



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

November 9-15, 2020

Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon

Sermon Title: "A Contagious Faith"

Notes from sermon on 11/8:

Things For Which to Pray This Week:

### Family Focus Question:

The parable speaks fundamentally about talents, which was a way of thinking about money. But it also invites us to think about our lives as the talents. What are we doing with our life? Are we investing it fearlessly to multiply it for the kingdom or are we burying our potential under the ground out of fear?

### Questions for Small Groups

1. Describe the difference between multiplying and managing.  
Does it fit your understanding of faith?
2. How can we invest our lives and church instead of managing them?
3. Describe what "contagious faith" might look like.

### Monday, November 9: Read Matthew 25:14-30 – *The Parable of the Talents*

In a year like this one, it's tempting to go into "maintenance mode." Simply keeping our head above water and getting to the end should be enough – who can expect more? Who can invest in the future when the present is so volatile?

So often we are accustomed to a philosophy of "maintaining" when it comes to our understanding of church and even the kingdom. We talk about standing our ground, avoiding "backsliding," or even just focusing on maintaining a good attendance record, reputation, or church property. What we will discover this week, however, is how many of Jesus's parables speak not to maintaining what we have, but in doubling what we have to serve even more.

As we explore some of Jesus's most beloved parables, we begin with the parable of the talents, in which three servants are given much, but only two invest what they are given for greater return. This requires both faith in grace of the giver and confidence in one's self. What talents are we hoarding or burying in order to simply maintain our security or image? How can we invest our lives, resources, and our church in a way that goes beyond mere preservation?

**Tuesday, November 10: Read Matthew 13:31-33: *The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast***

What if we have so little with which to begin? What if there is no clear trajectory for our efforts, or no visible sign that our labors will not be in vain? Today's short but powerful parables from Jesus illustrate God's ability to transform the smallest gifts, efforts, and talents into life-sustaining masterpieces. We will never comprehend how these transformations happen, just as we can't fully witness or orchestrate the miracle of a buried seed becoming a mighty tree or a small amount of yeast turning flour into bread. That is exactly how our feeble efforts can magnify God...by allowing God to magnify us. Where are the mustard seeds of resources in our church and lives? Where and how can we let God magnify them?

**Wednesday, November 11: Read Luke 13:6-9: *The Parable of the Fig Tree***

Too soon we give up on others and on ourselves. We have a great idea, start a ministry, and when it doesn't immediately yield fruit, we cut it off. When we try something new and aren't immediately great at it, we declare it's "not our gift." The caregiver of the vineyard in today's parable did not give up on the fig tree, and neither does God give up on us. Instead, like the caregiver, God gives us second chances, fertilizes our efforts, and gives us time. What efforts have we given up that might be able to grow, given more time, care, and nurturing? What would "fertilizer" look like, and what could be some possible sources for it? Where could we nurture the fledgling efforts of others?

**Thursday, November 12: Read Matthew 13:1-23: *The Parable of the Seeds and Soils***

But we have to be so careful and strategic with our efforts, we say. Our resources are limited, and we can't risk planting seeds where they do not grow. Today's parable is usually read from the perspective of the seeds: if we want to grow and bear fruit, we must avoid being hard-hearted (a seed on the path), shallow (a seed on rocky soil), or distracted (a seed among thorns). These are all true. But perhaps we also can read this parable from the perspective of the sower – one who scatters seeds in *all soils*. How can we recognize the seeds God is scattering even where conditions are not ideal (including our own hearts and minds) where we could water, soften, till, and weed?

**Friday, November 15: Read Matthew 22:1-14: *The Parable of the Wedding Banquet***

One of the best ways we can enjoy a fruitful life and church is to be prepared for the opportunities and work God will send our way. Living in the kingdom of heaven means being ever-ready to attend the banquets God is throwing for us. Are we looking for these opportunities? Are we studying the Word, fellowshiping with others, learning from the saints in our lives, and saying "yes" to the small things so that we will be ready and able for the time when the big opportunities come? Let us all start getting prepared, stepping out in faith, and trusting in God's transforming grace so we can be multipliers, not maintainers, in God's ever-growing and everlasting kingdom.

**Saturday, November 14: Scripture Memorization: Matthew 25:23b**

"Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little;  
I will set you over much. Enter in the joy of your master."

**Sunday, November 15: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession:** *Almighty God, we confess that all too often we have settled for mediocrity. You have called us to excellence, to multiply our lives and our church to fill our relationships and community with your joy and wonder, and so often we have instead buried what we have within us out of fear. Forgive us for the poor stewardship of our lives and faith. Bring us to a new understanding of who and whose we are so that we may joyfully and aggressively invest ourselves and our churches for your kingdom. Do not let us bury our possibilities in the sand but raise us up as beacons of hope in a world that has so little of it. We ask it all in the name of Christ. AMEN*