[[1]](#footnote-1)Week 1 Preaching Resources: Hit the Road

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| Scripture Passage | Matthew 28:16-20 |
| Focus Statement | Jesus sent out his apostles to make disciples of all the world. We have been sent to do the same. |
| ME | The Apostles felt they were being sent on a journey they were not quite ready for. Have you ever been sent to do something, and you did not feel prepared? Tell a funny story, sharing a time you got directions of what and where but were not sure of the how. Have you ever done an escape room or a scavenger hunt? People come together only by this task and given tools, but how do you manage to get out? |
| WE | We all have experienced a time when we are sent on a mission that had value but were not sure how to begin. Maybe it was a work or school project, possibly a camping experience. The great commission is sending of the disciples on their first mission without Jesus, how will they make it without Jesus? They have been the followers, but now they are sent on their own. You might include an example. All can relate to being fearful of setting out on something new alone. Establish this felt need for all who have gathered. |
| GOD | God’s Word talks about how God sends us.   1. Acknowledging fear and doubt – as people of faith and community of faith we are sent on a mission that can cause fear and anxiety. 2. Sending with the instruction – with authority, unpack “go”, “make disciples”, and “all nations” 3. Promising presence – risky/important journey Jesus is sending the disciples |
| YOU | What does this mean for your life and the life of your community? As disciples this is a commission for us as individuals. How do we see ourselves on the mountain, Jesus is speaking to each of us? Ask yourself, what is the mission that God is sending me on? Is it teaching Sunday school, helping with youth group, serving in soup kitchen, what is my part in this mission? |
| WE | Tell a story of someone who has faithfully responded to this commission. Imagine the impact our community of faith can have when each of us live out our mission. Conclude with a challenge. How will we as a congregation live out this commission? |

Week 2 Preaching Resources: Worth Stopping For

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| Scripture Passage | Act 2: 1-4; 16-21 |
| Focus Statement | When taking a road trip, the journey matters as much as the arrival at your destination. Every road trip should include a “can’t miss” stop along the route. It important in our faith journeys not to miss the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives. |
| ME | Tell a story about a time when you ran out of gas or had car trouble. Share how this changed the trip. How did you resolve this, how did you reflect later? |
| WE | Running out of gas/breaking down happens in our life of faith. Have you ever been in a place in your spiritual journey where you felt like you were running on empty? When you should be praying more or getting involved in small groups or missions, yet can’t muster the energy, or you appear to have it all together, doing all the right things – but your soul is on empty. |
| GOD | How have the disciples moved from being lost and empty to a spirit-filled life? As Jesus leaves them, he sets their path, giving them a world-changing mission. Imagine the conversations walking down the mountain, getting back to reality. Returning to day-to-day living left feeling empty and wondering how to manage all they are asked.  The apostles needed a way to move forward. It would have been easy to go out and work, but Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem. Then with a sweep of the wind and the touch of the fire, God pours out the Holy Spirit on these empty followers of Jesus. The filling of the Holy Spirit mobilizes the apostles to go out into the world, filled with the necessities to make the journey. They have the power through the Holy Spirit. Peter dismisses the claims of drunkenness and claims this new power is from God. This stop in the journey filled them for the mission Jesus had planned for them. |
| YOU | What is needed? When availing to the presence of the Spirit – you can go out and change the world for the glory of God. How will you open yourself up to God’s spirit? There’s a temptation to do things in your own strength but when you do, you will run out of gas. When we try to do God’s work, relying on our own strength, we are like glasses poured out emptied. When we tap into the power of the Holy Spirit we are not empty, we are filled with the flow of God’s power. Consider different ways that the Spirit fills us. |
| WE | The power of the Holy Spirit is not just to a few, but to a community of believers. How will our church use what the Spirit is offering to us? Use examples of how together as a church you need to be filled with the power of the Spirit, then move out to change your world. Share a story of an individual or a community that became aware of the Holy Spirit in their midst and how they lived into this. |

