



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

February 15-21, 2021

Sermon by Rev. Stephen Coleman

First Sunday in Lent

Sermon Title: "Who Are You?"

Notes from sermon on 2/14:

To pray for this week:

Family Focus Question:

What is your Lenten discipline this year and why are you following a Lenten discipline?

Questions for Small Groups

1. What does Mark 1:9-15 tell you about Jesus, about God, about humankind?
2. Why does baptism matter for Jesus and for us?
3. Define and discuss the words kingdom of God, repentance and good news.

Monday, February 15: Read Mark 1:9-15

This week we begin our Lenten journey, and it's ironic that we start this seemingly long season before Easter with today's lightning-fast gospel reading. Notice where we are in the gospel of Mark: *only nine verses in*. Mark writes like a he's running out of time; no pregnancies, babies, shepherds, or wise men – we go straight to Jesus' baptism, his temptations in the desert, and the beginning of Jesus' ministry when he proclaims, "The kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe the good news." If we blink again, Mark's gospel will be at the cross.

Given the pace of this gospel, we know to pay close attention to everything in it. There is a lot packed into these seven verses. This Sunday, Stephen Coleman's sermon will focus on the baptism of Christ where God says to him, "You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased." As we seek to understand what this statement tells us about Jesus, we will also seek to understand what this says about us and how it can enhance the season of Lent. Yes, we are being called to a season of repentance, reflection, and growth. Are we viewing it not as a punishment, but as a gift of renewal and rebirth from a loving God who claims us as God's beloved children? How could our attitudes toward Lent change with this mindset?

Tuesday, February 16: SHROVE TUESDAY: Read Genesis 9:8-17

We continue the theme of cleansing water in our reading of the end of the Noah story. This passage captures a moment of renewal, when the world is emerging from a dark and incredibly painful time and God is reassuring it of God's love, protection, and blessing. When have we experienced these moments in our lives? Are we in need of experiencing this feeling of cleansing, relief, and hope right now? As painful as it may be, are there things that need to "die" in our lives in order for us to start anew? What are they? On this Shrove Tuesday, let us partake in the tradition of confession...and eating pancakes...and ruthlessly examine our lives in search of things that are keeping us from living the life to which God is calling us – a life filled with hope, harmony, and alignment with God and all of creation.

Wednesday, February 17: ASH WEDNESDAY: Read Psalm 51:1-17

Any time today, we can watch Reveille's prerecorded Ash Wednesday service and engage in the healing tradition of repentance and mourning of our sins. Our sins hurt – both us and others – and pretending they don't leads us to emotional, physical, and spiritual illness. God wants us to be free of it all – wanted it so badly that God sent his Son to die on the cross so we could be washed clean. Today's psalmist pours out his heart to God, fully confessing his guilt and searching for a clean heart. Let us do the same and remember all throughout the world today who are in search of spiritual cleanliness, either consciously or unconsciously. Let us see us all as God's beloved children, humbled yet cherished, sinful but redeemed.

Thursday, February 18: Read 1 Peter 3:18-22

As we begin Lent, too many of us are burdened by guilt, condemnation, and self-hatred. Too much of our world lives under this mantle of oppression. We try to make up for our past wrongs by doing good, but it's as effective as adding clean drinking water to a cup of mud. What we need is to be poured out, washed clean, and filled up with something greater than ourselves and our best efforts. What we need is repentance, where we lay our shortcomings, sins, and guilt at God's feet and "appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (verse 21).

Friday, February 19: Read Psalm 25:1-10

We read today's exquisitely raw and exposed psalm begging for God to forget the sins of our youth, save us from shame, and guide us in a better path. Who among us is not desperate for these very things? What baggage are we carrying around because we cannot forgive ourselves for things we did in our youth? What masks are we wearing and walls are we building to protect ourselves from shame? Where do we feel lost? What if we accepted the amazing truth that we can lay these burdens at God's feet? What would that do for our mental health, relationships, and sense of purpose? Let us all see confession and repentance for the incredible, life-giving gift it is, and begin fully living in the joy and freedom Lent provides us.

Saturday, February 20: Scripture Memorization: Psalm 51:10

"Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me." (NRSV)

Sunday, February 21: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *Merciful God, we begin this Lenten season in confession. We do not live according to your ways but our own. We have failed to love you and to love our neighbors. We have disregarded your Word and your sacraments. Forgive us Lord. Give us grace and power to put away all hurtful things and walk in your holy ways. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.*