

SERMON RESOURCES FOR **RECKLESS FAITH**

Dear Friend,

I am so excited that you are walking through the Reckless Faith experience as a congregation. I have gathered some materials that will be helpful as you put each sermon/message together.

Of course, no pastor or teacher plans to take someone else's sermon and simply repeat it. That is why I am not offering a manuscript for you to read, but some resources for you to use as you shape the unique message God wants you to bring to your congregation. What you will find in this document is a compilation of resources for each of the eight weeks of the Reckless Faith Campaign. You can use what works for you, drop out what does not fit, and add your own content to develop a Spirit-led message that will connect for the people in your congregation.

As you prepare each message I suggest you proceed with this seven step process:

1. **Pray** for God's leading and the infusing power of the Spirit as you write a message that lifts up the Name of Jesus and encourages believers to grow passionate and committed in their walk of faith.
2. **Read the primary biblical passage(s)** for the message and ask God to speak to you through the truth of His Word.
3. **Read the corresponding chapter of Reckless Faith** and contextualize the lessons from that chapter for your ministry setting.
4. **Watch the small group DVD for that week of Reckless Faith.** This will give additional ideas, stories, and biblical input.
5. **Review the sermon/teaching materials** provided in this document.
6. **Add your own study** and ideas.
7. **Write your message and deliver it** with passion and joy!

May the God of all grace lead you in your preparation and delivery of His message of reckless faith!

*With you in His service,
Kevin G. Harney*

»» MESSAGE 1 - From Domesticated to Adventurous

Preparation Suggestions

1. Pray for God's leading.
2. Read these biblical passages: Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 9:18-36; John 10.
3. Read book introduction and chapter 1 of *Reckless Faith*.
4. Watch Introduction video piece and week 1 of the *Reckless Faith* DVD.
5. Review the resources below.
6. Write your sermon/message.

»» PREACHING RESOURCES FOR WEEK 1

Basic Message Outline

- Introduction
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer
- How Our World Has Changed
- God Calls Us from Being Domesticated to Reckless
- What Is Responsible Recklessness? (The three-part matrix)
- Life Application...An Invitation to Recklessness
- Closing Prayer

Introduction Ideas

- You could give some examples of how safety consciousness has gone a bit too far... maybe showing pictures of signs or warnings that are a bit over the top.
- You could talk about how the world has changed from back when you were a kid and how things are today. If you want to have a little fun, you might even come out rearing a helmet and talk a bit about how safety consciousness has gone a bit too far. You can tell people, that for legal and safety reasons, the church board has asked you to wear a helmet while preaching.
- You could read a piece from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* where the beavers describe that Aslan is not a tame lion, but he is good. You might even show the clip from the movie.

Scripture Reading

- Read Scriptures as you feel they fit your message: Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 9:18-36; John 10. Give exposition of texts you use.

Prayer

- Pray for God to help each person discover the joy of reckless faith and the need for responsible recklessness.

How Our World Has Changed

- Share about how risk-taking, for the ordinary person, used to be more normative. Look at examples of how our world has become very safety conscious (You will find many examples in the book and DVD).
- Reflect on how this has become part of Christian culture and how most American Christians live a fairly safe and guarded life.
- In the book and video I talk about one of my sons wanting to do something risky and adventurous (first roof jumping and then going to the mission field). You might want to tell your own story about this kind of a spirit in a person you know.

God Calls Us from Being Domesticated to Reckless

- Explore Jesus' bold claims and reckless teaching in John 10.
- Look at the call of Jesus for Christians to take up the cross and lay down their lives in Luke 9.
- Invite people to make a commitment to being more reckless and less tame!

What Is Responsible Recklessness? (Three-part matrix)

- Clarify that reckless faith is not taking blind and senseless chances that are impulsive and lack prayer or wisdom.
- Define "Responsible Recklessness" and teach the simple three-part matrix that will help Christians follow God with boldness, and also with wisdom. Be sure to take your time and look at each of these steps that lead to a God-led life of spiritual recklessness:
 - » **Prayer**- Focus on how prayer will guide us toward God's will for our lives.
 - » **Perspective**- 1) Look at how the teachings of Scripture should guide our every decision and dream. If we feel led to do something "reckless" for God and it is contrary to the teachings of the Bible, we should **not** do it! The teaching of the Bible always trumps our sense of adventure or desire to do something for God. 2) Reflect on how God gives each of us wise Christians in our life who can be a good sounding board and who can offer godly perspective. We need to solicit their input and learn from them. It would be helpful to share about a person in your life who acts as a spiritual sounding board and mentor.
 - » **Patience**- Encourage people to slow down and take their time when they feel a call to reckless faith. Move forward, but don't jump blindly! If a believer uses these three "P's" they will walk with bold and reckless faith, but also exercise wisdom. Remind those gathered that you will be using this simple three-word matrix through the whole *Reckless Faith* series.

