

LEADER DEVOTIONAL

In the early 1900s, there were still many “blank spots” on the map — places that no one in the western world had explored or ventured into. The unknown was enticing to many, and it spurred on the turn-of-the-century explorers. While some ventured into the arctic or raced to the South Pole, others risked everything — starvation, exposure, warring tribes, cannibals, and deadly terrain — to pioneer into the dense jungles of the Amazon.

One such person to brave the South American wilderness was British explorer Percy Fawcett. Colonel Fawcett became a worldwide phenomenon in his search for what he called “The Lost City of Z” — a place that is more commonly referred to as El Dorado. During his adventures into the harsh jungle, the true terrors were not in his surroundings, but were, instead, the seemingly small things that could ravage a person from the inside.

In David Grann’s book that recounts Fawcett’s life, Grann describes these terrors. “Ticks that attached like leeches that consumed human tissue. The parasitic worms that caused blindness. The Berne flies that drove their ovipositors through clothing and deposited larval eggs that hatched and burrowed under the skin [causing bodies to become maggot infested] … There were the ‘kissing bugs,’ which bite their victim on the lips, transferring a protozoan called *Trypanosoma cruzi*; twenty years later, the person, thinking he had escaped the jungle unharmed, would begin to die of heart or brain swelling. [And then there was] everything from malaria to ‘bone-crusher’ fever to elephantiasis to yellow fever.” It wasn’t their surrounding environment that proved so treacherous for the explorers, it was the foreign things that now destroyed them from within.

Most of us will never find ourselves in an environment quite so hostile, but according to Scripture, there is something inside all of us that is even more disturbing, destructive, and volatile than what these explorers faced. It even has the ability to rot our soul from the inside. That something is called sin.

Sin has wreaked havoc on our world and on our souls. It’s the reason for the brokenness of nature. It’s the reason for the brokenness of our relationships with each other and with God. Most of all, it’s the reason for our spiritual death.

But Jesus offers us a way out, a way to heal, a way to be made whole once again. That way is grace through faith. As you prepare this week to teach on God’s remedy for sin, spend some time kicking over the rocks in your soul. See what sin turns up and let God’s grace and forgiveness move in.

John Garrison
GO! Team Member

Sunday Check-In

Sunday morning check-in to build connection, encourage spiritual growth, and reinforce our expectations upstairs.

1. Check-In (5–7 min):
Ask each child:
 - What was a high from your week?
 - What was a low from your week?
 - Any prayer requests?
 (Feel free to share your own too!)

2. Rule Reminder (2–3 min):
Go over our 3 rules for upstairs:
 1. Respect God – Worship, listen, use kind words
 2. Respect People – Be kind, share, follow leaders
 3. Respect the Building – Take care of the space & supplies

Thanks for leading with love and consistency!