
Graphics and Audio Notes

- There **will** be a sermon starter video.
- There **will** be notes and / or scripture to show on screen during the sermon.
- There will be a prayer for children at the end of the service, which is different than usual.



Key Questions

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about our history and the opportunity of being in small groups and how the story of Joseph and Pharaoh can invite us to be in relationship with each other.

Why is this sermon important?

It is important because being in relationship with other people matters.

What is the context of this sermon?

This is the third week of the worship series focused on group life. The graphics, video and some sermon content have been adapted from the TWO Gather series at Life.Church - online at <http://bit.ly/2d0jDo0>.

What are the next action steps?

Join one of three new Wesley Small Groups launching at First UMC El Dorado before Easter 2017.

What is the good news? What is the bottom line?

The good news is that God still works through people and relationships.

What are other key takeaways?

For social media

- In the first week of this series, we took a closer look at the courageous friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Together, they decided to obey God and not the king, were thrown into a fiery furnace and were saved from death by the power of God. From this story, we learned that it is important to have the right people in your life, especially when:
 - you have to decide whether to obey God or not
 - you are in the fire and facing challenges and difficulties
- Last week, we examined the story of Elisha and the widow's jars. Elisha was able to provide the right help at the right time to the widow, because they knew each other. Elisha asked her to gather all the empty containers in her house and ask all

her neighbors for their empty containers as well. She miraculously filled every empty container with oil and was able to sell the excess to survive.

- God works through you in relationship with others.
- The power of God can flow through you when you live life together.
- “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I’m there with them.”
Matthew 18:20
- Not all relationships are helpful. Not only can the right people propel you in the right direction, but the wrong people can take you in the wrong direction. Paul writes to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15:33: “Don’t be deceived, bad company corrupts good character.” It makes a difference when we are surrounded by the right people.

Metadata

Topics

- Grow
- Make Disciples

Sermon Books of the Bible

- 1 Corinthians
- Deuteronomy
- Genesis
- Matthew

Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, smallgroup, grouplife, WesleySmallGroup, discipleship, grow

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21st Sunday after Pentecost
TWO Gather - Follow the Leader
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado
Text Online at <http://bit.ly/2cMBLBX>

October 9, 2016
Genesis 41:33-45
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,909
Audio Online at <http://bit.ly/2d10cyv>

What is a Wesley Small Group?

Why do they exist?

What do they do?

Fear: Exposing the Real You

Fear: Past Experiences

Invitation to a Wesley Small Group

Invitation

Key Scripture: Matthew 18:20

Assurance

I'm sorry. Thank you. Please.

Not ready to pray

Logistics

Closing

Closing Prayer

Genesis 41:33-45, CEB

³³“Now Pharaoh should find an intelligent, wise man and give him authority over the land of Egypt. ³⁴Then Pharaoh should appoint administrators over the land and take one-fifth of all the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. ³⁵During the good years that are coming, they should collect all such food and store the grain under Pharaoh’s control, protecting the food in the cities. ³⁶This food will be reserved for the seven years of famine to follow in the land of Egypt so that the land won’t be ravaged by the famine.”

³⁷This advice seemed wise to Pharaoh and all his servants, ³⁸and Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man with more God-given gifts than this one?” ³⁹Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, no one is as intelligent and wise as you are. ⁴⁰You will be in charge of my kingdom, and all my people will obey your command. Only as the enthroned king will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Know this: I’ve given you authority over the entire land of Egypt.” ⁴²Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, he dressed him in linen clothes, and he put a gold necklace around his neck. ⁴³He put Joseph on the chariot of his second-in-command, and everyone in front of him cried out, “Attention!” So Pharaoh installed him over the entire land of Egypt. ⁴⁴Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh; no one will do anything or go anywhere in all the land of Egypt without your permission.” ⁴⁵Pharaoh renamed Joseph, Zaphenath-paneah, and married him to Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera the priest of Heliopolis.

Response to Scripture

One: The word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Introduction

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

Listen for God’s Word

I invite you to listen for God’s word today.

Place for Notes

You can find a place in your bulletin to take notes or, if you prefer, in the event for this worship service in the Bible app on your mobile device

Tool for Spiritual Growth

When you learn something new, have a question, make a connection with your life or hear anything that will help you live as a disciple of Jesus Christ as you worship, grow, give, serve and share, write it down.

