

Sermon Guides for Romans – Ephesians (Stewardship Campaign)

Series Title: Step into This Story

Dates (2020): November 8, 15, and 22

Key Verse:

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Series Overview

We often feel small, insignificant, helpless, powerless, and devoid of possibility and potential. But the truth is, we are significant characters in God's ongoing, living story, which began in the Old Testament, moved forward through the rich stories of the New Testament, and continue in the pages of our lives today. We must take the next step to make God's story come alive in and through us. Our year long journey through the Bible, in which we have read the stories of the people of Israel, Jesus, and the early Church, has taught us that we have a role to play in God's story. We recognize that these are not just stories from the past; they are our stories, which describe the legacy we have inherited from our spiritual ancestors. In that way, we are part of the ongoing unfolding of that story, and God is calling us to "step into that story" and became the latest characters on the newest page that God is writing.

Colors, Images, Mood, Vibe

Images of faithfulness, storytelling, taking the next step, writing the next chapter.
Feelings of hope, adventure, responsibility, expectation.

Sermon 1

Title: Step into This Story: Impact

Scripture: Romans 12:1-21

Key Word: Impact

Theme: The impact our church has made in our community and beyond (missions Sunday).

Main Idea: We are called to live a transformed life, so that we can be part of God's transformation of the world.

Sermon Description:

We remember that the mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Romans 12 captures the possibility and impact of this idea in a powerful way. Once we allow God to perform an inner transformation of our mind and heart, then we are empowered to contribute to the transformation of the world through godly actions and holy virtues.

As a local church, we see this narrative played out in the remarkable way we join together to make a profound difference in the community and world through missions and service. This Sunday was Mission Sunday, and our preacher reminded us of the power of the local church to be a witness of hope and love for the world. It was also a critical part of our stewardship campaign, in which the sharing of testimonials inspired us to give.

Sermon 2

Title: Step into This Story: Love

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

Key Word: Love

Theme: Paul's letters to the Corinthians.

Main Idea: Nothing else matters if we don't have love at the center.

Sermon Description:

Paul's letter to the Corinthians addressed the significant issues of conflict that plagued that early congregation. It was part of a wider, cosmopolitan community marked by a melting pot of ideologies and perspectives. There is much about our current culture that resonates with the early church in Corinth.

As Paul addressed each of the specific issues, he continually returned to the quality of love, which to him was central to the character of the Christian. As John Wesley said, the mark of a Christian is one in whom the love of God is "shed abroad" in their hearts. Nothing else matters if it is not done in love.

This service was a critical pivot point in our 2020 stewardship campaign. We remembered that because of God's love, we can respond in generosity and self-sacrifice for the world. And one of the ways that we can grow deeper in our commitment to God is by giving our money to God out of a sense of love and gratitude.

Sermon 3

Title: Step into This Story: Unity

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-13

Key Word: Unity

Theme: Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Main Idea: When we are united in commitment and love, God can use us to impact the world.

Sermon Description:

The word "one" serves as the pulse, the heartbeat, of this passage from Paul. He reminds the church in Ephesus that we are to be characterized by unity, because there is unity in the Godhead. This essence of God enables us to bridge our differences and tear down the barriers that divide us. It also reminds us that even today, two thousand years after the birth of the church, we can be part of the great unfolding story of God's love, when we each do our part.

This service for Hyde Park was Commitment Sunday, when we shared our Estimate of Giving Cards. It will be a tangible and practical way for us to "each do our part," regardless of the size of our estimate, know that together, in unity, God can use us to make a profound impact on the world.