Life Application: An Invitation to Recklessness

- Use the reckless prayers, actions, and thoughts at the end of chapter 1 to spur you on with life application ideas that will fit your distinct church culture and needs.

Closing Prayer

Ask for God to send each person out with a bold commitment to living a responsibly reckless life of faith.

Additional Resources: As you prepare this message you might also like to read the Introduction to the book, *Seismic Shifts*.

»» MESSAGE 2 - An Invitation to Reckless Faith

Preparation Suggestions

1. Pray for God's leading.
2. Read the biblical passages: Luke 8:1-15, Matthew 13:1-23.
3. Read chapter 2 of *Reckless Faith*.
4. Watch week 2 of the *Reckless Faith* DVD.
5. Review the resources below.
6. Do your own original study and research on the topic and texts.
7. Write your sermon/message.

»» PREACHING RESOURCES FOR WEEK 2

Basic Message Outline

- Introduction
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer
- The Parable of the Sower
- Jesus, Trailblazer of Recklessness
- Life Application
- Closing Prayer

Introduction Ideas

- Tell a story about a time you saw someone who was recklessly generous (as opposed to being overly cautious and reserved). This story should capture the spirit of the parade story (with kids throwing candy).

Scripture Reading

- Read Scriptures as you feel they fit your message: Luke 8:1-15, Matthew 13:1-23, and Matthew 27. Give exposition of texts you use.

Prayer

- Pray for God to inspire each person to grow reckless in how they live their life of faith. Ask Jesus to help us see Him as the greatest example of reckless faith.

The Parable of the Sower

- Look at the passage as recorded in the Gospel of Luke.
- Take note of the sower and how generous he was with the seed (and how out of place it would have been for a farmer in Jesus' days to toss seed in the weeds and on a path).
- Connect this to how Jesus was always free and generous with His grace and love. This is how he wants us to live.
- Sometimes we don't scatter the grace and love of Jesus because we think the soil conditions are not right. But, we are not wise enough to know when the conditions are right...we are called to scatter seed.
- Tell a story about someone in your church or life who came to faith in Jesus at a time when they seemed very unlikely to respond to the gospel. Let this illustrate how the soil might not seem receptive, but when someone scattered the seed of the gospel and God's love, it took root and bore fruit.
- Challenge people to scatter seed...everywhere and all the time!

Jesus, Trailblazer of Recklessness

- Read from Matthew 27 or the other Gospels and look at the suffering and death of Jesus. Focus on how Jesus blazed the trail for recklessness by giving His life freely for us.
- You might want to read the story about the angels Michael and Gabriel in chapter two of the *Reckless Faith* under the title, "Jesus, Trailblazer of Recklessness."

Life Application

- Use the reckless prayers, actions, and thoughts at the end of chapter 2 to spur you on with life application ideas that will fit your distinct church culture and needs.

Closing Prayer

Ask for God to help you hear the invitation to reckless faith. Pray that you will not look at people and try to figure out if they are ready to receive the love and message of Jesus, but that you will simply be generous in sharing it wherever you go.

Additional Resources: As you prepare this message you might also like to read the Introduction to the book, *Seismic Shifts*.

»» MESSAGE 3 - Reckless Love

Preparation Suggestions

1. Pray for God's leading.
2. Read the biblical passages: Ephesians 2:1-10; John 15:9-17; 1 John 4:7-12; John 3:16-21; Mark 12:28-31, Romans 5:6-8, and John 21.
3. Read chapter 3 of *Reckless Faith*.
4. Watch week 3 of the *Reckless Faith* DVD.
5. Review the resources below.
6. Do your own original study and research on the topic and texts.
7. Write your sermon/message.

»» PREACHING RESOURCES FOR WEEK 3

Basic Message Outline

- Introduction
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer
- What Is the Greatest Call of Recklessness?
- God Initiates Reckless Relationships
- Loving God Above All Else
- Loving the People of God
- Life Application
- Closing Prayer

Introduction Ideas

- You could read the story about my wife Sherry and our son Josh and the birthday box he gave her from chapter three in *Reckless Faith*. Or, you could show a video of her telling this story from the video page on her website (sherryharney.com).
- Another option is to tell a story of your own about a time you saw a child show reckless and wholehearted love to someone else.

