

RAINBOW CITY

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



GROW GUIDE

Week of April 23, 2017

Get a filled-in version and listen to the audio of the sermon at rbcfumc.org/sermons.
The Grow Guide is available at noon Sunday; sermon audio available by Tuesday at 8am.

Learning to Dream Like God
Sermon 10 of 11 in *The Roots of Redemption*

SERMON NOTES

Ephesians 1:8b-23
Rev. Dr. R. Brandon Harris

The Arc of Redemption

Redemption is the act of God restoring creation to what it was meant to be.

The Church is the forum within which and through which God's great work of redemption will come to pass.

“These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, and [this man] has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus.” —Acts 17:6-7

Paul: A Man Turned Upside Down

Knowing the God Who is God

In this world being renewed, reshaped, turned upside down, and reborn by the redeeming power of the risen Christ, the most important thing any of us can know is the sort of God who is God.

“Faith and certainty are not the same thing, at least not if certainty is a matter of knowing everything you need to know before you leave a familiar place for strange one, or trade in a known way of life for one you do not know.” —Barbara Brown Taylor

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mon. 4/24/2017 Acts 5:217-33

The apostles are persecuted

Living life in an upside-down way is sure to invite curious looks. But when these ways run counter to the way of the big deals of the world, it invites persecution. The apostles lives stood out so markedly because they were patterned after Jesus' way of manna and mercy.

Tues. 4/25/2017 Acts 7:51-8:1

The first Christian martyr

Sometimes our commitment to the way of Jesus is so threatening to the power of the big deals that the big deals will want to stop our lives completely, just as they tried with Jesus. Yet when we, like Stephen, trust in God's power to redeem even the worst of human sin and failures, we are empowered to live as Christ lived--lives of abundant mercy--even to the point of death.

Wed. 4/26/2017 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 *The Corinthians adopt the ways of Pharaoh's Egypt*

The community of Jesus followers in Corinth were seduced by the ways of Pharaoh's Egypt. They served the biggest and best portions at the Lord's Supper (at that time it was more than just a little pinch of bread dipped in wine) to the wealthiest and most powerful while the poor and marginalized didn't receive enough. Paul challenged them to "discern the body of Christ" in their eating and drinking which meant that they were to recognize their unity and to follow his ways over Pharaoh's Egypt.

Thurs. 4/27/2017 2 Corinthians 7:5-9:15 *The big test for the Corinthians*

After the events in 1 Cor 11 (see the readings for Wednesday), Paul presents the Corinthians with an opportunity to live out Jesus' way of manna and mercy. The Christians in Jerusalem, under Roman persecution, were being squeezed and didn't have enough. Paul knew that the Christians in Corinth had plenty, so he pleaded with them to release their excess, confident that God would sustain them.

Fri. 4/28/2017 Romans 8:18-39

Paul's appeal to the Romans

No one is sure of the exact circumstances that prompted Paul's letter to Rome, a community of Jesus followers he had never visited. But, in chapter 8 he writes to them about the remarkable power of God to bring his great work of redemption to completion in and through the church. Perhaps Paul knew the persecution that may come down the road and he was encouraging Christians to be radically faithful to Christ's ways because of God's vision for the future, that all creation would be restored. Because of this promised future, Christians don't have to fear any earthly authority.

Sat. 4/29/2017 Revelation 5; 18; 22:1-5 *A vision of what's to come*

Revelation was written to a church enduring great persecution by Rome. Written years after Paul's ministry, the church was facing exactly what Paul had anticipated: regimes like Pharaoh's Egypt do not go quietly. The church needed to be constantly reminded of the redemption God was working through them. Their faithfulness to Jesus' ways of manna and mercy was how God's future would come to fruition. The visions offered in Revelation show the fruit of their radical faithfulness.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Download this week's prayer list from <http://tinyurl.com/prayer-2017-04-19>
