

Bouquets: Intentional Relationships in Making Disciples

6 Week Sermon Series

(Author – Bruce Hamsher Publisher – Herald Press)

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(or) www.brucehamsher.blogspot.com

Series Theme: “Living On Purpose”

Sermon One – “Rock Droppers”

Scripture: John 8:1-11

(Initially read through chapter 2 of the book to get a pulse of the theme.)

Object Lesson:

Give a small rock to everyone entering the service.

Introduction:

Share “Elderly Farmer” story from introduction of book including the thrust from paragraph number four.

Share 2 Corinthians 2:14-15 and it’s spiritual aroma idea along with the following paragraph, “One thing we do in our culture is rather peculiar and interesting to note. We wait until someone has died and then we send the most beautiful bouquet of flowers we’ve ever sent the person in their entire life. It’s certainly a nice gesture for the family, but it does absolutely nothing for the deceased. Wouldn’t it make much more sense if we would give of ourselves and share this fragrance while we’re all still living? How about sending some *bouquets to the living*?”

Transition:

This is something Jesus did over and over again with persons he encountered. Listen closely to the story of the adulterous woman...

*Have a woman recite/act out the monologue found on pp.23-25 of the book (or)

*Read the monologue as a narrative yourself.

Questions:

Are we Rock Throwers or Rock Droppers?

Are we quick to notice the sins of others, while overlooking our own?

Outline:

1. Where Jesus gave life, we typically give judgment.
2. When someone sins, instead of talking about them, do something for them.
3. True mercy is compassion that goes into action.

*Acceptance of ‘sinners’ doesn’t mean we approve of the behavior, but that we approve of that person receiving the same mercy we’ve received many times.

Object Lesson:

Have persons come forward and symbolically ‘drop their rocks’ into metal buckets. The unique noise leaves a powerful effect.

Sermon Two – “Squeezing Your Sponge”

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:16-18

(Initially read through chapter 3 of the book to get a pulse of the theme.)

Introduction:

Share the “race” story (or) the Jackie Robinson story.

Paul was in this condition during the last days of his life. In scripture, he lists several men who had deserted him, but points out one man who did not...Onesiphorus. Paul talks about the continued REFRESHMENT this man brought to him.

Outline:

1. He had a true Concern. (16a) “He often refreshed me...”
*A True concern produces a call to Action.
2. He had a true Compassion. (16b) “He wasn’t ashamed of my chains.”
*A True compassion produces a courage to step out.
3. He had a true Commitment. (17) “He searched hard until he found me.”
*A True commitment produces a completion of what was started.

Illus:

(Fairly new house with a “grown-over” grass driveway.) *Pg. 32 of book.

How is this similar to our lives? Scripture says that we are to “...finish our work, so that our eager willingness to do it may be matched by our completion of it.” 2 Cor. 8:11

Scripture also says that we are to, “comfort others with the very comfort that we have received from God.” 2 Cor 1:4 It doesn’t say to be Skeptical, Cynical, or Doubtful, (but) to be Comforting.

Object Lesson:

“Squeezing Your Sponge” exercise described on pp. 32-33 of the book.

Sermon Three – “Predictably Unpredictable”

Scripture: Acts 23:12-24

(Initially read through chapter 5 of the book to get a pulse of the theme.)

Introduction:

Share opening story about the ‘pastor-lady-wig’ surprise.

In scripture, God has pulled many surprises. Think of the Apostle Paul and how he went from being a persecutor of Christians to becoming a writer of at least a dozen books of the Bible. Think about Peter and how he went from promising to never deny Christ, to strongly doing so, to then becoming the Rock on which the modern-day church was built. Consider how David went from the murder conspiracy boardroom, to the satisfying of his flesh, to becoming best known as a man after God’s own heart.

Then we think about this motley bunch of men known as the Disciples. These *blue-collar nobodies* didn’t have the proper education and credentials, they argued about who was the best and were very slow to grasp what Jesus was teaching. At one point, Jesus wonders how they can be so dull and dense in their lack of understanding His parables. It’s amazing then to see how God still took this pitiful bunch and equipped them to carry out the gospel message.

Today, we see how God pulls a **surprise** in this obscure story in Acts, proving again how we must “become like a child” to enter His Kingdom.

