

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

“Covenant” is a Bible word for “sacred promise.” Can you think of any sacred promises we make today?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Sermon Insights:

A long time ago, God entered into a covenant, a sacred promise, with the ancient Israelites. In every covenant, two sides make a promise to each other. So, when the Israelites entered into a covenant with God, God promised to lead and protect them, and the Israelites promised to follow his laws.

Scripture:

Then Moses carefully wrote down all the Lord’s instructions. Early the next morning Moses got up and built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He also set up twelve pillars, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent some of the young Israelite men to present burnt offerings and to sacrifice bulls as peace offerings to the Lord. Moses drained half the blood from these animals into basins. The other half he splattered against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people. Again they all responded, “We will do everything the Lord has commanded. We will obey.” Then Moses took the blood from the basins and splattered it over the people, declaring, “Look, this blood confirms the covenant the Lord has made with you in giving you these instructions.” Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel climbed up the mountain. There they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there seemed to be a surface of brilliant blue lapis lazuli, as clear as the sky itself. And though these nobles of Israel gazed upon God, he did not destroy them. In fact, they ate a covenant meal, eating and drinking in his presence! **Exodus 24:4-11 NLT**

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write down all these instructions, for they represent the terms of the covenant I am making with you and with Israel.” Moses remained there on the mountain with the Lord forty days and forty nights. In all that time he ate no bread and drank no water. And the Lord wrote the terms of the covenant—the Ten Commandments—on the stone tablets. **Exodus 34:27-28 NLT**

[God said] “If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you the seasonal rains....I will give you peace in the land, and you will be able to sleep with no cause for fear....I will look favorably upon you....And I will fulfill my covenant with you.” **Leviticus 26:3-4a, 6a, 9 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

According to Exodus 34:27-28, what were the “terms of the covenant” that the Israelites agreed to keep? Which ones of these can you list from memory? (They are listed in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.)

Exodus 24:4 says, “Moses carefully wrote down all of the Lord’s instructions.” Why would it have been unwise for Moses to write down only the instructions from the Lord that he liked?

Exodus 24:11 describes a covenant meal they ate in God’s presence. What is the covenant meal we eat in God’s presence today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, I thank you that you keep your promises. Even when we have trouble staying faithful, you remain faithful. You are our rock. As 2 Timothy 2:13 says, “If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.” You are holy and righteous. We trust in you and find our rest in your promises.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Can you think of a time one person held up their end of an agreement, but the other person didn't?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Sermon Insights:

Sadly, the ancient Israelites went on to break the covenant they entered with God by following idols.

Scripture:

“Those who hear the warnings of this curse should not congratulate themselves, thinking, ‘I am safe, even though I am following the desires of my own stubborn heart.’ This would lead to utter ruin! The Lord will never pardon such people. Instead his anger and jealousy will burn against them. All the curses written in this book will come down on them, and the Lord will erase their names from under heaven....And all the surrounding nations will ask, ‘Why has the Lord done this to this land? Why was he so angry?’ And the answer will be, ‘This happened because the people of the land abandoned the covenant that the Lord, the God of their ancestors, made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.’”

Deuteronomy 29:19-20; 24-25 NLT

The Lord said to Moses, “You are about to die and join your ancestors. After you are gone, these people will begin to worship foreign gods, the gods of the land where they are going. They will abandon me and break my covenant that I have made with them.” **Deuteronomy 31:16 NLT**

Then the Lord said, “Broadcast this message in the streets of Jerusalem. Go from town to town throughout the land and say, ‘Remember the ancient covenant, and do everything it requires. For I solemnly warned your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, “Obey me!” I have repeated this warning over and over to this day, but your ancestors did not listen or even pay attention. Instead, they stubbornly followed their own evil desires. And because they refused to obey, I brought upon them all the curses described in this covenant.’” **Jeremiah 11:6-8 NLT**

“Sound the alarm! The enemy descends like an eagle on the people of the Lord, for they have broken my covenant and revolted against my law. Now Israel pleads with me, ‘Help us, for you are our God!’ But it is too late. The people of Israel have rejected what is good, and now their enemies will chase after them.”

Hosea 8:1-3 NLT

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

The Old Testament is a story of a covenant the ancient Israelites entered into with God which they ended up breaking. According to Jeremiah 11:6-8, why did they turn away from following God?

Have you seen any consequences that come when people reject God in our own day?