Then, use these notes as a tool to help you grow in your faith in the days ahead.

Prayer

Will you pray with me?

O God, use these words to speak good news, so that, as individuals and as a congregation, we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you, and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Follow the Leader

Today, we continue our series - TWO Gather. Each week, we looking at stories in the bible of people who share their life together and what these stories mean for our life today.

Series Review

Week 1

In the first week of this series, we took a closer look at the courageous friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Together, they decided to obey God and not the king, were thrown into a fiery furnace and were saved from death by the power of God. From this story, we learned that it is important to have the right people in your life, especially when:

- you have to decide whether to obey God or not
- you are in the fire and facing challenges and difficulties

Week 2

Last week, we examined the story of Elisha and the widow's jars. Elisha was able to provide the right help at the right time to the widow, because they knew each other. Elisha asked her to gather all the empty containers in her house and ask all her neighbors for their empty containers as well. She miraculously filled every empty container with oil and was able to sell the excess to survive.

- God works through you in relationship with others.
- The power of God can flow through you when you live life together.

Key Scripture: Matthew 18:20

We have a common theme in the words of Jesus from Matthew 18:20:

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I'm there with them."¹

Wherever two or three gather together in Jesus' name, God is there.

Now, you may say, "Does that mean God's not there if I'm by myself?"

Of course not, God will never abandon you.²

¹ Matthew 18:20, CEB.

² Deuteronomy 31:6, CEB.

But there is something special about the power of God with us as we gather in community with other believers.
Life is better together.

God's Work through Relationships

Throughout the Bible, we find that God uses God's people to bring about God's purposes, and there is power in relationships. This is consistent from the beginning to the end of the Bible.

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:33

Of course, not all relationships are helpful. Not only can the right people propel you in the right direction, but the wrong people can take you in the wrong direction. Paul writes to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15:33:

"Don't be deceived, bad company corrupts good character."³

It makes a difference when we are surrounded by the right people.

Our History of Small Groups

Small groups are part of our DNA.

Methodism started as a movement to inspire and train disciples for Christian living and to spread scriptural holiness across the land. In 1729, a few young college men gathered at Oxford and started the first small group in Methodism. These class meetings or Wesley Small Groups were the start of a movement which spread from England to the United States and would emerge into congregations and eventually a denomination.

Transition

This brings us to the story from scripture for today. Let me tell you the story again.

Joseph Saves the Day

Key Scripture from Bible Storybook

"Two years had gone by since Joseph had helped the cupbearer and the baker with their dreams. Joseph was still in jail.

Meanwhile, Pharaoh was having strange dreams. No one was able to help him understand them. The cupbearer remembered Joseph's help and told Pharaoh about him. "Send for Joseph at once," ordered Pharaoh.

Joseph was brought from the jail to Pharaoh's palace.

"I need your help understanding my dreams, Joseph," said Pharaoh.

"With God's help, I can help you to understand them," replied Joseph. "Please tell me your dreams."

³ 1 Corinthians 15:33, CEB.

“I dreamt that I saw seven fat cows grazing by the Nile River. All of a sudden seven skinny cows appeared and ate the fat cows! It was strange and a little scary.”

“Your dream is about what will happen. Egypt will have lots of food for seven years, then Egypt will have seven years without food. People will go hungry,” Joseph explained.

“Joseph, I want you to help Egypt. You will be a leader and will help us store up food so we won’t go hungry,” decided Pharaoh. Joseph did help Egypt.⁴

Lessons from Joseph Saves the Day

This story teaches us something important about life together with others.

Cupbearer and Joseph

Relationships can make a difference - even years later

“Two years had gone by since Joseph had helped the cupbearer and the baker with their dreams. Joseph was still in jail.

I imagine that two years was a long time in the Pharaoh’s jail. Joseph had built a relationship with the cupbearer and the baker. They were released from jail and it wasn’t until two years later that one of them remembers Joseph.

Invitation to Reflection

Have you ever had times where someone from your past sends you a note, gives you a call or somehow you find out that the way that you interacted with them made a difference. Small interactions can make a difference years later.

Relationships can make a difference - even years later

Pharaoh Recognizes Need

Pharaoh knows that he needs help.

He can’t figure out this dream on his own and when Joseph is there in front of him, he says, “I need your help understanding my dreams, Joseph.” Joseph helps him.

Pharaoh knows that he needs other people in his life.

