

The
Seedbed
Daily Text



FORTY STEPS ON THE ROAD TO RESURRECTION

SERMON SERIES OUTLINE

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The Seedbed Daily Text - Listen to Him: Forty Steps on the Road to Resurrection
(Sermon Series Outline)

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SERMON SERIES OUTLINES & GUIDANCE

The season of Lent designs to interrupt the business-as-usual pattern of our lives. It begins with Ash Wednesday and the in-your-face reminder, “From dust you have come and to dust you will return. Repent and believe the Gospel,” along with the ashen sign of the cross on our forehead.

This opens a door into what could be a deep transformational movement in the lives of persons and communities. Preaching stands to play a key role in reaching for these possibilities. Lent offers a preacher the cherished avenue to preach for awakening. It is an opportunity to connect with those who have never known or experienced the grace of God. As well, it is a prime moment to speak boldly into the lives of so many believers who have drifted off to sleep.

This series of six sermons aims to facilitate an ever-deepening posture of listening to Jesus as he preaches, teaches, and heals along the journey to Jerusalem. These are not sermon manuscripts, but rather outlines. They are meant to provide structure and possible trajectories for sermon development.

There are many possible directions a preacher can go with the series. The text spans from Luke 9:18 to 24:8; from the Mount of Transfiguration to the empty tomb. One strategy might be to identify and preach a particular saying from Jesus from each week’s set of readings, helping the community *Listen to Him* on this particular point. Each week has seven Daily Text entries, which could offer seeds for sermon development.

SERMON #1

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Text: Luke 9:28–36

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)

While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

Introduction

As we begin the season of Lent, we recognize that this is more than the marking of time. It is movement in a journey.

I. GET YOUR BEARINGS

About eight days after Jesus said this . . .

This passage begins by establishing the context. This event is not isolated as a stand-alone story, a useful vehicle for delivering important principles and moral truths. It is part of the larger story. It is intentionally connected to what came before in 9:18–27: Jesus’ declaration that he was the Messiah, sent to die. And his revelation that discipleship requires the same from us.

It bears asking, though, eight days after Jesus said what? Among the things he said in that last conversation, this part stands out most to me: “But what about you? . . . Who do you say that I am?” (v. 20). It’s a good question for each one of us as we embark on this journey. Listen to him ask you this question, “Who do you say that I am?” What do you say to him? “Jesus, you are my eternal life insurance policy,” or perhaps, “Jesus, you are my helper or my guide,” or maybe, “Jesus, you are my

Savior,” or, “Jesus, you are my God.” Where are you with Jesus today? “Jesus, you are my life, my all in all, my . . .” Why is this important? Because however we identify him in our life determines the depths to which we will listen to him.

We begin today on the Mount of Transfiguration. But we cannot stay here. Jesus is on a mission that will lead him toward Jerusalem and, ultimately, to the cross. This is the journey of Lent.

II. SEE THE WHOLE STORY

Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus.

The disciples were in awe of Moses and Elijah. Moses and Elijah were in awe of Jesus. Both known for their mountaintop moments in the Old Testament, this scene is a call back to those key turning points in Israel’s history. The disciples will soon recognize that they, too, have seen the glory of God revealed.

Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the Prophets. The people of Israel would refer to God’s Word as “the Law and the Prophets” when speaking of his collected revelation to his people. Their presence is a symbol of all of God’s covenants and promises and wisdom. And yet we see them stationed on each side of Jesus, the One they were pointing to all along. He is the Word who is completion and fulfillment of every word that came before.

III. BECOME AWAKE

. . . when they became fully awake, they saw his glory. . .

Even though they are in the presence of his unrestrained glory, they haven’t yet seen it. Because they are not yet awake. The glory is there. They are not aware of it.

This journey of Lent is an invitation to become awake. His glory is breaking in all around us, all the time. Do we have the eyes to see it? What is keeping you distracted? What is numbing your senses? What is lulling you to sleep? What will it take to become awake?

Illustrate

Can you recall a time in your own faith journey where you thought you were awake only to be awakened to a reality you never knew before? Share this story. Ask people, “Are you fully awake?” So many of us are living in a season of life where find ourselves tired and so prone to drifting off to sleep.

IV. LISTEN TO HIM

“This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”

To follow Jesus requires obeying him, which requires hearing him, which requires listening to him. As simple as that might sound, this the heart of our Lent journey together. We will seek to listen to him. We will avoid the temptation of believing we know what he meant. We will lean into what he actually said. We will hang on his words and ask them to challenge us, shape us, break us, heal us.

Illustrate

To listen to someone means to pay attention to what they say—to their words. Over the course of our lifetime, we all do a lot of talking. I want you to get a number in your mind. How many words would you estimate the average person speaks in their lifetime? By one expert estimate, the average person speaks 860,341,500 over the course of their lifetime. Multiply that by your own family alone and you have an idea of the incredible volume of words floating into and out of our lives all of the time. Multiply it by the number of people sitting on your row this morning; or the number of people in the room today. In no time we are way into the billions and billions of words bouncing around us all the time.

Now, how many words would you estimate are in the Bible? The King James Version boasts 783,137 words. Now, how many of those would you estimate are the recorded words of Jesus? 36,450. Very roughly speaking, if you take out the duplicated words as they are repeated across the synoptic Gospels, it gets us down to less than 20,000 words.

I want to be careful here, but studies show the average woman speaks approximately 20,000 words a day and the average man speaks approximately 7,000 words a day. That’s a whole different sermon series—it’s called “Listen to Her”.

All kidding aside, of the millions of words we will speak over the course of our lifetime and the billions of words we will hear, doesn’t it make sense that we would want to give the absolute fullness of our attention to the twenty thousand-ish words spoken by the most significant person in the history of history—Jesus Christ. The Son of God. The Second Person of the Trinity—who among those 20,000 words said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (Luke 21:33)

Challenge

Will you make a commitment during this season to actively listen and then actively respond? I know that sounds simple, but it is the revolutionary way of Jesus. It is a

dangerous proposition. There is no way to predict how this might transform your life. But the Father cuts through the cloud and makes himself clear: “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”

Over these next six weeks—forty 40 days plus six Sundays—we will be walking together through Luke’s Gospel, precisely speaking, from Luke 9:18 to 24:8. It comes to about 15,000 words total. Of those, around 11,000 are the recorded words of Jesus. Can we listen to him? We are joining together in this common reading plan with the help of J. D. Walt and the Seedbed Daily Text. You can get it in book form. You can read it online or subscribe through e-mail. You can listen to it as a podcast.

As we make our way down Transfiguration Mountain and begin this journey to the cross, which is the road to resurrection, I want to assure you of this fact: Jesus has something to say to you. What would it look like for you to raise the level of your expectation that this is so? How will you hear him? What will it take to get yourself to a place where you can hear him?