



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

May 10-16, 2021

Sermon by Lead Pastor Dr. Pete Moon

ASCENSION SUNDAY

Sermon Title: "Preparing the Fire"

Notes from sermon on 5/9:

To pray for this week:

Family Focus Question

How good are you with waiting? How do you make your waiting time productive time?

Questions for Small Groups

1. Usually when we think of prayer, we think of it as conversation with God, with our times of confession, thanksgiving, and making our requests.
Can you think of prayer as also that time of preparation? How so?
2. What does it mean to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit?"
3. Our reading from Ephesians speaks of the way that knowing God better translates into spiritual power in our lives. How does that work?

Monday, May 10: Read Acts 1:1-11

A year ago this week, we were preparing for Ascension Sunday less than two months into the pandemic. It felt like an eternity. We couldn't believe we had been quarantined this long, and still held out hope that the class of 2020 would have their graduation and prom, our vacation plans wouldn't need to be cancelled, and life would return to "normal." We are now 14 months into the pandemic. We have waited far longer than we ever imagined.

This week, we will learn more about how to wait. Christ's disciples began their waiting period upon Christ's ascension into heaven, and what they did while waiting changed history. They earnestly believed Jesus would return in their lifetimes, and when Christ followers realized they would need to wait longer...much longer...they changed history again, creating structures and habits and support systems in place to shepherd God's children and prepare for the kingdom. How well do we wait in our lives? Do we recognize it as a holy time that can fill us with renewed knowledge and an opportunity to "prepare the fire" for what God has planned next? What are we doing right now to actively wait on God?

Tuesday, May 11: Read Ephesians 1:15-23

Paul's words to the church in Ephesus demonstrate what incredible good a church can do when it is waiting in joyful anticipation for Christ. In the midst of turmoil and many, many earthly distractions, the church of Ephesus exuded love, gratitude, and hope. Paul gave them encouragement to stay centered on Christ and keep their hope in Christ's power and God's eternal work. How are we at Reveille being beacons of this hope and power? How have we each as individual members of Christ's body been using this time of "waiting" to renew our strength and purpose for the upcoming year, when we can begin helping our body, our community, and our world heal? How have we been renewed through this period of waiting?

Wednesday, May 12: Read Luke 24:44-53

The book of Acts is actually a continuation of the gospel of Luke, so today we return to the final words of Luke that precede Monday's reading. Christ does not leave the disciples without giving them some explicit instructions: "stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Jesus knew the disciples were not ready to just hit the road and start preaching and healing and doing. They needed to stop, rest, and wait. Are we building time into our daily and weekly routines to stop and wait on the power of the Holy Spirit to speak to us, renew us, and give us direction? Could we begin a morning routine of not beginning our day before waiting on God in prayer and meditation? What difference could that make in our days and in our lives?

Thursday, May 13: Read Psalm 47

Waiting doesn't have to be quiet or solemn. The psalms are filled with commandments to shout and sing praises to God, even in times when the children of Israel were desperately waiting for God's deliverance. How much time have we spent in joy and song during quarantine? In the absence of being able to sing hymns with a full choir on Sunday mornings, what are we doing to sing praises to God? Let us all find our voices again and feel the renewing power of song and poetry and our voices, even in the privacy of our own homes. The time is coming soon when we will be able to raise our voices together in song, all in one place. Today, let us raise our voices together from each of our places!

Friday, May 14: Read Isaiah 40:28-31

No time with God is wasted, and that includes the waiting time. When we wait on God, we our strength is renewed and our power exponentially amplified, as if we are borne on "wings of eagles." This familiar image can give us focus and discipline as we incorporate habits of prayer and meditation into our lives. It can give us pause before running out on our own to engage in frantic opportunity, rather than engaging in prayer first. How much more could we get done for God's kingdom if we incorporated more prayer and meditation into our individual and church-wide routines? Let us all let our strength be renewed through waiting on the Lord so we can reach new, unimagined heights in the next season to come!

Saturday, May 15: Scripture Memorization: Isaiah 40:31

"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (NRSV)

Sunday, May 16: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of

Common Confession: *Almighty God, we are an impatient lot. What we want we want right now. And yet, this day we are reminded that those seasons of waiting are not empty times simply to be endured. You are at work within it all, preparing us for even greater things. Give us a renewed spirit of patience, that we might not just bide our time but instead abide in you, for it is in the name of the Ascended One that we ask and wait. AMEN*