Personal Reflection

This one is hard for me. I like to be able to have things all figured out on my own. It is hard for me to ask for help - even from people that are close to me. Yet, even Pharaoh, one of the arch-villains in the scriptures, shows humility. He knows that he needs help and he asks for it.

Pharaoh knows that he needs other people in his life.

God helps Joseph help Pharaoh

“With God’s help, I can help you to understand them,” replied Joseph. “Please tell me your dreams.”

God helps Joseph help Pharaoh. Joseph isn’t interpreting the dream on his own. God is interpreting the dream through Joseph. God can use us to work in the lives of those with whom we have relationships.

⁴ Kerry Blackwood, Daphna Flegal, and Brittany Sy; with special thanks to Elizabeth F. Caldwell, *Deep Blue: Bible Storybook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014), 52-54.

Conclusion

Good News

The good news is that God still works through people and relationships..

Call to Action - Wesley Small Groups

Wesley Small Groups Launch

We are making plans to launch three new Wesley Small Groups before Easter 2017 so that we can more effectively live our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. You can find more information at our website at

www.FirstUMCEIDorado.org/WesleySmallGroups

What is a Wesley Small Group?

A Wesley Small Group is a group of 8 to 12 people who commit to living as disciples of Jesus Christ as they worship, grow, give, serve and share.

Why do they exist?

A Wesley Small Group exists to be a catalyst for spiritual development as we discover where we are in relationship with God and where God is calling us to grow in faith and love. The focus is not to gain more information; it is a way to equip people to actually live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

What do they do?

The members of a Wesley Small Group meet weekly for 60 to 90 minutes to study and share life, encouragement, care, and accountability. In addition, they gather for fellowship and fun, to serve beyond the walls of the church, and to share their faith with others.

Fear: Exposing the Real You

Now, I recognize when I talk about being part of a Wesley Small Group there are some fears that people have. One of them is this exposing the real you. You know, to be able to say, "Here's what's really going on in my life." That's kind of scary, wouldn't you agree? I mean, because you've got to let somebody know, "Hey, here's what I'm doing, here's where I'm messing up." And there's some fears that are associated with that.

Fear: Past Experiences

Another fear is our past experiences. Sometimes there have been some of us who have been burned relationally. In fact, some of you are here today and you are wounded relationally. And your response to the wound wasn't to get the wound healed, your response to the wound was saying, "I'll never let that happen again."

And I will just say that was the wrong response. I understand it, but that's the wrong response. "I'll never let someone hurt me that way again. I'm never going to expose myself that way again." We've got to be careful that we don't let past experiences keep us from all that God has in mind for us.

Invitation to a Wesley Small Group

Wesley Small Groups meet at the following days and times:

- Wednesday at 6 p.m.
- Thursday at 6 p.m.
- Sunday at 10 a.m.

If you want to be part of a Wesley Small Group, call the church office, come talk to me today after worship, or sign up at our website.

Invitation

Key Scripture: Matthew 18:20

Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I'm there with them."⁵

Wherever two or three gather together,
wherever two or three come together in Jesus' name,
God is there in the midst of them.

This connection with other people starts with a connection with God.

Assurance

Some of you may say, "I'm not sure that I have a relationship with God."
You can be sure.
God love's you, no matter what.
No matter where in your life you've messed up, God is ready to forgive.
All you have to do is ask.

I'm sorry. Thank you. Please.

It's a very simple thing to pray – I am sorry. Thank you. Please.
Turning away from the things that we know are wrong, saying "I am sorry".
Thanking Jesus for dying and being raised for us; putting our faith in him.
And finally asking, 'Please come and fill me with your Spirit.'

Not ready to pray

You may not be sure if you want to pray a prayer like that and that's okay.

Logistics

And, if you would like to pray, then:
You do not have to pray it out loud, but just quietly under your breath.
You can repeat after me.
I'm sorry, thank you, please.

Closing

Life is better together.
It begins with a relationship with God.

⁵ Matthew 18:20, CEB.

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Will you pray with me?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, I am sorry for all the times in my life when I mess up.

And if anything comes to mind, ask God's forgiveness.

Forgive me of my sin and all that I know is wrong.
Thank you that you died on the cross and rose for me.
I trust you with my life.
Help me receive your forgiveness.
Please fill me with your Spirit and help me to follow you.
In your holy name, Amen.