

Day 1

S.O.A.P. – “Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer” Conversation Starter

Do you remember a time when you felt like you lost hope for a time?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus.

As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, “Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day.”

Then they remembered that he had said this. So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. But God kept them from recognizing him.

He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?” They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.” “What things?” Jesus asked.

“The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they said. “He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. **We had hoped** he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago...” **Luke 24:1-21 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

There are two shades of hope: hope fulfilled and hope failed.

I think the saddest words in the Bible are, “We had hoped...”

Application (5 minutes)

What do you hope for most in life?

How had the believers “lost hope”? Was it because Jesus had failed or because the believers had wrong expectations?

When life is disappointing, threatening, and invites you to be hopeless, how will you maintain focus and hope?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for being faithful even when I am legitimately disappointed and confused. Help me have faith and focus!



Day 2

S.O.A.P. – “Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer”

Conversation Starter

When something that is true is also very hard to believe, how do you become convinced?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

This is a continuation of the fascinating conversation between the once-hopeful followers and the risen but unrecognizable Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Here’s the Scripture:

“...Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.”

Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?” Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, but they begged him, “Stay the night with us, since it is getting late.” So he went home with them. As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

They said to each other, “**Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us** on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, who said, “The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter.” Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.

And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! “Why are you frightened?” he asked. “Why are your hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.” As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it as they watched. **Luke 24:22-43 NLT**

Application (5 minutes)

Have you ever experienced God’s kind presence without immediately recognizing it?

Why is it essential to regularly slow down so you can reflect on what you have seen and heard and experienced?

How did Jesus prove his physical bodily resurrection? Why was it important that they understood?

How did they go from “downcast” to “hearts burning”?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for being patient with me even when I do not recognize your presence with me. Help my eyes and heart and mind to be open to how you are leading me.



Day 3

S.O.A.P. – “Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer” Conversation Starter

How important is a promise?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

God’s promise to Abraham: The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.” **Genesis 12:1-3 NLT**

God’s promise to Moses: “Then the Lord told Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. When he feels the force of my strong hand, he will let the people go. In fact, he will force them to leave his land!” And God said to Moses, “I am Yahweh—‘the Lord.’ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty’—but I did not reveal my name, Yahweh, to them. And I reaffirmed my covenant with them. Under its terms, I promised to give them the land of Canaan, where they were living as foreigners.

You can be sure that I have heard the groans of the people of Israel, who are now slaves to the Egyptians. And I am well aware of my covenant with them. “Therefore, say to the people of Israel: ‘I am the Lord. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt. I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the Lord!’” **Exodus 6:1-8 NLT**

Jesus’s promise to his followers: “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going.” “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” **John 14:1-6 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

How do we move from *hope* to *thanks*? We place our hope in God’s *promise*.

Are we only thankful when our hopes are fulfilled?

Application (5 minutes)

Placing hope in someone based on their promise indicates that you trust them and are willing to be patient for the outcome. Have you chosen to trust God and be patient for him to keep his promises?

Do you believe it is important to God for his people to have trust and patience?

Can you be thankful DURING trust and patience or only after your hopes have been fulfilled?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for being faithful and for teaching me to be trusting and patient. Help me to be thankful as I wait!



Day 4

S.O.A.P. – “Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer” Conversation Starter

Is hope primarily a thought? A feeling? A choice?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

Jesus told his disciples at the Last Supper on the night he was betrayed: “If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?”

Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

“I don’t have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let’s be going. **John 14:15-31 NLT**

Application (5 minutes)

What would you prefer, to walk with Jesus and be separated from him for a time, or to always have Jesus’ Holy Spirit present in your life?

Jesus’ gift—peace of mind and heart—is a gift the world cannot give, receive, or understand. Are you experiencing Jesus’ gift regularly in your life?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for faithfully obeying your Father and paying for our freedom through your blood. We don’t deserve love or forgiveness or peace. But we gladly accept it and thank you for your kindness to us!



Day 5

S.O.A.P. – “Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer”

Conversation Starter

Who is the most faith-filled person in your life?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God’s command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel’s offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith. It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying—“he disappeared, because God took him.” For before he was taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God.

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith.

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God. It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise. And so a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead—a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them.

All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. **Hebrews 11:1-16 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

Look up to Jesus. Look up with thanks because you look through promise. When you look up, others will look with you!

Application (5 minutes)

How are you choosing faith in your own life?

Who do you admire most out of the examples in the Scripture above? Why?

Why is it important for you to live as a “foreigner” here on earth? Is it easy or difficult for you?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, it is an undeserved privilege for me to be invited to live in your eternal home. Thank you for loving me and including me in your family. Teach me to be full of faith like the people I admire most...so I can become an example of faith!