassandra Albert)