



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

January 4-10, 2021

Sermon by Guest Preacher Dr. Douglas Powe

Sermon Title: "Repairers of the Breach"

Notes from sermon on 01/03:

Things For Which to Pray This Week:

### Family Focus Question:

It looks like 2021 is still going to have many challenges in store for us. This sermon tells us that we can be people who are used to fix the broken parts of our world. Do we believe that is possible? How do we go about it?

### Questions for Small Groups

1. Dr. Powe calls us to be "repairers of the breach." What are some of things we must do before we get to that point?
2. How is our world right now similar to the context to which Isaiah was speaking?
3. Dr. Powe speaks to the importance of not pointing fingers. Is there a place where you need to do that in the coming New Year?

### Monday, January 4: Read Isaiah 58:9-12

We begin a new year, and we want it to be better than the last one. We want our communities and nation and world to heal from the ravages of disease, social isolation, partisanship, unemployment, and racial injustice. After months of feeling helpless, we feel ready to answer the call in Isaiah to be "repairers of breach."

This week, we prepare for a sermon on this very topic by guest preacher Dr. Douglas Powe, Director of the Lewis Center for Leadership at Wesley Seminary. As we carefully read today's scripture, upon which Dr. Powe's sermon will be based, we will learn that there are some important steps to being able to repair the breaches in our society. Call on the Lord. Stop pointing fingers. Take care of those who are struggling for life. Be ambassadors to God's grace. As we enter 2021, with all of the challenges in our midst, this call is particularly timely. What first step will we take today to better prepare ourselves for this call?

**Tuesday, January 5: Read Acts 19:1-7**

For the remainder of the week, we turn to our common lectionary readings – ones being read by Methodists, Catholics, and other denominations around the world. While our global brothers and sisters in Christ are not all preparing for the same sermon, nor one necessarily based on Isaiah (as that is outside our lectionary this week), we can see how remarkably strong the message of Isaiah is echoed in these readings. In today's passage from Acts, we read how a potential breach between the followers of Paul and John the Baptist could threaten the unity and growth of the early Christian church. Believers are urged not to follow one leader versus the other, but instead unite in following Christ alone, calling on the power of the Holy Spirit. They are encouraged to see one another and their leaders as partners, not rivals, in God's work on earth. Whom do we need to start viewing as partners, not rivals, in the repair work of 2021? How can we unite by setting our eyes further up, towards Christ, rather than in the details of our disagreements and differences?

**Wednesday, January 6: Read Psalm 29**

Today's psalm reminds us of a first step and final failsafe for avoiding pettiness and discord as we try to go about the business of repairing: calling on the Lord. When we train our eyes to focus on our perfect God, not God's imperfect children, we will be strengthened and reassured by God's power, magnificence, and love. We must begin each day and each endeavor by "ascribing to the Lord" the glory of everything God is and has done, and return to this glory every time we start to slip into finger pointing or despair. Let us spend some time today memorizing parts of this psalm to use as breath prayers or mantras, allowing us to turn to them whenever we need them: "Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength." "The God of glory thunders." "Worship the Lord in holy splendor." "May the Lord give strength to his people!" "May the Lord bless his people with peace!"

**Thursday, January 7: Read Mark 1:4-11**

As we read today's account of Jesus's baptism by John, we get the feeling of time standing still. We imagine the hushed awe of John himself, then John's and Jesus' followers, as Jesus descends into the water, emerges into the air, and the heavens tear apart and the dove descends. This was truly a moment when everything felt right in the world, and the hope and love and pleasure of God was revealed. This gift of baptism and "rightness," or justification with God, is available to us all through God's grace as revealed in the life, baptism, death, and resurrection of Christ. These potential moments of sacrament where we encounter God are surrounding us every day. Are we looking for them? Our Methodist tradition describes "Means of Grace" which we can practice to help us recognize and experience God's grace. Let us spend some time looking up these "Means of Grace" and make a resolution to practice them more intently.

**Friday, January 8: Read Genesis 1:1-5**

First, there was God. Then, there was light. We are called today to help people focus on God and the light in 2021, not despair and darkness. Today, let us use these first, foundational verses from our Bible to reinforce our foundation in our God and in the light we can see and help others see in 2021. Let us all point to the light instead of pointing at each other. Let all of our actions and words reflect God's light!

**Saturday, January 9: Scripture Memorization: Isaiah 58:9b-10**

"If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday."

**Sunday, January 10: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of**

**Common Confession:** *Lord, you have called us to be people who repair the broken walls. We are called to "restore the breach." We, however, have failed in our calling. Instead, we have spent our time pointing fingers at one another while ignoring the poor and oppressed. Forgive us for forsaking our calling. Forgive us for our distraction from your vision for us and for the world. By your grace, lead us into a renewed understanding of who we are and what we are called to do, even in these very hard seasons in our world. All this we ask in the name of Christ our Lord. AMEN.*