

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you look forward to Heaven?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit.

So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body. **2 Corinthians 5:1–10 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

How should a believer embrace the idea that "the best is yet to come"?

How is the Holy Spirit bringing 1) comfort in your struggle, and 2) hope for your eternal future?

Are you experiencing a growing confidence in Jesus?

What does Paul suggest our goal as believers should be, and is that your focus?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for filling me with optimism and confidence through your Holy Spirit. Thank you for giving me everything I need and so much more than I deserve. Teach me to set my eyes on Heaven so I can be a blessing to others here on earth.

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

How persuasive are you naturally? Are you working to develop that skill?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

We're going to read the same Scripture two days with a different focus: Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! **2 Corinthians 5:11–17 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

God has given US the responsibility of carrying his promises to the world. We are called to persuade others. Persuade literally means "to win the favor of" and "to gain one's good will."

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

When you pray for the hungry to be fed, you should assume three things: 1) God will be involved in the solution, and 2) God's solution will involve people participating, and 3) God's solution will involve the use of physical food. What three similar things can you also assume when you pray for God's "will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven"?

When did you realize that becoming right with God means you have to become a new person *through the power of God*?

How do YOU work to persuade others of God's amazing grace?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for shining a light on the problem of my sin and giving me a solution I could not begin to deserve—you making me into a new person through your Holy Spirit! Help me be creative and strategic, full of wisdom and love, as I work to persuade others!

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

In terms of priorities, how important is your faith? Are you satisfied with your answer?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

We’re going to read the same Scripture two days with a different focus: Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. Either way, Christ’s love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! **2 Corinthians 5:11–17 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

The stakes are eternal.

The potential is limitless.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Is it possible to have a “spectacular ministry” without having a “sincere heart”?

Paul teaches us that while reputation matters (he carefully defends his God-given role and ministry), he is securely focused on what matters most—reconciling people to God through Jesus at all costs to himself. Are you focused on reconciling others to God?

“Christ’s love controls us”—how is your life “controlled” by Christ’s love?

Is there anything more important than Jesus in your life? Why or why not?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for coming from Heaven to rescue me from the consequences of sin. Thank you for giving me a hope and a future, not only in this life, but in the life to come!

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who or what do you personally represent?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:18–21 NLT**

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan. **Ephesians 1:3–11 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

What is the most effective way to reconcile people to God?

If you are a Christian, God is "making his appeal" to the world through YOU. What sort of "speaker" are you most like—a Bose wave radio? A bullhorn?

What is the single most powerful statement about Jesus to you in these Scriptures? Why?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for being a God of kindness, wisdom and understanding. Help me share with others the "truth in love" that I have been given!

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is God really like?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

From the Old Testament: "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days," says the LORD. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the LORD.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already," says the LORD. "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."

It is the LORD who provides the sun to light the day and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea into roaring waves. His name is the LORD of Heaven's Armies, and this is what he says: "I am as likely to reject my people Israel as I am to abolish the laws of nature!" This is what the LORD says: "Just as the heavens cannot be measured and the foundations of the earth cannot be explored, so I will not consider casting them away for the evil they have done. I, the LORD, have spoken! **Jeremiah 31:33–37 NLT**

And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:18–21 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

If God can show unlimited patience and love for a people who habitually rejected him, ask yourself two questions:

- 1) What brokenness in my life required the blood of the Son of God, Jesus, to forgive?
- 2) Is there anything in my past that Jesus' blood cannot cover?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, your patience is stunning, your grace is amazing, and I ask humbly that you forgive my sin, increase my confidence in you, and use me to help others find the joy, freedom, and purpose you have given me!