



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

March 8-14, 2021

Sermon by Rev. Kelley Lane

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Sermon Title: "What Defines Our Lives?"

Notes from sermon on 3/07:

To pray for this week:

Family Focus Question

How can someone know we love them?

Questions for Small Groups

1. How do you define love?
2. What is most important to you in your life?
3. What one thing can you do between now and Easter to share God's love with the world?

Monday, March 8: Read John 3:14-21

We start our lectionary reading this week in the middle of a story. The third chapter of John begins with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, who goes to Jesus at night and says, "Rabbi, we know that you are the teacher who has come from God." He then asks Jesus a series of questions regarding Jesus's identity and purpose, as well as our human relationship to God. What follows is a series of incredible statements regarding God's purpose as revealed in Jesus. What is that purpose? Love. Love is the answer. God loves so God gives. All is a gift.

This week, we will prepare for Rev. Kelley Lane's sermon examining the sacrificial nature of God's love and how Jesus's atonement for our sins invites us into a right relationship with God, self, neighbor, and creation. The scriptures will all address the inescapable reality that we are sinful and in need of justification, redemption, and forgiveness. To ignore this reality is to ignore the magnitude of Jesus's gift and the extent of God's love.

Tuesday, March 9: Read Numbers 21:4-9

“And just as Moses lifted the staff up in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him will have eternal life” began yesterday’s scripture reading. Today’s ancient scripture is the background of that reference – the serpent-shaped staff of bronze held up by Moses to deliver the Israelites from lethal serpent bites. As long as people kept their eyes on the raised staff, they would be delivered. We can focus on the seemingly harsh consequences of sin described in both yesterday’s and today’s passages, or we can focus on the real point of it all: God’s love. Or perhaps we can focus on both: the real consequences of sin juxtaposed against the reality of grace and redemption. How does acknowledging the wages of sin help us better recognize, appreciate, and embrace God’s love?

Wednesday, March 10: Read Ephesians 2:1-10

When have you felt “dead to sin?” Sin isn’t a tantalizing choice; it’s a ruthless master. It erodes, controls, multiplies, captures, and destroys. We try to outrun it, conquer it on our own, or lower our standards in an effort to deny its presence. But then comes God’s mercy. God’s love. God’s grace. Our deliverance. What’s more, God hasn’t just delivered us to a baseline of neutral existence, but “created us in Christ for good works which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” What difference can it make in our lives if we fully embrace the truth that not only are we not condemned to a life of imprisonment or mediocrity, but have been chosen and prepared for a life of meaning, purpose, goodness, and joy? What difference would this make in the lives of so many in our community and world who are struggling with self-hatred, depression, and addiction? Who will bring this message to them?

Thursday, March 11: Read Psalm 107:1-3

Give thanks, for God is good. His love will never change and will last forever. Just ask anyone from around the world who has experienced this love – those who have been delivered and redeemed from the trouble they found themselves in. This is the message of today’s reading from the 107th psalm. Have we asked others to share their stories of God’s love and redemption? Who could we ask? What would this do for our appreciation of this gift?

Friday, March 12: Read Psalm 107:17-22

How much more have we appreciated the recent sunshine and warmth, given the seemingly endless days (and weekends) of cold, rain, and ice of February we endured? Times of hardship can give us more gratitude and enjoyment in times of deliverance. Today’s psalm excerpt recognizes that many have been “sick through their sinful ways”, thus enduring “affliction”, but were delivered when they cried out to God. The command from today’s psalmist? Offer thanks. Let us heed this command ourselves and create a daily practice of gratitude to God for everything we have been delivered from, ranging from the smallest new joys Spring will bring to our eternal deliverance from the wages of sin and death.

Saturday, March 13: Scripture Memorization: Ephesians 2:4-5a

“But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” (NRSV)

Sunday, March 14: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, the Shepherd of Israel, a pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night. In these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance that in this pilgrimage of prayer we might learn to be your people once more. In fasting and service you bring us back to your heart. You open our eyes to your presence in the world and you free our hands to lead others to the wonders of your grace. Be with us in these journey days, for without you we are lost and will perish. To you alone be dominion and glory, forever and ever. Amen.