



GPS GUIDE Grow, Pray, Serve Guide for Weekly Reflection

(adapted from United Methodist Church of the Resurrection resources: sharechurch.com)

November 24, 2024 *Why This Church?*

Scripture: Ezekiel 34:1, 4, 15-16 (NRSV) and Matthew 5:16 (CEB)

This church: welcoming all

MONDAY 11.25.24 Luke 19:1-10

DID YOU KNOW?

“In May 1739, John Wesley’s friend George Whitefield invited him to preach in the fields to the coal miners and farmers—truly non-religious and nominally religious people. Those early Methodists were compassionate and sought to welcome everyone. Wesley went to the fields to preach. They went to prisoners, even those on death row, to demonstrate the love of Christ. They were relentless in providing food for the hungry, medicines for the sick, and in speaking up for those who had no power or voice—for Wesley that even included a man who was in prison for being gay.” *

Jesus broke through the barriers that blocked people from God's love. As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus was both wealthy and widely despised. Tax collectors helped fund the Roman occupation by collecting taxes (usually excessive) from other Israelites. But Jesus saw the man’s spiritual hunger beyond the labels others put on him. By inviting himself to Zacchaeus' house, Jesus showed that God loves everyone—no one is beyond redemption. This story powerfully modeled what Resurrection means when we say we aim to be a place where all are welcome to meet and follow Jesus. • Jesus ignored the grumbling crowd and reached out to include Zacchaeus, not deterred because others rejected him as a "sinner." His radical welcome transformed Zacchaeus' life. Who might feel excluded from God's love as you look at the people around you at work, school, or in your neighborhood? How can you and your church help welcome them?

- Jesus’ mission was “to seek and save the lost.” Scholar William Barclay said, "'Lost' does not mean damned or doomed. It just means in the wrong place.... A lost [person]... has wandered away from God; and is found when once again in the rightful place as an obedient child in the Father’s... family." ** In what ways has God given you your rightful place in God’s family? When have you been able to help God “find” someone else?

Prayer: Loving Lord, help me to see others through your eyes that lit up with love and compassion at the sight of a “sinner.” Help me to love and serve anyone I can in your name. Amen.

* Adam Hamilton, notes in preparation for November 24, 2024 sermon.

** William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of Luke* (Revised Edition). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, page 257.

This church: valuing even the youngest **TUESDAY 11.26.24 Matthew 21:8-9, 14-16**

DID YOU KNOW?

The Resurrection web site offers extensive information about Resurrection's ministry to [kids and parents](#) and to [students \(grades 6-12\)](#). This is a central part of the church's ministry at all locations.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem (the day we call "Palm Sunday"), children shouted his praises. To defend them from his enemies, Jesus quoted the Bible, but from the Greek translation of the Psalms. Why? This may explain it: "The Hebrew reads 'strength' instead of 'praise.' Jewish interpreters frequently chose the textual tradition or translation that best communicated their point. The primary language of the Sadducees was probably Greek (the dominant language of their tomb inscriptions)."

- * • Jesus rode into Jerusalem the way a king who came in peace would (cf. [Zechariah 9:9](#)). Why did that make "the chief priests and legal experts" angry? "The aristocratic priests belonged to Jerusalem's wealthy ruling class.... they probably have political objections." ** Some Israelites profited from dealing with Rome; others wanted a military king like David who led Israel to victories in war. But children praised a gentle "Son of David" who said to love your enemies. Do you?
- It's unlikely that the children who shouted that Jesus was the "Son of David" analyzed that title's theological fine points. The "proper" religious authorities objected both to the shouting and to what it might imply, but Jesus said he valued the children's joy. At Resurrection, we want all ages "to know, love and serve God." How can you "know God" by thinking clearly and precisely while keeping the ability to "love God" through joyful praise like the children that day at the Temple?

Prayer: Lord, Jesus, help me learn all I can about your saving life, death and resurrection while retaining and passing on the ability to simply cry with joy, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Amen.

* NIV, *Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* (pp. 8474-8475). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

** NIV, *Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* (pp. 8474). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

This Church: turning faith into caring action **WEDNESDAY 11.27.24 Isaiah 58:5-8, James 1:22-25, 2:14-17**

DID YOU KNOW?

Wesley and the early Methodists took seriously Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, the parable of

the sheep and the goats, and all the prophetic words indicating that *God didn't care how much we prayed and read scripture and worshiped if we didn't work to see justice roll down like a river and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.* *

Both Isaiah and James strongly challenged empty religious rituals that didn't lead to caring action. Isaiah said people's fasting meant nothing if they ignored hungry, homeless, and oppressed people around them. James compared hearing God's word without acting on it to looking in a mirror and immediately forgetting what you saw. He said real faith always shows itself in practical action. This Biblical theme is why Church of the Resurrection emphasizes putting faith into action through serving others. It's not an optional add-on but a sign of authentic faith.

- James used the stark example of sending away hungry or cold people with only words of blessing to show how faith without action falls short. When you see needs in your community—hunger, homelessness, loneliness, addiction or other challenges—what specific actions does Resurrection take to help meet those needs? (If you don't know, [click here.](#)) In what ways are you, or could you become, involved in turning your faith into practical action?
- Isaiah pointed out that God wants religious practices (like fasting or prayer) to open your eyes to see and respond to human suffering around you. What are the main spiritual practices (e.g. prayer, worship, Bible reading) you make a part of your life? How do they shape the way you notice and respond to needs in your community? What is one change that could make your practices more action-oriented?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you didn't just wish me well—you acted to save me. Guide me into a life that draws on and mirrors your practical action as I serve as your hands to help and uplift others. Amen.