Hosea 8:3 says, “The people of Israel have rejected what is good.” What are some reasons you are sometimes tempted to reject what is good?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, you are good. Your path leads to life. Your teachings lead to our well-being. When I am tempted to stray from you, I pray that you would open my eyes to reality. Show me clearly what is good and evil. Give me discernment to know what is true and false, so that I can follow you and reject lies.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Can you think of a time when a sad ending became a new beginning of something that was beautiful?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

“The day is coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the Lord. “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.” **Jeremiah 31:31-34 NLT**

For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.” For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again. **1 Corinthians 11:23-26 NLT**

“You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.” **Hebrews 12:24 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

The Old Testament tells the story of a broken covenant. But the Old Testament also describes a “new covenant” to come, in which God would forgive our sins completely based on a once-for-all sacrifice.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Jeremiah 31:31-34 talks about the “new covenant.” How does God deal with our sin problem in the new covenant?

According to 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, communion is a time when we remember what? Why is this such an important thing to keep remembering?

What makes the new covenant better than the old covenant? (You might revisit Hebrews 12:24.)

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you that our story doesn’t end with the sadness of people breaking their relationship with you. You didn’t let the broken covenant be the end of the story. Instead, you made a new covenant with humans, promising forgiveness of sins not because of our righteousness, but because of your sacrifice. We are so grateful to be part of your new covenant, with your blood covering our sins, your instructions written on our hearts, and your presence with us forevermore.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What are 2-3 things that seem to keep getting in the way of you and God having a closer relationship?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Sermon Insights:

Human sin is a huge deal in the Bible. (It’s also the cause of a large part of the misery in our world today.) Sin gets in the way of us and God. In order for us to have a close relationship with God, something needs to clear that sin out of the way. Under the old covenant, this was done by making offerings/sacrifices...

Scripture:

The Lord called to Moses from the Tabernacle and said to him, “Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you present an animal as an offering to the Lord, you may take it from your herd of cattle or your flock of sheep and goats.” **Leviticus 1:1-2 NLT**

“When he becomes aware of his sin, he must bring as his offering a male goat with no defects.” **Leviticus 4:23 NLT**

“As a guilt offering to the Lord, you must bring to the priest your own ram with no defects, or you may buy one of equal value. Through this process, the priest will purify you before the Lord, making you right with him, and you will be forgiven for any of these sins you have committed.” **Leviticus 6:6-7 NLT**

The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year. For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins....[Christ] cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. For God’s will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time. Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand.

Hebrews 10:1-4, 9b-12 NLT

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

The animal sacrifices were an effective picture of the ugliness of sin: Sin takes something good and innocent which God has created, and it destroys it. When is a time you have seen the ugliness of sin?

According to Hebrews 10, why is Jesus a better “high priest” than the priests under the old covenant?

According to Hebrews 10, should we in the new covenant keep feeling guilty? Why or why not?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord Jesus, thank you for removing the sins that have gotten in the way between us and God. We are not good enough or able to offer enough sacrifices to make things right between us and God. We are weak and sinful, but by your sacrifice you make us righteous. We are so grateful for your once-for-all sacrifice.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

When you were a kid with no money, did you ever buy/make a gift for your parent? How did you get the money/supplies in order to buy/make them the gift?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Sermon Insights:

In the old covenant, sin was cleared out of the way each year by making offerings/sacrifices, but these sacrifices never really removed sin permanently. In the *new* covenant, it was the sacrifice of *Jesus* which cleared sin out of the way completely for all who put their faith in him. But now that our sins have been removed, there is still room for us to make offerings/sacrifices. What kinds of offerings/sacrifices do we make now? Let’s look at these Scriptures:

Scripture:

You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God’s temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What’s more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God. As the Scriptures say, “I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” **1 Peter 2:4-6 NLT**

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” **Romans 12:1-2 NLT**

“I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit.” **Romans 15:16b NLT**

“...your faithful service is an offering to God...” **Philippians 2:17 NLT**

“For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.”

Hebrews 13:14-16 NLT

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

From the Scriptures above, what are the kinds of offerings/sacrifices God wants from us today?

An early church leader named Irenaeus said, “We offer to Him His own.” In other words, anytime that we have something good to offer to God, it’s something God has already given us. What are some examples?

What is something you could ask God to give you—that you can give it back to him as an offering?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, everything good that we have is something you have given to us. The grace and forgiveness we can show others came from the grace and forgiveness *you* give us. The good things we can share with those in need come from *you*. We praise you with the breath *you* fill our lungs with.