



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

March 29-April 4, 2021

Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon

EASTER SUNDAY

Sermon Title: "A Race for Hope"

Notes from sermon on 3/28:

To pray for this week:

Family Focus Question

What is the most challenging thing you are facing right now?

Questions for Small Groups

1. The sermon this week mentions how many things can keep us from taking in the power and wonder of the resurrection. What deflects you from the wonder of this day?
2. There are many claims that the resurrection is not literal. In other words, we need to interpret it figuratively and symbolically. Do you see any problem in that?
3. Have you found any loss of hope during the pandemic? Mary, Peter, and John were all found "running" in the story. In many ways, they were running in search of hope. Is there a way that the resurrection of Jesus can yet give you hope for today and tomorrow?

Monday, March 29: Read John 20:1-18

For the second year in a row, we prepare for a holy week unlike any other before the pandemic. We have been through so much and have suffered real losses. We have learned to reimagine worship, Sunday school, youth musicals, choir, children's activities, and fellowship. Just as Mary Magdalene in today's foundational scripture to our faith, we are racing in the dark, aware of everything that has been taken from us. We too, however, are beginning to feel hope and recognize that Jesus is alive and well in our world and in our church and still has great plans for us now and for all eternity.

We approach Easter Sunday as an imperfect, incomplete people who are perfectly loved and completely saved from our sin due to God's grace through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It's so easy to lose sight of who we are and what has been done for us. This week, we will both celebrate Christ's resurrection and take time to remember and relive the sacrifices he made for us. When we take these sacred pauses to remind ourselves of what the resurrection means, we are more able to embrace and share the power and hope that is uniquely ours because the tomb is empty.

Tuesday, March 30: Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-19

Because we are an Easter people, we can live in the knowledge that death is not the final answer. We can live in the freedom that sin does not have ultimate power over us. When we embrace the resurrection, we find hope in everything and can face down giants, be they global and universal or intimate and highly personal. We see beginnings where others see only ends. We recognize impending victory when others only recognize defeat. We can wait in joy and hope for the revelation of God's work rather than live in perpetual mourning and anxiety for what is gone. If we can open our eyes to the gifts of the resurrection, it can change everything.

Wednesday, March 31: Read Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Psalm 118 cannot be read too often, and when read in the context of Holy Week, we find deeper meaning in the words, "I shall not die, but live," and "open to me the gates of righteousness." These are not mere wishes, but bold statements of faith based on what we have witnessed God do for us and for all humanity. We can live every day in joy and celebration for what God has done, is doing, and will do. How have we found new ways to celebrate each day in the past year? What incredible surprises and gifts are we looking forward to now? How much does it mean to us that we know we are children of a God of rebirth, renewal, and resurrection, who has promised us eternal salvation, love, hope, and peace?

Thursday, April 4: HOLY THURSDAY: Read John 13:1-17, 31-35

"Do you know what I have done for you?" Jesus asked his disciples. We might well be asked the same thing today. Have we really stopped to think of all the things Jesus did during his life to teach, serve, and save us? What examples did he give us of self-sacrificial love that has paid us dividends through the lives of millennia of followers? What words of his have given us direction, comfort, and hope? How different is the world thanks to a savior who washed our feet so we would do the same? "I give you a new commandment, that you should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." This is the savior we will follow to the cross. This is the savior whom we can follow into eternal life.

Friday, April 5: GOOD FRIDAY: Read John 18:1-19:42

Today's reading is long and hard to read. We want to turn away, skim through, and get to the happy ending. We do ourselves and our savior a disservice if we numb ourselves to the true brutality of the Passion, and therefore the magnitude of Christ's love and gift to us. We do not worship a living Savior who escaped the pain of death; rather, he took on the most pain imaginable so we can be spared of the pain of isolation, despair, hopelessness, and sin. Take time with today's Passion. Read it aloud. Stay at the foot of the cross for a while so we may more fully experience the magnitude of the joy and miracle of Easter.

Saturday, April 3: Scripture Memorization: John 13:15 (Optional Reading: Mark 16:1-8)

"For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." (NRSV)

Sunday, April 4: EASTER SUNDAY: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our

Prayer of Common Confession: *Oh Lord, our Lord, on this day of all days we can only turn to you in praise and thanksgiving. In grace you have come to us, and in grace you have saved us. We deserved death and you have given us life through the resurrection of Jesus our Lord. Forgive us for our focus on lesser things; forgive us our distractions that move our souls away from the wonder of this day. Lead us to the glory of the empty tomb for we ask it all in the name of the Risen One, Christ, our Lord. AMEN*

Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! Happy Easter!