

Vocations Sunday 2017

Sermon Ideas

I. Acts 2:42-47

A. Community of equity

The need for equity is universal, as is written in the United Nation's sustainable development goals. How might the passage's reference to equity in community speak into the context of your church or parish?

B. Fellowship v26, value in sharing the load

There is truth to the saying 'many hands make light work'.

C. Devoting ourselves to praying together and communion

Walking the Way is an initiative promoted by the current moderator of the URC, calling us to discipleship, communion and fellowship.

D. Sacrifice

Offering all that we have to God, be it financial, energy, free time.

E. The Lord will add to our number

How may this apply to the need of your context?

II. Psalm 23

A. The Lord is 'our' Shepherd

B. Link to Jn 10:10

Cross reference that may be drawn upon in the sermon of Christ's purpose to bring abundant life.

C. We are all fearfully and wonderfully made

D. God knows our names and calls us personally

E. Answering the call of the Good Shepherd

What does it mean to be called?

F. Every part of the journey, God is with us and He guides our path, warning us of danger

A message of hope and comfort to those who may feel alone and overwhelmed

G. Even when it is dark and we are weary, God will be with us and guide our paths

A reference to Psalm 109:105

H. God does lead from the back and like a leader He guides us to go down the

correct path

When we think of a lead we may conjure images of one who take charge and directs the group. However, sometimes being leader is like a shepherd means watches over and protects the sheep while allowing them to graze safely.

III. 1 Peter 2:19-25

A. The prodigal son

Possible cross reference

B. We don't deserve Christ's love, but he invites us freely and gives it to us freely

C. There is a freedom in the knowledge that He suffered for us

There is privilege in participating in the suffering of Christ in our journey, as Peter wrote this letter with the intention of strengthening and encouraging persecuted church.

D. We are called to follow in Christ's footsteps (vs 21)

We now have a guide/map/satnav to follow to lead us home to an assured victory in Christ.

E. Faith can lead to suffering

Christian persecution throughout the world, segregation in the workplace, caricatures in the media.

F. We can get comfortable and no longer hear the call

In our comfort zones we can lose empathy with those who are suffering.

We may see a difference between helping ninety nine people who suffer and the helping one person who suffers. Sometimes we get overwhelmed by the sheer number of ninety nine, yet we can empathise with the one individual.

IV. John 10:1-10

A. Shepherd needs to know their sheep in order to recognise if something is wrong

Believers need to develop a relationship with God in our personal devotions, community and our way of Life.

B. Shepherds need to go before the sheep, not always leading from the front, but also leading from behind

C. Shepherds need to have their sheep at the forefront of their minds, they are there to look after the whole flock from danger

D. We need to have strength

More than a physical strength, but a more profound spiritual strength that comes from God.

Psalm 121, Where does our help come from?

E. Being a member of a flock

The importance of finding or being part of a community.

We are not alone; we are all in this together.

The Lord's Prayer says 'our' not 'my'

G. Sheep don't like to be alone

There is safety in numbers

G. Jesus the Good Shepherd

H. Jesus is the gate/door

Gate being a place of safety and refuge, reliable and strong, all things we depend on and can be applied to the Character of God.

H. Sheep know the Shepherd voice

A knowledge that comes with spending time with God.

I. Jesus used a metaphor that people would have been familiar with and would have understood

Sheep and shepherds were a common sight to the people in first century Israel.

What common imagery can be used to contextualise this metaphor in your church or parish community?

V. Personal stories of people responding to God's call or vocation

Use illustrations the testimonies or an extract from memoir of a prominent figure who answered God's call.

For example Mother Teresa or Desmond Tutu have profound stories of calling.

VI. Pixels making up the image of the body of Christ

Individual a single pixel on a screen is simple a blob of colour, but when collected with other pixels of various colours the individual blobs become one coherent image.

We are one pixel that makes up the image that reflects Jesus Christ to the world.

VII. All are called... some are called to?

What does this mean? Are there any other passages that come to mind?