* Adam Hamilton, notes in preparation for November 24, 2024 sermon.

This church: committed to accurate Bible study

THURSDAY 11.28.24 2 Timothy 2:14-15, 23-25

DID YOU KNOW?

“As a young person, I loved that in Methodism you were not expected to check your brain at the door of the church, that it was okay to ask questions. Methodism encourages critical thinking about scripture, theology and spirituality.” *

Paul wrote to Timothy about the importance of studying and teaching God's word accurately. In Ephesus, where Timothy served, arguments about religious words and ideas had created division, not spiritual growth. Paul urged Timothy to focus on what really mattered—correctly understanding and applying God's truth. This remains crucial today. That's why Church of the Resurrection stresses thoughtful Bible study that helps people understand Scripture's meaning and connect it to their daily

lives.

- “Paul offers a portrait of the Christian ‘workman’, the one who knows how to study scripture and how to preach and teach God’s word... figure out what standards of knowledge, expository skill, historical and literary judgment, and above all spiritual understanding, are required for the job, and make sure you possess them.” ** What does Resurrection offer to help you understand the Bible more clearly? (If you don’t know, [click here](#).) How can informed, Christ-centered Bible study help you discern truth from falsehood?
- Paul told Timothy to avoid meaningless arguments that only lead to quarrels. Instead, he should gently teach truth to help people grow. When you encounter different views about faith or the Bible, how can you focus on understanding and learning together rather than winning arguments? What are the benefits of learning from genuine dialogue with other believers, rather than just studying by yourself?

Prayer: Lord of my life, help me to keep growing into a “tried and true worker” for your kingdom. Make me accurate, kind and gentle in sharing what I learn from you. Amen.

* Adam Hamilton, notes in preparation for November 24, 2024 sermon.

** Wright, N. T., *Paul for Everyone: The Pastoral Letters: 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus* (The New Testament for Everyone) (p. 107). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

This church: building bridges of care and unity

FRIDAY 11.29.24 Ezekiel 34:11-16, 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

The prophet Ezekiel knew God promised to be the good shepherd who would “seek out the lost, bring back the strays, bind up the wounded, and strengthen the weak.” Jesus did just that (cf. [John 10:7-11](#)). The apostle Paul said the good news is that God loves us, wants to reconcile the world to God, and acted in Christ to overcome our alienation. One of Pastor Hamilton’s earliest books was titled *Leading Beyond the Walls*. * Resurrection aims to build bridges, to call others to “be reconciled to God,” and to one another.

- “[Ezekiel’s] metaphor goes beyond the normal responsibilities of making sure that the sheep are protected and fed. Instead it focuses on the remedial duties, caring for the sick and finding the lost. These equate to the need for kings to bring about justice for alienated and disenfranchised people.” ** What are some ways you can help your church actively support and work for justice for alienated or disenfranchised people today?
- *The Message* paraphrased 2 Corinthians 5:21 as “We’re speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he’s already a friend with you.” *** Do you picture God as eager to bridge the distance to all human beings (including you), as distant and uninterested, or as angry and punitive? How has your reconciliation with God made you “a new creature in Christ”? Who do you know who needs to hear that good news, quite possibly from you?

Prayer: Lord, help me each day to develop greater understanding, compassion and vision. Then as I become more whole, help me to see each person as your precious child. Amen.

* Adam Hamilton, *Leading Beyond the Walls: Developing Congregations with a Heart for the Unchurched*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.

** NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible (pp. 7248-7249). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

*** Peterson, Eugene H. *The Message Numbered Edition Hardback*. Navpress. Kindle Edition.

This church: reaching non-religious and nominally religious people

SATURDAY 11.30.24 Matthew 28:16-20

Matthew's gospel ended with Jesus giving his followers what we call the "Great Commission." He sent them forward to make disciples, baptizing and teaching them to join the Kingdom of God he'd spent his adulthood preaching. The Commission included (and includes) caring about "all nations," making continual choices to invest energy and talents in making the lives of others (whoever and wherever they are) better. Resurrection's purpose statement, based on Jesus' commission, is "... to build a Christian community where non-religious and nominally religious people are becoming deeply committed Christians." One of our guiding values is that we are Outward-Focused. * As Pastor Hamilton puts it, "We don't believe we are more Christian than any other denomination, or that we are better than anyone else. But we do believe our approach to the gospel is one that reaches some that other churches might not reach." **

- The risen Jesus boldly claimed, "all authority in heaven and on earth." That sweeping authority meant that he could promise his followers: "I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age." To those early disciples, that meant not even the seemingly mighty Roman Empire could block Jesus from being with his followers. "The apostles are to go out as heralds, not of someone who may become king at some point in the future, but of the one already appointed and enthroned.... One day that kingdom will come, fully and finally. In the meantime, we have a job to do." *** Jesus' promise wasn't just a temporary thing for the first apostles. It also means that no power on earth today has the authority to make Jesus abandon you. How can knowing Jesus is with you give you courage, strength and peace? How can it make Resurrection, and you as a part of Resurrection, fearless as "one church in many locations"?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, empower me to be more effective as a witness to Jesus who loves me, and who has saved me. Let my peace, purpose and passion help my church better draw others to Jesus. Amen.

* All purpose and values statements found at <https://resurrection.church/about-resurrection/#ourvalues>.

** Adam Hamilton, notes in preparation for November 24, 2024 sermon.

*** Wright, N.T., *Acts for Everyone, Part One: Chapters 1-12* (The New Testament for Everyone) (p. 8-10). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.