



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

February 22-28, 2021

Sermon by Lead Pastor Dr. Pete Moon

Second Sunday in Lent

Sermon Title: "God's Long-Range Planning"

Notes from sermon on 2/21:

To pray for this week:

Family Focus Question

What are our long-range plans? Do they match up with God's plans and style?

Questions for Small Groups

1. Abraham and Sarah were very old when the Lord appeared to them in this story. Decades had passed since God made the initial promise. What do you think those years in between were like for this elderly couple?
2. Describe a time that you had to wait for the promise, and it seemed like it just didn't arrive.
3. Describe how Peter's understanding of God's methods differed from Jesus in our New Testament reading.

Monday, February 22: Read Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

What have you got planned? This question has taken on a new meaning in the past year, as so many of us have learned just how fragile our plans really are and how little control we truly have over our future.

It's easy to get disheartened thinking about our lack of control. That is, until we remember the incredible fact that God *does* have a plan, and not just for the world, but for *us*. How do we know what it is? How do we keep the faith that God has wonderful things in store for us?

Today, we read of one of the most unlikely promises in the Bible – one that seemingly came too late. In this text, God makes a covenant with the elderly Abram and his far-past-childbearing-years wife, Sarai. We gain insight into the character of God – one of love and faithfulness to promises – and God's intentions: to reveal God's love to the world, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus and the kingdom. "Walk before me, and be blameless," God tells Abram, "and I will make my covenant between me and you." Today, let us ask ourselves, do our goals match with God's? Are we aligned with God's character and willing to walk before God, having faith in God's ultimate plan?

Tuesday, February 23: Read Mark 8:31-33

We love plans, but only if we can see the ultimate end and they do not involve anything too painful or hard. Peter had plans such as these for Jesus – plans of glory, power, and victory...minus the journey to the cross. In contrast, Jesus' plans were fully aligned with God's ultimate plan. God's plan was exceedingly more difficult, long-term, and impactful than Peter ever could have dreamed. As we look back on our own life journeys, we can probably point to many times when things proved more difficult, yet ultimately more wonderful than we ever predicted. We can also recognize God's presence with us through it all. How can this knowledge help give us faith and patience in what God has in store for us next?

Wednesday, February 24: Read Mark 8:34-38

We want the great figure without the dieting and exercise, the great grades without the late nights studying, and the happily ever after without having to slay the dragon. "Let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me," Jesus tells the crowd and his disciples in today's text. One week after Ash Wednesday, we may already be feeling the strain of keeping our Lenten promises, if we made any at all. Let us today refocus on why we made the promises to begin with and how they might help us have a more eternal mindset that is more aligned with God's sustainable, life-giving gifts instead of the cheap, fickle promises of instant gratification and life on easy street.

Thursday, February 25: Read Romans 4:13-25

Lest we are tempted to try to earn God's favor and rewards through our own efforts, today we read one of Paul's famous passages regarding faith in his letter to the church in Rome. Abraham did not become the father of a great nation because he did great things; he became it because he had great faith. Abraham's ability to fully believe God and align his plans to God's vision allowed him to receive incredible, unbelievable blessings. Abraham's belief was not perfect, nor was it passive. It involved travel, risk, humility, mistakes, repentance, and hard, hard work. He and Sarah often tried to rush God's plan (example: Hagar) but always turned back to God and God's plan. Where are we tempted to give up on the quiet calling we have heard from God for our lives? What attitudes and behaviors and actions could we change to bring ourselves back in alignment with God? Today, could we renew a Lenten promise...or simply start one a little late...that involves adopting (rather than giving up) a discipline that will better align us with God's means of grace?

Friday, February 26: Read Psalm 22:23-31

Today's psalmist paints a picture of a world where God's glory is proclaimed from all the ends of the earth and for all generations: the poor are fed, the afflicted find acceptance and love, and all who are seeking love, peace, kindness, and joy...the gifts of God...find them. Is this the picture we have also painted for our future? When we read these words aloud, are we praying "with our feet" as the African saying goes, or only giving lip service to them? Let us come together as a congregation to help bring into life this vision, starting with single individual acts, today.

Saturday, February 27: Scripture Memorization: Genesis 17:1a-2

"I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." (NRSV)

Sunday, February 28: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *Almighty God, we are a chronically impatient people. We want it and we want it right now. In our impatience, we also confess our lack of trust in you and our desire to take things in our own hands. By your grace give us patience but also give us vision. Enable us to see as you see, understand as you do. Guide us into an abiding place of trust in you, your plans, and your ways, for we ask it in the name of Jesus.*