Scripture Reading:

- Read Scriptures as you feel they fit your message: Ephesians 2:1-10; John 15:9-17; 1 John 4:7-12; John 3:16-21; Mark 12:28-31, Romans 5:6-8, and John 21. Give exposition of texts you use. There are a number of additional passages in the endnotes for the chapter.

Prayer

- Pray for God to open the hearts of each person to grow in love with God and His people.

What Is the Greatest Call of Recklessness?

- We are called to love God with everything we have and are and then to love our neighbors as ourselves. Take time to explore and look at the Great Commandment (Mark 12:28-31).
- What does it look like to truly love God...on a daily basis? How can this be costly? What are the risks? Can God truly be our closest friend? Explore these ideas.
- What does it look like when we love other believers? How can this be costly? What are the risks? Look at examples of how we can love, serve, and connect in our local church in a way that extends love.

God Initiates Reckless Relationships

- Look at Romans 5:6-8 and 1 John 4:9-12. God begins this relationship of love. He takes the first chance. He is always the initiator. Reflect on and celebrate the greatness of God's love and the amazing truth that He loved us first!

Loving God Above All Else

- Walk through the four possible interpretations of "these" in the John 21 passage. Look at the conversation Jesus and Peter have and dig into what it looks like when we love God more than:
 - » Material wealth and success
 - » Security
 - » Other people
 - » And when we love God with a humble heart.

Clarify what this kind of surrendered and reckless love can look like.

- You might want to turn this upside down and look at what our lives of faith look like when we love each of "these" more than God (and this can happen when we are not careful).
- In chapter three of *Reckless Faith* there is a story about Ajith Fernando and his commitment to sacrificially love God above all else. Tell a story about one of your church missionaries or someone connected with your church who has pursued God with passion and a heart willing to count the cost. If you can capture this person on video, this could be very powerful.
- In chapter three of *Reckless Faith*, there are a few quotes from the great little book, *Prayers of the Martyrs*. You might want to get this book, read it, and share a few additional quotes...there are amazing examples of lives fully committed to love God no matter what the consequences.

Loving the People of God

- Be honest about the trend in some Christian circles to speak badly of the Church and other Christians.
- Look at Jesus' love for the Church and His call for us to serve and care for other believers.
- Invite the congregation to commit their hearts to love other Christians the way God does...this is a huge commitment of love.

Life Application

- Use the reckless prayers, actions, and thoughts at the end of chapter 3 to spur you on with life application ideas that will fit your distinct church culture and needs.

Closing Prayer

Ask for God to grow each person's heart to love Him more than they have ever loved Him before. Pray for a passionate commitment to live out that love in action. Ask the Holy Spirit to help each person gathered grow in their love for the local church and for the believers in their lives.

Additional Resources: As you prepare this message you might also like to read chapters 1-4 of the book, *Seismic Shifts*, and chapter 1 of the book, *Leadership from the Inside Out*.

»» MESSAGE 4 - Reckless Generosity

Preparation Suggestions

1. Pray for God's leading.
2. Read the biblical passages: Malachi 3:8-12, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, Matthew 6:24, 1 Timothy 6:6-10, and Philippians 4:11-13.
3. Read chapter 4 of *Reckless Faith*.
4. Watch week 4 of the *Reckless Faith* DVD.
5. Review the resources below.
6. Do your own original study and research on the topic and texts.
7. Write your sermon/message.

»» PREACHING RESOURCES FOR WEEK 4

Basic Message Outline

- Introduction
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer
- A Biblical Outlook (Three Counter-Cultural Declarations)
- Deciding Not To Judge Others
- Committing to Share
- Lessons On The Road to Generosity
- Life Application
- Closing Prayer

Introduction Ideas

- You can tell a story about someone who resists being generous and what they have missed out on because they live a stingy life.
- You can tell a story about someone you know who has taken reckless changes by being generous and how God has used them to bless others. Also, look at how God has grown them in faith and love through a generous life.
- You can show the YouTube video of how monkeys are caught because they won't let go of what is in their hand. Compare this to how we can get trapped with the stuff of this world and refuse to be generous. This is a vivid and sobering picture.

