

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Are you naturally a thankful person, or do you have to work at being thankful?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other.

John 15:1–17 NLT

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Are you “remaining in” Jesus’ love?

Is your life producing “fruit” by being connected to Jesus?

Is your joy overflowing to others in your life?

How has difficulty in your life impacted your level of thankfulness?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for giving me life through Jesus. Help me to stay vigilant to remain in Jesus’ love so that I can continue to stay connected to the source of life, joy, and hope.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

How do you risk to love others?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him. The man’s name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there.

Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband. Then Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had blessed his people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland. With her two daughters-in-law she set out from the place where she had been living, and they took the road that would lead them back to Judah.

But on the way, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back to your mothers’ homes. And may the LORD reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me. May the LORD bless you with the security of another marriage.” Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept. “No,” they said. “We want to go with you to your people.” ... **Ruth 1:1-10 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

A well-designed life takes risks to love others.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

How have surprising circumstances affected who you consider “family”?

Have you ever felt like a complete outsider?

If so, how did that affect your compassion for others?

Who in your life would you sacrifice everything for? Who would sacrifice everything for you?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, our only security is you. Thank you for your promises, your presence, and your power in my life.

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

Other than Jesus, who has sacrificed the most for your well-being? How have you expressed your thanks?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)
Scripture:

... But Naomi replied, "Why should you go on with me? Can I still give birth to other sons who could grow up to be your husbands? No, my daughters, return to your parents' homes, for I am too old to marry again. And even if it were possible, and I were to get married tonight and bear sons, then what? Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone else? No, of course not, my daughters! Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD himself has raised his fist against me."

And again they wept together, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye. But Ruth clung tightly to Naomi. "Look," Naomi said to her, "your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same." But Ruth replied, "Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!" When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. "Is it really Naomi?" the women asked. "Don't call me Naomi," she responded. "Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the LORD has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?" So Naomi returned from Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth, the young Moabite woman. They arrived in Bethlehem in late spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest. **Ruth 1:11–22 NLT**

The Apostle John writes about Jesus: So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. **John 1:14 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

A well-designed life takes risks to love others.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

When someone sacrificially loves someone, they imitate the ultimate love that God shows. Who are you loving sacrificially?

What stands out to you about Ruth's character and response to her situation?

How did God himself show his willingness to be vulnerable in order to love us on earth?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for your unending love and faithfulness. Thank you for giving Ruth the wisdom and resilience to show great love for Naomi. Help me to be filled with purpose and integrity, willing to risk to love others!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who do you most enjoy having a conversation with?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

Jesus said: “When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

“When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. **Matthew 6:5–18 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

A well-designed life clings to hope.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Jesus doesn’t sugar-coat the way the world is...rather, he teaches us to lead by example and invite him to participate through humble, hope-filled prayer.

Does your prayer life need an upgrade? What would make it better, according to Jesus?

How does the “Lord’s Prayer” invite us to be hopeful?

Why is forgiving others (canceling the debt people have towards you personally) absolutely essential?

Why do you think “private” matters to God?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Take a few minutes, go somewhere quiet and private, and pray the “Lord’s Prayer.”

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

How has God’s faithfulness in the past helped you have hope in the present about how God will act on your behalf in the future?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

Then Boaz said to the elders and to the crowd standing around, “You are witnesses that today I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon. And with the land I have acquired Ruth, the Moabite widow of Mahlon, to be my wife. This way she can have a son to carry on the family name of her dead husband and to inherit the family property here in his hometown. You are all witnesses today.”

Then the elders and all the people standing in the gate replied, “We are witnesses! May the LORD make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, from whom all the nation of Israel descended! May you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. And may the LORD give you descendants by this young woman who will be like those of our ancestor Perez, the son of Tamar and Judah.”

So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the LORD enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son. Then the women of the town said to Naomi, “Praise the LORD, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel. May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!”

Naomi took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own. The neighbor women said, “Now at last Naomi has a son again!” And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David. **Ruth 4:17–22 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

The word translated “kindness” (in Ruth 2:20) means a loyal, enduring, relentlessly committed love. Ruth showed kindness to Naomi, and Boaz showed kindness to Ruth and her family. Ruth would become the great-grandmother of King David, ancestor to Jesus Christ. *A well-designed life transforms the world!*

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Safety, security, a future—Boaz and Ruth took extraordinary steps in their culture to provide these for Naomi and honor the extended family. God blessed them, and their descendants included King David, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Jesus himself (through Mary, his mother). God enabled all this after extreme pain, loss, and difficulty. Why does knowing God’s track record of faithfulness give you hope?

How has God proven his faithfulness and creativity in your life?

How are you still waiting for God to provide for you?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Consider 1) expressing thankfulness to God for his eternal kindness and power, and 2) expressing thankfulness to God for the kindness and power he has shown in your life.