Outline:

1. The Child was Caring. (v.16)
He cared enough to act.
2. The Child was Courageous. (v.16;19)
He had to go alone into the “barracks” around all kinds of soldiers and guards. This would’ve been difficult, perhaps even dangerous for him. **Vs. 19** shows he was so young that he was taken by the hand, signifying his age. But he did it. He did it because it was the right thing to do.
3. The Child was Credible. (v. 20-22)
*This child was on a mission from God. In doing so, the officer trusted the boy and took him serious. He could have easily retained the child for a day or two until the whole affair was handled, but there was something about the child that indicated a believability and a trustworthiness.

*Satan is known for his predictability, while God is known for his unpredictability...for the *surprise ways* in which He works. In life, let’s be quick to embrace this reality rather than push it away. We simply need to be courageous enough to let him surprise us and maybe, just maybe, we will be the surprise waiting to happen very soon in someone else’s life.

Sermon Four – “Life-Jacket Theology”

Scripture: 2 Samuel 9:1-13

(Initially read through chapter 6 of the book to get a pulse of the theme.)

Object Lesson:

Display a bright, orange life-jacket up front.

Drama/Monologue:

Have ‘Mephibosheth’ briefly tell/act out his story.

History:

Share a condensed history lesson from pp. 48-49. Make sure to make the connection between the story and John 14:2-3. (Bottom of p. 48)

Parable:

Mephibosheth = Us; Lo-Debar = Sinful World; Christ = David;
King’s Table = Heaven.

Outline:

1. God still meets the Mephibosheths of the world today.
2. David restored Mephibosheth from a place of no pasture to a place of honor.
3. We are seen as hopeful saints rather than hopeless sinners.

Object Lesson:

Draw attention to the life-jacket.

Consider someone you know who needs a life-jacket. What shark-infested waters have they been swimming in? Who do you know that’s exhausted from swimming against the tide (and) who needs rescued from a dry, barren land?

Key Point:

The life-jacket was developed to keep people alive, but it’s useless unless we wear it.

Like David to Mephibosheth and like Christ to our sinful world, God calls us to intercede and be lovingly persistent with those persons in our lives who need to be fitted with the eternal life-jacket. The covenant we’ve made with our Creator to “go and make disciples” is still binding. Will we be the ones to throw a life-jacket their way?

Sermon Five – “A Tale of Two Offerings”

Scripture: Genesis 4:1-8

(Initially read through chapter 9 of the book to get a pulse of the theme.)

Introduction:

Share opening ‘birthday gift’ story (or) act out as a drama.

History:

Share the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs from p. 64.

Outline:

1. Cain had a deeper problem of the heart.
*His sacrifice was more of an attempt to appease God than to please God.
2. God can only accept our worship on Sunday, if we live it out on Monday.
3. Abel gave not the leftovers, but the fat portions of the firstborn of his flock.

Key Question:

Do we give limited or unlimited offerings to God?

Illus:

Share ‘missionary family’ story (bottom p. 66 to middle p. 67)

Key Points:

*With any offering, it’s not what you give, it’s why you give it.

*Limited offerings cannot be fully received, because they’re not fully given.

Read James 2:15-16; I John 3:16-18; Luke 6:33-35; 14:13-14

What kind of “givers” are we?

Sermon Six – “Suggestions or Commandments?”

Scripture: James 1:19-25

(Initially read through chapter 11 of the book to get a pulse of the theme.)

Introduction:

Share ‘friend in hospital’ story and ‘6:01am’ story with James 1:22 stated in between. Then ask, “How do we read, hear and listen to God’s word? Do we view scriptures as mere suggestions or as commandments to be lived out?”

Outline:

1. Scripture doesn’t serve us, we serve scripture.
2. We deceive ourselves when we decide not to obey scripture.
*Share ‘rich uncle’ story.
3. Strong Christians don’t let things happen to them, they happen to things.

Key Point and Question:

As Christians, our lives are either clarifying the gospel message or confusing it.
Which is your life showing?

Three Assignments:

*Provide Encouragement

*Provide Comfort

*Provide Prayer

Conclude by sharing “Aunt Bee” story, by summarizing paragraphs 2 and 3 on p. 82 and by saying, “It’s been said that we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give away.”

Whose life will you touch with His spiritual aroma beginning today?

****Bouquets: Intentional Relationships in Making Disciples is equipped with a 6 week study guide, making it ideal as a small group study resource. It has also been used as a ‘midweek’ and Sunday school elective.***

****Contact Bruce to share how the series went and to share other ways in which you were creative with the material. Bruce may be reached via email at hamsherfive@yahoo.com***