

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

When you picture Jesus, do you imagine him with the "weak" or the "powerful"?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites. A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **Ephesians 6:1–10 NLT**

Jesus, talking about himself, told his followers: "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'

Matthew 25:40 NLT

Sermon Insights: Whatever your walk of life...children, fathers, masters, even slaves, you can walk in God's mighty power.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Did you notice who got special attention before fathers were addressed? Children! Did you notice who got special—and extended—attention before the employers were addressed? The employees! Typically, at this time, the weakest were ignored, used, abused, and exploited. Jesus, the Son of God, appeared as a slave, was murdered as a criminal, was raised to be the eternal King, and turned the heart of his people to empowering the weak rather than abusing the vulnerable.

What does Jesus teach us about REAL power? Who gets to experience GOD'S power?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for loving even me. Thank you for forgiving and saving the murderous Saul so he could show us the power of grace and mercy. Teach me to forgive and love!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

If you could describe your attitude as a piece of clothing, what do you "have on" right now?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. **Ephesians 6:11-12 NLT**

And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are. In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. All power to him forever! Amen. **1 Peter 5:5–11 NLT**

This is how Jesus described the devil: He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. **John 8:44 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

"Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith." Who is our great enemy?

Describe what you are going to focus on today.

What is the reality about suffering in the life of a believer—does God promise a safe and easy path?

What did God, in his kindness, call you to share in? Will that be your focal point today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, while our great enemy is dangerous, you are greater. While our suffering may last a while, your grace and power will be with us forever. Help me be strong in my faith today and not be dissuaded, discouraged, or dismayed...help me to be full of faith, hope, and love!

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

What kind of footwear (shoes, boots, sandals) is most important to you and why?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **Ephesians 6:13-17 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

"...put on every piece of God's armor..." Don't just pick your favorite!

"...so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil." Are you currently in a battle?

"Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness." Without truth, everything falls apart! Without righteousness, you are vulnerable to guilt, shame, and the power of sin to harden your heart and cloud your mind. How are you insisting on truth and righteousness in your life?

"For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared." How has God given you peace?

"In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil." When are you most tempted to give in to doubts, fear, and sin? How does faith shield you from these temptations?

"Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." All of the "armor" is defensive and protective; the "sword of the Spirit" which is the Bible, is how you will move forward in life—cutting through lies and boldly taking new ground in your life.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

As you pray, have a simple and honest conversation with God about putting these on in your life. For example, "Lord, I struggle with peace...help me put on the peace that comes from knowing I am forgiven, like my workboots, so I am ready to face the day."

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who is praying for you? Who are you praying for?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should. **Ephesians 6:18-20 NLT**

Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

We also know that the Son did not come to help angels; he came to help the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested. **Hebrews 2:14-18 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Paul asked believers to ask God to give Paul what he needed to accomplish the mission—the right words and boldness. He didn't ask for a comfortable lifestyle; he asked that he might fight well and be successful.

What do you need to accomplish the mission God has given you?

Who are you asking to pray for you, and what are you asking them to pray for specifically?

What was Jesus' mission? Has Jesus' mission—setting people free from sin and death—been accomplished in YOUR life?

Who in your life needs you to pray for them?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Take time and pray for believers you know—especially pastors—that they would be strong, bold, and make Jesus famous!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who do you "have a heart for" most?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord's work. I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. **Ephesians 6:21–24 NLT**

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him. Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure. Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God. And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him. Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is.

Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God. So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God. **1 John 3:1–10 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

True Christianity is deeply relational—not just learning information but living out your faith...not just loving others, but sacrificially leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ! What "generation" of faith do you see yourself in most—a child learning and being mentored? A sibling "doing life" with brothers and sisters? A parent taking time to calmly and carefully lead others into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Consider thanking God for the believers in your life and pray that they would continue to recognize God's power, presence and provision in their lives!