

Day 1 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer (“SOAP”)

Conversation Starter

What has God provided for you that you are most thankful for *today*?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

I trust in the Lord for protection. So why do you say to me, “Fly like a bird to the mountains for safety! The wicked are stringing their bows and fitting their arrows on the bowstrings. They shoot from the shadows at those whose hearts are right. The foundations of law and order have collapsed. What can the righteous do?”

But the Lord is in his holy Temple; the Lord still rules from heaven. He watches everyone closely, examining every person on earth. The Lord examines both the righteous and the wicked. He hates those who love violence. He will rain down blazing coals and burning sulfur on the wicked, punishing them with scorching winds. For the righteous Lord loves justice. The virtuous will see his face. **Psalms 11:1-7 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

The temple in Jerusalem reflected God’s intent to evict sin and rule the earth in justice and love. God’s intent is that his majesty, grace, and goodness occupy every inch of this world!

Now Jesus comes along! God doesn’t just visit planet earth—God comes to earth to *live among us*. And Jesus’ relationship with the temple is very important (see tomorrow’s Scripture for more!).

Application (5 minutes)

Have you ever been tempted to give up on doing good?

David articulated why he maintained trust in God despite the threats of evil. Read the Scripture again, noticing what David says is true NOW and what David says WILL HAPPEN.

Do you love what God loves and hate what God hates?

If someone who did not know you only took a look at your calendar (what you do), your bank statement (what you buy), and your entertainment choices (what you enjoy), would there be enough evidence to convict you of loving Jesus?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for coming to live among us through Jesus. Thank you for giving believers new lives so we can be the “temple of the Holy Spirit.” Thanks for accepting, loving and forgiving me and empowering me to stay faithful.

Day 2 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer (“SOAP”)

Conversation Starter

How would you describe yourself in five words or less?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. The law of the Lord says, “If a woman’s first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord .” So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord—“either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” **Luke 2:18-24 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

Circumcision was a picture of the covenant **relationship with God**.

Being given a name at the temple was a sign of **identity before God**.

Being consecrated to the Lord means being given a **purpose from God**, and

the offering of a sacrifice happened in the temple as a picture of being **forgiven by God**.

Application (5 minutes)

Take a moment to consider:

What is my relationship with God? Who initiated it? Who sustains it?

What is my identity before God? Who does God say I am?

What is purpose from God? What has God uniquely made me to be and do?

Do I live as though I've been forgiven by God?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for “sending heaven to invade earth” by sending Jesus into the world. Thank you for offering me a relationship, identity, purpose, and forgiveness through Jesus!

Day 3 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer ("SOAP")**Conversation Starter**

Who in your life can you trust completely to follow through when they make a promise?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)**Scripture:**

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple.

So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"

Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul." **Luke 2:25-35 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

God's Spirit had told Simeon that he would see the long-awaited Messiah, the Savior of the world. Every day, he scanned the crowds looking for "the ONE." Simeon knew something tremendous was about to happen.

What matters is who I become while I'm waiting. Waiting builds character, endurance, and faith.

Application (5 minutes)

Make a list: what are you waiting on?

Who are you becoming while you wait?

What is an area of character, endurance, or faith that God is helping you grow in?

Why do you think God makes promises that can take a lifetime to fulfill?

Do you think the power of anticipation is part of the depth of satisfaction once the promise is fulfilled?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for forming Simeon while he waited. Thank you for developing his character, endurance, and faith. Thank you that his great anticipation was fully satisfied as you followed through on your promise to let him see the hope of the world, Jesus, before he died.

Day 4 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer (“SOAP”)

Conversation Starter

If you choose to meet Jesus at any age, how old would he be (and why)?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

When Jesus was twelve: Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual. After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn’t miss him at first, because they assumed he was among the other travelers. But when he didn’t show up that evening, they started looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they couldn’t find him, they went back to Jerusalem to search for him there. Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. His parents didn’t know what to think. “Son,” his mother said to him, “why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere.” “But why did you need to search?” he asked. **“Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house?”** But they didn’t understand what he meant. Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart. Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people. **Luke 2:41-52 NLT**

When Jesus was leading his disciples: At about that time Jesus was walking through some grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, so they began breaking off some heads of grain and eating them. But some Pharisees saw them do it and protested, “Look, your disciples are breaking the law by harvesting grain on the Sabbath.” Jesus said to them, “Haven’t you read in the Scriptures what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He went into the house of God, and he and his companions broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that only the priests are allowed to eat. And haven’t you read in the law of Moses that the priests on duty in the Temple may work on the Sabbath? **I tell you, there is one here who is even greater than the Temple!** **Matthew 12:1-6 NLT**

Before Jesus was crucified: It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers’ coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, “Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father’s house into a marketplace!” Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: “Passion for God’s house will consume me.” But the Jewish leaders demanded, “What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it.” **“All right,” Jesus replied. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”** “What!” they exclaimed. “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?” **But when Jesus said “this temple,” he meant his own body.** After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said. Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. But Jesus didn’t trust them, because he knew all about people. No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person’s heart. **John 2:13-25 NLT**

Application (5 minutes)

Think about the shift in mindset the Jews had to embrace: the ultimate temple is not the building, but Jesus’ body. And once he went to Heaven, the ultimate “temple” is now the “body of Christ” (the church!)! What is your role in this?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for making me a part of your stunning, overarching plan to bring your Holy Spirit to earth to dwell inside of people around the world. You are not confined to a building or a body or a belief—you are ever-present in believers around the world—bringing truth in love, forgiveness, and peace.

Day 5 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer (“SOAP”)

Conversation Starter

What do you like to create?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)**Scripture:**

Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?

When one of you says, “I am a follower of Paul,” and another says, “I follow Apollos,” aren't you acting just like people of the world? After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow.

The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. For we are both God's workers. And you are God's field. You are God's building. Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.

Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. Stop deceiving yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world's standards, you need to become a fool to be truly wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As the Scriptures say, “He traps the wise in the snare of their own cleverness.” And again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise; he knows they are worthless.”

So don't boast about following a particular human leader. For everything belongs to you— whether Paul or Apollos or Peter, or the world, or life and death, or the present and the future. Everything belongs to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. **1 Corinthians 3:1-23 NLT**

Application (5 minutes)

This Scripture offers powerful statements about God's plan for his temple (the people who make up the church, the “body of Christ”) and God's patience with his temple.

What do you appreciate more about God from this passage?

How are you participating in God's plan?

How have you needed God's patience in your own life?

Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for making me a part of your plan to bless the world. Thank you for your patience with me. Help me to love with your love.