



Beyond the Sermon

A Sermon Application Guide

Title: The Ultimate Act of Love

This guide is designed to offer a simple tool for those wanting to take the next step with Sunday's message. You can print this guide to study on your own, or use it in a group and experience transformation together.

Message Theme

The Greatest Gift

Prayer Focus

"God, you are holy and worthy and I love to honor you. You are the beginning and the end. You love me so much and for that I am so thankful. In this season of my life I recognize that you have been at work. I pray that I can learn more and more what it looks like for me to partner with you in bringing Heaven to Earth. Thank you, Father. Amen."

Key Truths

When it comes to the holidays we all know what they are, but the person that knows WHY has a great advantage.

We tend to think that Mary had something special to be favored by God but Ephesians tells us that we too are highly favored. We all have potential, high value, and great purpose.

We live in a culture that believes that people are basically good. The bible teaches that people are basically bad. So, people try to be good to please God. Romans 3 tells us that no one has ever been made right with God by obeying the rules. God gave the law so we could realize that we need a savior. Religion is man trying to reach God to have a relationship with Him. Christianity is God reaching to man.

There are four Greek words that mean 'love' in the New Testament. Agape love is 'in spite of' love. That's the love God has for us. He loves us in spite of our behavior. The law without grace does not produce anything other than condemnation. But when the law comes into the picture and we see we need a savior, and there is a savior, **that** is the good news.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have **eternal life**." When it says "eternal" it means that kind of life that was given to all believers in Christ. 'Eternal' draws attention to the quality of life, not its duration in a temporal sense. Infinite levels of life! Whoever you are, and wherever you go, that eternal life is yours because of God's agape love. Walk in it today.

Which one truth do you already have evidence of in your life today? Ask the Lord for new ways to see even more of it for you and others around you. Which one truth is the most challenging or least existing in your life today? Why do you think that is? Ask the Lord if there are any beliefs or barriers that are keeping you from believing that particular truth, and thank Him for being your way, your truth, and your life.

Practical Application

Christianity isn't about just when we die. God told us to pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done. On Earth as it is in heaven." When God's will is done today, that's the kingdom.

The Kingdom is here and now. As a matter of fact, it is the main subject of the New Testament. Creating an environment for the kingdom of God to move could look a number of different ways for each of us. How could that look in your life this week? Setting aside more time to read the bible, praying out loud over your kids, befriending your neighbor you never talk to, asking about your coworker's family?

This week, intentionally assist in bringing God's kingdom to Earth.

Reference Verses

- Luke 1:26-33
- Luke 2:4-10
- John 3:16

Declarations

Life is released when your words are in agreement with God. Intentionally speaking life and biblical truth out-loud is extremely powerful. In fact, you have that very life in the power of your tongue. These words below, when spoken out loud, will cause an acceleration of the reality of God's words in your life. We encourage you to speak the following with an expectancy to renew your mind and see God's fullness.

- God, you are a constant in my life. You pursue me and I am so blessed to be highly favored by you.
- I know that you have a great plan for my life and that my story is important. I am here to play a part in your grand story.
- This week I will stay kingdom minded, trying to find ways to bring your kingdom to the world around me.

What's Next?

Living a life reconciled to God is not just about understanding His love; it's about applying it in our daily lives. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Paul reminds us of our new identity as ambassadors of Christ, called to carry the message of reconciliation to the world. This 3-step guide will help you take practical steps to embrace God's righteousness, heal broken relationships, and live out your purpose as a reflection of His grace.

Acknowledge Your Need for Reconciliation: Take time to reflect on areas of your life where you feel distant from God. Ask yourself: Am I fully embracing God's love and forgiveness, or am I holding on to guilt or shame?

Are there broken relationships in my life where reconciliation is needed? Spend time in prayer, confessing your need for God's grace and inviting Him to restore your relationship with Him. Meditate on scriptures like 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, which remind us that God's purpose is to reconcile us to Himself through Christ.

Embrace Your Identity in Christ: Jesus' life, death, and resurrection mean that you are no longer defined by sin but by His righteousness. Each day, remind yourself of these truths: You are forgiven and loved by God. You are made righteous through Christ, not by your own works. Write down affirmations based on Scripture like "*I am the righteousness of God in Christ*" and repeat them throughout the day. Let this identity shape your decisions, attitudes, and interactions with others.

Practice Reconciliation in Your Relationships: God's gift of reconciliation doesn't stop with you—it extends through you to others. Take intentional steps to mend broken relationships. Apologize when needed, forgive when wronged, and seek peace as far as it depends on you like it says in Romans 12:18. Share the good news of reconciliation with others. Look for opportunities to explain God's grace and love in your conversations, actions, and kindness toward others.

As you daily embrace your identity in Christ, extend His grace to others, and walk in His righteousness, you become a living example of His transformative power. Remember, God has entrusted you with the ministry of reconciliation. Don't hesitate to reach out by leaving a comment or connecting with us on WhatsApp. And for more resources check out the 'Beyond the Sermon' link below. Step into His transformative power boldly, knowing He is working through you to bring His love to the world.

Scripture References

The Ultimate Act of Love

Luke 2:4-14 TLB And because Joseph was a member of the royal line, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, King David's ancient home—journeying there from the Galilean village of Nazareth. He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was obviously pregnant by this time. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born; and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn. That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared among them, and the landscape shone bright with the glory of the Lord. They were badly frightened, 10 but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone! The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem! How will you recognize him? You will find a baby wrapped in a blanket, lying in a manger!" Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven," they sang, "and peace on earth for all those pleasing him."

Mark 2:3-11 NKJV Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four *men*. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the

scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this *Man* speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘*Your* sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

Genesis 2-3 NKJV

2 Corinthians 5:18 NLT And all of this is a gift from God...

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 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.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 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.

2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV ...that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:8 NKJV ...to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Exodus 20:19 NKJV Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”

Exodus 20:18-19 MSG All the people, experiencing the thunder and lightning, the trumpet blast and the smoking mountain, were afraid—they pulled back and stood at a distance. They said to Moses, “You speak to us and we’ll listen, but don’t have God speak to us or we’ll die.”

Hebrews 1:3 NKJV ...who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person...

John 14:9 NKJV ...He who has seen Me has seen the Father...

John 5:19 NKJV Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

Acts 10:38 NKJV ...who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

John 8:1-11 NKJV

John 4:1-42 NKJV

Romans 4:25 NKJV...who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

James 5:17-18 AMPC Elijah was a human being with a nature such as we have [with feelings, affections, and a constitution like ours]...

John 3:16-17 NKJV or God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

1 Peter 1:18-19 NKJV ...that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ...

Acts 20:28 NKJV ...God which He purchased with His own blood.

Mark 1:15 NKJV “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

Mark 1:15 MSG “Time’s up! God’s kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the Message.”

Mark 1:15 NLT “The time promised by God has come at last!” he announced. “The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!”

Mark 1:15 GW Change the way you think and act...

James 4:8 NKJV Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Matthew 5:48 MSG “In a word, what I’m saying is, Grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.”