



## THREE WEEK SERMON SERIES

Created by BibleProject's Scholar Team, these sermon outlines can help you develop and deliver three sermons. We have included pertinent research and some guidance related to thought flow, but we have intentionally avoided scripting the sermon or telling you exactly what to say. We recommend reading the main Scripture passage out loud to the congregation as a way to open the sermon and orient your audience to the text. And we strongly recommend adapting your script or sermon plan according to the unique characteristics of your specific audience.

Please use the references and illustrations as a guide, but stay creative as you plan. Know that especially the opening introductions and closing calls for response will need additional adjustment to connect with your audience. Perhaps most importantly, please read and study each biblical passage you intend to use for each sermon, taking care to interpret its meaning within the larger context of Scripture.

Thank you for bringing the good news, hope, and love of Jesus to all who hear you preach!

## SERMON OUTLINE #1: JUSTICE

[Download Justice Study Notes](#)

- **Introduction:** Tell a story (or stories) about people who have devoted their lives to working for justice, seeing it as central to God's character and his calling for his people. For example:
  - Mother Teresa, who cared for the poor in India.
  - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who sought civil rights for African Americans.
  - Bryan Stevenson, lawyer and author of "Just Mercy," who has confronted injustices in the criminal justice system and exonerated innocent prisoners on death row.
- **Key Passage: Genesis 18:1-19**
  - Contextual Background: In Genesis 1-11, God creates and blesses humans to be his partners who rule the land in his way, on his behalf. But they fill the land with injustice through distrust, deception and violence leading to death.
  - In Genesis 12:1-3, we see God choosing Abraham and his family to become a blessing to all *peoples* or all *humankind*.
    - In the Hebrew Bible, this word is *mispaḥa*, which is about ethnic human communities, clans or families.
    - In the Greek Old Testament, this word is *ethnos*, which means ethnic group or family.

- This leads some translators to render it “every family of the earth” (see KJV, NASB, NET, and others). The point seems to be exhaustive; Abraham and his family are blessed by God so that they can bless every human being whom God has created.
  - In Genesis 18, God reveals the outcry of the oppressed (i.e., opposite of being blessed or cared for) that has come to him from Sodom and Gomorrah, explaining that his blessing will spread out to the world through the right and just actions of Abraham’s family.
- **Point 1: Righteousness and justice are the way of the Lord.**
  - Righteousness and justice are central to God’s character (Psalm 33:4-5).
  - The Hebrew word for justice is *mishpat*.
    - It can have a retributive sense of paying the consequences for one’s actions, but justice in the Bible is always about restoring goodness.
    - Mishpat involves helping others who have a need or have been wronged in order to contribute to the flourishing of people and of society as a whole (see Jeremiah 22:3).
    - Mishpat/justice is a blessing to all who experience it.
- **Point 2: Abraham is called to teach his family righteousness and justice so that these blessings will flow from them out to the nations.**
  - God’s blessing is about human flourishing, and people flourish when they act justly toward one another. By treating each other and outsiders with fairness and generosity, Abraham’s family will demonstrate righteousness and justice to the nations.
    - Deuteronomy 4:5-8 provides good language to show God’s intent to bless other nations/families of the Earth.
    - Deuteronomy 23:15-25:18 provides many examples of Hebrew law that intend to build and nurture a just society.
      - Note especially the themes of honesty with others, generosity toward the poor and the total rejection of any oppressive behaviors.
      - Note especially the concentration of civil-relational commands in Deuteronomy 24:8-25:4, which not only aim to provide for people who do not have enough but also to retain their dignity by inviting them to work for their food.
      - Justice is on display in some way throughout all of these examples.
  - Sadly, as the biblical story continues, we see that Abraham’s descendants do not always live out God’s call for justice (Isaiah 1:16-17; Amos 5:7-15).
  - The prophets speak of one to come who will always live out God’s call for justice (Isaiah 42:1-7).
- **Point 3: Jesus models what a just member of Abraham’s family looks like.**
  - Jesus declares that his mission is to liberate the poor and oppressed (Luke 4:16-21), and he cares for those on the fringes of his society — women, children, beggars, Roman centurions, tax collectors, “sinners,” etc. (John 4:1-38; Luke 18:15-17,35-43; Matthew 8:5-13-9:9-13).
  - As followers of Jesus, we are called to participate in his mission of blessing all people with just treatment, especially those in the most vulnerable places of our society — the poor, the imprisoned, fostered/orphaned children, sick, elderly, immigrants, refugees, etc. (Matthew 25:31-46).

- **Call for Response**

- Take some time to reflect on and journal about where you have witnessed or experienced justice this week.
- Where does the temptation to act unjustly show up in your own life? Where do you find it most difficult to embrace the way of justice?
- Where do you see injustice in your workplace, classroom, family gatherings, etc.? How can you advocate for those who are on the margins in these spaces?

# SERMON OUTLINE #2: GENEROSITY

[Download Generosity Study Notes](#)

- **Introduction**

- Have you ever made a bad investment? Online fraud is quickly growing, and many have lost their entire life savings to thieves. For example, scammers may masquerade as fraud investigators and convince people to move their money to a “safe” location where the scammer can steal it.
  - Some investments are obviously bad.
  - The return on any investment is ultimately uncertain, but Jesus tells us how to make an investment that will never fail.

- **Key Passage: *Luke 12:32–34***

- Contextual background: Jesus is speaking to Jewish people who have long been oppressed by the Romans and are suffering under burdensome taxes. Few are wealthy.

