

Day 1 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer (“SOAP”)

Conversation Starter

What would it take for you to thrive in 2021?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them.

“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”

Matthew 5:1-16 NLT

Sermon Insights:

First, Jesus is passionate about people! Second, Jesus’ method is teaching.

Did you realize that you are called to be a social reformer...a change agent?

Application Suggestions (5 minutes)

Why must change happen first...in you?

In the list of people God blesses, which do you like the most? Which do you like the least? Why?

“Let your good deeds shine out for all to see...” What is the purpose? How are you going to embrace that today?

Prayer Suggestions (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for blessing those who trust you even when they are scared or full of uncertainty. Help me to keep my eyes on you and be a faithful light so people can see you!

Day 2 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer (“SOAP”)

Conversation Starter

What is the most surprising thing you have changed your mind on recently?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

The Apostle Paul writes, “For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”

But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky.

Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other’s bodies. They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. They know God’s justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too. **Romans 1:16-32 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

Culture sets moral direction, cultural norms and defining what is good and what is bad. But when culture defines morals, the morals always fall short because people are sinners.

Application Suggestions (5 minutes)

What is the most sad statement in this Scripture?

What is the most hopeful statement in this Scripture?

Why is it important for Christians to believe and speak the truth in love?

Prayer Suggestions (5 minutes)

Lord, I confess my sin and ask that you forgive me—not because I deserve it, but because you sent Jesus so I could live a new life. Thank you for your forgiveness and giving me a better way.

Day 3 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer (“SOAP”)

Conversation Starter

How long did it take your most comfortable clothes to become comfortable—right away or slowly over time?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

The Apostle Paul writes, “Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.

Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. **Colossians 3:1-17 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

The second force of morality in the world is personal. We are not helpless victims of our culture; we each have a personal choice. We can choose who we follow – our friends – our own desires – or God.

Application Suggestions (5 minutes)

God forgives you so you can live a *new life*. Grace allows you to be honest because you no longer fear God’s punishment and want to thrive without the choking shame, guilt, and despair that comes with living a secret life of sin. So...be honest...what are the “sinful, earthly things lurking within you”?

You put them to death by embracing forgiveness (embrace your freedom!), not lying to each other (tell someone about what’s bothering you!), and putting on your new nature (put on Jesus’ character traits like clothes!). So...

What do you need to be FREE from?

Who do you need to talk to about it (HINT: find someone who is trustworthy and has also been forgiven)?

Which “Jesus trait” should you focus on “putting on” today?

Prayer Suggestions (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for forgiving me, for giving me people in my life who love me, and for giving me the opportunity to become like Jesus!

Day 4 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer (“SOAP”)

Conversation Starter

What was your favorite toy to “look through” as a child?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

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! 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 5:11-21 NLT

Application Suggestions (5 minutes)

Why are “being a good person” or “becoming a better person” radically insufficient descriptions of the Christian life?

“We have all died to our old life” – have you? How?

“Those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ.” Describe the peace and purpose God gives you.

If God was “more than fair” with you, how is he calling you to treat your neighbor?

Do you work hard to persuade others to be reconciled to God?

Prayer Suggestions (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for loving me when I least deserve it. Help me to love in ways that are “more than fair”!

Day 5 – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer (“SOAP”)

Conversation Starter

What is the greatest impact you can make in 2021?

Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

Scripture:

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.

Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy. Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy. **Philippians 2:1-18 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

For Antioch Christian Church to make ANY significant impact on this community for the Lord, we must NOT act out the prevailing cultural norms around us! Jesus cared about people enough to come to earth, teach God's word, share kingdom principles with us, die on the cross, and take the punishment for our sins...so we can have a right relationship with a holy God, have God's spirit live in us, and be a new creation in Christ!

Application Suggestions (5 minutes)

Is there any Christian brother or sister that you need to treat differently or apologize to? Try setting a time/day now!

How does Jesus' attitude inspire you?

“Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.” What is God's role? What is your role?

Are you focused on Jesus' return and the goal?

Prayer Suggestions (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for saving me! Thank you for giving me the desire and the power to do what pleases you. That is an opportunity I could not create. I commit to embracing the new life you have sacrificed to give me!