

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

When you feel helpless, WHO or WHAT do you turn to?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

I will praise the LORD at all times. I will constantly speak his praises. I will boast only in the LORD; let all who are helpless take heart. Come, let us tell of the LORD’s greatness; let us exalt his name together. I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened; he saved me from all my troubles. For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him.

Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him! Fear the LORD, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need. Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the LORD will lack no good thing. Come, my children, and listen to me, and I will teach you to fear the LORD. Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous? Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies! Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help. But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil; he will erase their memory from the earth. The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time. For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken! Calamity will surely destroy the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be punished. But the LORD will redeem those who serve him. No one who takes refuge in him will be condemned. **Psalms 34:1-22 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

This week, as we read accounts of heroes of the faith who had great disappointment with God at certain times in their journey, David reminds us of God’s faithfulness—even when we cannot see it as soon as we would like.

Consider writing down five things God has done that you can be thankful for.

In what area of your life are you still waiting for God to act?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for always being faithful even when I have to wait to see the outcome. Help me to always trust you and to persist in faith.

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

When someone asks, “How are you?” and you are NOT okay...how do you tend to respond?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Consider Job’s struggle: “Is not all human life a struggle? Our lives are like that of a hired hand, like a worker who longs for the shade, like a servant waiting to be paid. I, too, have been assigned months of futility, long and weary nights of misery. Lying in bed, I think, ‘When will it be morning?’ But the night drags on, and I toss till dawn.

My body is covered with maggots and scabs. My skin breaks open, oozing with pus. “My days fly faster than a weaver’s shuttle. They end without hope. O God, remember that my life is but a breath, and I will never again feel happiness. You see me now, but not for long. You will look for me, but I will be gone. Just as a cloud dissipates and vanishes, those who die will not come back. They are gone forever from their home— never to be seen again. **Job 7:1-10 NLT**

Consider the Prophet Elijah’s struggle: When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: “May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them.”

Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died.” **1 Kings 19:1-4 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

Many great heroes of the Bible knew great disappointment and discouragement with God.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Pastor Greg suggested that when you are disappointed, Step One is to send an SOS to God— let him know how you feel! Is there an area of your life that you need to genuinely express to God?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, rather than pretending that “everything is okay,” I’ve got some serious struggles and circumstances that I’d like to talk with you about...

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Sometimes the solution is not a FIX...it’s a change of FOCUS...what are you focused on today?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

For Jeduthun, the choir director: A psalm of Asaph. I cry out to God; yes, I shout. Oh, that God would listen to me! When I was in deep trouble, I searched for the Lord. All night long I prayed, with hands lifted toward heaven, but my soul was not comforted. I think of God, and I moan, overwhelmed with longing for his help. Interlude

You don’t let me sleep. I am too distressed even to pray! I think of the good old days, long since ended, when my nights were filled with joyful songs. I search my soul and ponder the difference now. Has the Lord rejected me forever? Will he never again be kind to me? Is his unfailing love gone forever? Have his promises permanently failed? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he slammed the door on his compassion? *Interlude*

And I said, “This is my fate; the Most High has turned his hand against me.” But then I recall all you have done, O LORD; I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago. They are constantly in my thoughts. I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works. O God, your ways are holy. Is there any god as mighty as you? You are the God of great wonders! You demonstrate your awesome power among the nations. By your strong arm, you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. *Interlude*

When the Red Sea saw you, O God, its waters looked and trembled! The sea quaked to its very depths. The clouds poured down rain; the thunder rumbled in the sky. Your arrows of lightning flashed. Your thunder roared from the whirlwind; the lightning lit up the world! The earth trembled and shook. Your road led through the sea, your pathway through the mighty waters—a pathway no one knew was there! You led your people along that road like a flock of sheep, with Moses and Aaron as their shepherds. **Psalm 77:1-20 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Step 1 – Send out an SOS to God. Let him know how you feel.

Step 2 – Redirect your thoughts. Remember what God has done.

Step 3 – Magnify God! Take time to focus on how great God is!

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, teach me to focus my eyes on you...your faithfulness in the past and your great power in the present.

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

When you are disappointed, do you harden your heart or soften your heart towards God?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Consider David's struggle: A psalm of David. Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. *Interlude*

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.” And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. *Interlude*

Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory. *Interlude*

The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.” Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the LORD. So rejoice in the LORD and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure! **Psalm 32:1-11 NLT**

Consider Jeremiah's struggle: Then I said, “What sorrow is mine, my mother. Oh, that I had died at birth! I am hated everywhere I go. I am neither a lender who threatens to foreclose nor a borrower who refuses to pay— yet they all curse me.” The LORD replied, “I will take care of you, Jeremiah. Your enemies will ask you to plead on their behalf in times of trouble and distress.” **Jeremiah 15:10-11 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

The Lord says, “I will guide you...I will advise you...I will take care of you...” What is YOUR responsibility so God's kindness and direction can have a good outcome in your life?

Notice that both David and Jeremiah expressed deep doubt and disappointment TO GOD as a way of deepening their trust. How can you express yourself and deepen your trust in God?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you can take the weight of my disappointment and doubts. I've got some things to share. Please receive my words with kindness and show me what to focus on so I can have peace.

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What has God used to help you grow in compassion towards others?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Consider Jonah’s struggle when God relented from punishing Jonah’s enemies: This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very angry. So he complained to the LORD about it: “Didn’t I say before I left home that you would do this, LORD? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people. Just kill me now, LORD! I’d rather be dead than alive if what I predicted will not happen.” **The LORD replied, “Is it right for you to be angry about this?”**

Then Jonah went out to the east side of the city and made a shelter to sit under as he waited to see what would happen to the city. And the LORD God arranged for a leafy plant to grow there, and soon it spread its broad leaves over Jonah’s head, shading him from the sun. This eased his discomfort, and Jonah was very grateful for the plant.

But God also arranged for a worm! The next morning at dawn the worm ate through the stem of the plant so that it withered away. And as the sun grew hot, God arranged for a scorching east wind to blow on Jonah. The sun beat down on his head until he grew faint and wished to die. “Death is certainly better than living like this!” he exclaimed. **Then God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?”**

“Yes,” Jonah retorted, “even angry enough to die!” Then the LORD said, “You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there. It came quickly and died quickly. But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn’t I feel sorry for such a great city?” **Jonah 4:1-11 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

As we have struggled with many heroes of the Bible this week, one theme continues to emerge: our struggles point us to God and increase our trust in his greater perspective, power, and plan. How is God increasing your love for him, yourself, and your neighbors?

What past difficulty are you most thankful for, in that it helped you grow?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, your ways are higher than my ways...your thoughts are higher than my thoughts. When I am hurt or disappointed, help me to let you know how I feel, remember what you have done, and take time to magnify you as I wait for you to rescue me. Thank you for your kindness!