Week 3 Preaching Resources: U-Turn

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| Scripture Passage | Acts 9:1-6 |
| Focus Statement | Have you ever thought you were headed in the right direction, only to discover you are way off course? This week we will examine the story of the Apostle Paul’s U-turn in life. Paul’s life takes a radical turn when he hears Jesus. How does Jesus direct us to turn around? |
| ME | Tell the story of your conversion, coming to faith in Jesus Christ. This is an opportunity to share with your church. Or if your congregation already knows your story have a member share their story. |
| WE | Some of us here may have experienced this kind of radical turn around, while not everyone has a dramatic Road to Damascus experience. There may be some of you that are at the beginning of your journey or still questioning what you believe. No matter where you are this morning, let’s take a moment and tune into your own experience. Where are you in this journey? (Let there be a moment of silence) |
| GOD | Saul’s encounter with Jesus on the road is very dramatic. God steps in and literally stops Saul right in his tracks. Saul was actively working against Jesus and persecuting the Christians. How do we actively and passively do this? Some of the decisions on our path are moving us away from Jesus. Others are not so certain, we might not be doing anything actively hurting our journey, but our inactivity is not moving forward the kingdom of God.  Jesus meets Paul on the road of despair. He literally stops him in his tracks. Paul’s life is turned around and is forever changed. Recognize that this is not the last time Paul needs to make a turn, Paul does not always get it right from this moment on. There are times when he argues with other followers, he parts ways with Timothy and Bartholomew, and he writes how he does what he does not want to do. In our Christian life we will go in the wrong direction, but the love of Jesus will be there to turn us around. |
| YOU | Some of you are here this morning and you are in the middle of the road to Damascus. Maybe you were once so sure of where you were going, but now you find yourself wondering. For various reasons you have not opened yourself fully to the presence of Jesus. For others, something in your life has pulled you away from your faith – like Paul, you end up doing what you never wanted to do. Jesus wants to encounter us on our Damascus Road – for those who have never done so, receive Jesus now. For those who are already on the road, recommit your lives Jesus Christ. Open to the fullness of God’s love, reaffirm your faith, commit to living fully as the disciples that Jesus has called you to be. |
| WE | Tie in your story or the story of the person who shared. Do an altar call. Invite people to discipleship. |

Week 4 Preaching Resources: Road Less Traveled

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| Scripture Passage | Luke 10:25-37 |
| Focus Statement | When Jesus sends us out, sometimes the road is difficult and dangerous. We can avoid the Jericho roads of life, or we can take them in order to serve Jesus. We are invited to travel the Jericho roads in our communities with eyes open and offer our service to another in need. |
| ME | Tell a hero story about one who has been called into a difficult place and has responded by offering aid, comfort and healing. Who is an ordinary hero in your own faith journey? |
| WE | We all have people in our lives that have exemplified this commitment to care, someone who is healing the wounds of the broken or lifts the value of all people. Those who have devoted themselves to a life of service, who sees the divine in others. |
| GOD | This is familiar story; I invite you to come to it with fresh eyes this morning. Here are three points that may help us see in a fresh way:   1. The road to Jericho is dangerous. If you have been to the Holy Land tell the experience of the Road to Jericho. You can easily google stories and images that show the danger and difficulty of this danger. 2. The road to Jericho is narrow. While at first it appears the Samaritan alone sees what the others did not see, others would have seen the man attacked by robbers. Visually show this in your church aisle. Ask a young person to sit or lay in the aisle. Ask another to try to get by him or her by stepping over her or him. 3. I too can be like the priest and the Levi and step over people and never recognize their pain. Tell a personal story of missed opportunity of discipleship. It models that we sometimes step over people, because of our fear, our apathy, our pre-conceptions. |
| YOU | In your life, there are people who need help that you see and step over. Or maybe we are too self-centered to really notice the needs around us. As we journey through our road trip, we must not step over the needs of others. In your life, who are you being called to help? |
| WE | There are people in our community that God is calling our church to see and help. Who are they? What obstacles do we have to overcome? Contextualize for your community. Suicide, drug epidemic, the homeless and the hungry? Come back to your ordinary hero (from opening) and how because of their faith they were able to do what was difficult and dangerous. Are you ready to do the same? |

Week 5 Preaching Resources: Headed Home

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| Scripture Passage | Luke 15:11-24 |
| Focus Statement | Sometimes we leave home with great expectations and hopes. But somewhere along the road we get off track, and the best decision is to head home. Many important lessons of life can be found on the road home. |
| ME | Tell a story about a time when you were lost – before GPS could provide you directions and reroute you successfully. |
| WE | We all have had this experience of getting lost in a journey in the car or journey of the heart. The journey of 1000 miles begins with the first step and the first step is the hardest. When we are lost turning around is the hardest part. |
| GOD | This is a beloved passage of many messages from God. Sometimes we are easily lost; I have experienced this. For the prodigal it was easy to get lost due to money and popularity. Good turns bad and he ends up off course. Time passes, and he realizes his state of being lost “when he comes to himself.” He determines being a hired servant is better than his current condition and he heads home for a life no longer as a son but as a servant. Why is this so hard? Fear? Ego, pride? Despite the difficulties he could no longer live being lost. |
| YOU | Here’s what the scripture means for your life. You may be lost. Have you allowed your pride, or fear keep you from going home? You may be longing for someone to return. We must understand how hard it is for the prodigal son to make the first step. How do we respond to prodigals in our lives? Henri Nouwen writes in *Return of the Prodigal Son*, “To become like the Father whose only authority is compassion, I have to shed countless tears…prepare my heart to receive anyone, whatever their journey has been, and forgive them from that heart.” |
| WE | How are we preparing our hearts? Share a story of being the prodigal or welcoming the prodigal in our own lives, then invite the congregating to open others with open arms, not because of their own but because that is what God has done for us. |

1. To find more information, please reference *Breakthrough: A GNJ guide to best practices for worship*, pg. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)