- **Point 1: *Our generous God gives abundantly to us.***

- God’s provision for even the birds and flowers reveals his generous care toward all life (Luke 12:22-31; Psalm 104). The idea is that we don’t need to be afraid of running out of supplies, and we can trust in the abundance of the kingdom he offers us.
  - That doesn’t mean people should be reckless or foolish with resources.
  - He’s not rejecting the wisdom involved with planning and saving for future needs. Doing so often helps us increase generosity toward others.
  - However, he *is* rejecting greed and stinginess, and he seems to be saying that choosing to worry about these things will lead to nothing valuable.
  - Note: Jesus appears to be talking about volitional choices here, and he does not seem to be addressing the kind of suffering people experience through depression and anxiety disorders.
- Describing God’s people as a “little flock” recalls the image of God as the Good Shepherd who tenderly provides for his sheep (Psalm 23, cross-reference John 10:11-18). As a father, God delights in giving good gifts to his children (Luke 11:11-13).
- Jesus offers the greatest model of generosity by freely giving his life for us (1 John 3:16).

- **Point 2: *Investing in God’s kingdom is best.***

- When we distrust God’s provision, we tend to seek our own security through selfish hoarding (Luke 12:15-21). But the security money offers is only an illusion; forces beyond our control can wipe away our possessions and savings (Proverbs 18:11; 1 Timothy 6:17). And money can easily become something we trust for life — an idol (Luke 16:13) — that promises to save us from bad things while actually leading to our destruction (1 Timothy 6:9-10).
- The most certain investment we can make is in God’s kingdom work, which involves us in the practice of making all things right, in part, by giving generously to people in need.
- Real security and the greatest possible reward are found not in focusing our resources solely on ourselves but in giving generously (1 Timothy 6:17b-19; Deuteronomy 15:10; Proverbs 19:17; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11).

- **Point 3: *How we use our resources both reveals and directs our hearts.***

- We can see what we value by paying attention to the way we spend time and money. To receive the generous love of God in our hearts, we choose to partner with God and his way of life by giving generously to others (1 John 3:16-18; James 2:14-17; Deuteronomy 24:19-22).
- If our hearts are misaligned or disordered, the spiritual practice of giving generously can help to realign our desires with God's and strengthen our hearts for those who are in need. We can learn to love well.

- **Call for Response**

- Prayerfully reflect on the specific fears, concerns and desires that make it difficult for you to respond to God's invitation to be generous.
- Consider nonfinancial ways that you might be either stingy or generous. The French essayist and philosopher Simone Weil once said, "Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity." Our busy lives tend to nurture self-obsession, and we can easily forget the simple yet generous act of paying attention to others.
- Consider a neighbor in need or an organization dedicated to helping those in need and spend some time thinking about God's heart for them. How can you move through a fear of not having enough to partner with God in acts of generosity?

## SERMON OUTLINE #3: COMPASSION

[Download Compassion Study Notes](#)

- **Introduction:** Have congregants turn to one another and describe themselves to the person sitting next to them in *three words*. Give a short time for this exercise, and then call people back together. Reflect on the challenge of communicating who we are and what we care about in so few words. Next, have congregants turn to their neighbor again and describe God in *one word*. See how well your characterization of God lines up with how he describes himself.
- **Key Passage: Exodus 34:6**
  - Contextual background: Moses asks God to reveal himself (Exodus 33:12-23), and God responds by passing in front of Moses and describing himself as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and overflowing with loyal love and faithfulness.
  - Notice that the first term God uses to characterize himself is *compassionate*.
- **Point 1: God shows motherly compassion toward his people.**
  - The Hebrew word translated in Exodus 34:6 as “compassionate” (or sometimes “merciful”) comes from the root *rekhem*, which means “womb.”
  - This term for compassion carries with it the sense of a mother’s connection to her vulnerable infant and is most often used to describe God’s heart toward people (Isaiah 49:15-16; Psalm 103:13).
  - God demonstrates his compassion by continuing to invite us into relationship with him, especially when we fail him.
  - In this story, God has just made a covenant with the Israelites (Exodus 19:1-8), which they immediately break by making a golden calf idol (Exodus 24:3-8). But in his compassion, God renews his covenant with them (Exodus 34:10).
- **Point 2: Jesus embodies God’s compassion in his ministry on Earth.**
  - Jesus often responds with compassion to the needs of those around him, healing the sick, raising the dead, and tenderly caring for those who are grieving or suffering (Matthew 9:35-36; Mark 1:40-41; Luke 7:12-14).
    - Note: He does not blame them for their poor circumstances, nor does he identify them as simple victims.
    - Jesus compassionately helps people with impartial love, whether their bad circumstances are self-imposed or the result of being mistreated.
  - By giving his life over to his oppressors rather than fighting them, Jesus offers the ultimate demonstration of God’s compassion toward all humanity.
  - As Roman soldiers kill him, Jesus is compassionate toward them, praying for their forgiveness: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34, NIV).
  - Even though we are often unfaithful to God (like Israel in Exodus 32), Jesus chose to suffer on our behalf so that we can be healed and restored into good relationship with God (1 Peter 2:24).

- **Point 3: *God calls us to be like him in our compassion.***

- Our experience of God choosing to be compassionate toward us motivates us to extend the same tender care to others (2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Philippians 2:1-2).
- Through great suffering, great love is often produced.
- As we demonstrate care and concern for those who cannot (or will not) return the favor, we become more like our deeply compassionate Father, embodying his compassion to the world around us (Luke 6:36).

- **Call for Response**

- Identify an individual or group within your community who has been shamed, harmed or labeled as broken or guilty. How might you (individually or as part of your church family) be an expression of God's compassion to them?
- What are some organizations or initiatives in your area that bring practical expressions of compassion to the vulnerable? How might you partner with these efforts?
- What would it look like in our own lives to embrace Jesus' compassionate heart toward those who harmed him--to become men and women who pray for those who persecute us and offer compassion and forgiveness to those who still don't understand the harm they are doing?