Scripture Reading

- Read Scriptures as you feel they fit your message: Malachi 3:8-12, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, Matthew 6:24, 1 Timothy 6:6-10, and Philippians 4:11-13. Give exposition of texts you use.

Prayer

- Ask the Holy Spirit to open the truth of the Bible and prepare each person gathered to grow in generosity in a way that will honor God, impact the world, bless the church, and transform our lives.

A Biblical Outlook (Three Counter-Cultural Declarations)

Look at these three truths, revealed in the passages above, that are opposite of what most of us learn growing up in our world today.

1. **I Have a Lot-** We spend a lot of time comparing ourselves to those who have more than us and feel we don't have much. When we study the world economy and how we fit into the whole world family. We really do have a lot. Look at this sobering truth.
2. **It Is All a Gift-** We tend to believe that we have earned what we have, provided for ourselves, and pulled ourselves up by our proverbial boot straps. Though God calls us to be diligent and work hard, and this does impact what we have, the truth is that God gives us every day, every breath, all of our abilities, a mind to think, and strength to work. God's gifts make it possible for us to have what each of us has.
3. **It Does Not Ultimately Belong to Me-** Our attitude is often that what we have is ours and we decide how much we want to share with God and others. At the end of the day, followers of Jesus do not live with clenched fists (like the monkey with a hand trapped in a tree). We live with open hands, thankfully saying, "God, it all belongs to you." When we live this way, freedom comes and God can use the resources He has placed in our hands to be a blessing to others.

Deciding Not To Judge Others

- We are called to examine our own hearts and lifestyle and answer to God. It is not our responsibility to judge, examine, and condemn others if we feel they have "too much," or that they are not sharing enough.
- Look at the danger of spending our time trying to set an exact amount of money or resources a "Good Christian" can use for personal items.
- Encourage people to give the first ten percent to God's work and live with the rest in open hands, guided by an open heart.

Committing to Share

- Invite people to grow a lifestyle of sharing. We learn this as children, teach it to our own kids, and then forget these lessons as adults (if we are not careful).
- Set goals for personal sharing. Identify things God has placed in your hands and find ways to make them available to God, the church, your neighbors, family members, and anyone God calls you to help.
- Imagine a church where every person has open hands and is ready to joyfully share. Imagine a world where Christians leverage everything God has given them for His glory. This kind of church can change a community and the world.

Lessons On the Road to Generosity

1. **The Deceit of Debt-** Discuss the way that debt can crush our ability to be generous. Give ideas for how to get out of debt. You might want to begin a class on Christian finances and living debt free right after this week of *Reckless Faith*.
2. **A Powerful Word and Attitude-** Look at the biblical call to contentment as a key to freedom and a generous life. Talk about how our world tends to invite us to become up-grade-aholics and that God wants us to learn the life-changing word, "Enough!" What might life look like if we were truly content and happy with what we already have?
3. **Focus on Eternity-** Another way to travel forward on the road to generosity is to focus on what lasts forever. There are treasures that rust and can be stolen. There are also things that last forever. Look at what heavenly treasures look like and encourage everyone to seek after these things...because they are what our hearts truly long for. You might want to read the short story in chapter four of *Reckless Faith* about the woman who wants to look at all her material stuff before she dies.

Life Application

- Use the reckless prayers, actions, and thoughts at the end of chapter 4 to spur you on with life application ideas that will fit your distinct church culture and needs.

Closing Prayer

Thank God for being so generous with us, including giving His only Son. Pray for hearts and lives that understand how good God has been and are ready to share freely and joyfully. Pray that each person will live with open hands and not clenched fists, and discover what a lifestyle of generosity looks like.

Additional Resources: As you prepare this message you might also like to read chapters 13-15 of the book, *Seismic Shifts*.

»» MESSAGE 5 - Reckless Service

Preparation Suggestions

1. Pray for God's leading.
2. Read the biblical passages: John 13:1-17, Mark 10:35-45, Colossians 3:15-17, Acts 1:7-8.
3. Read chapter 5 of *Reckless Faith*.
4. Watch week 5 of the *Reckless Faith* DVD.
5. Review the resources below.
6. Do your own original study and research on the topic and texts.
7. Write your sermon/message.

»» PREACHING RESOURCES FOR WEEK 5

Basic Message Outline

- Introduction
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer
- Jesus Models Humble Service
- Five Circles of Service
- Two Warnings
- Life Application
- Closing Prayer

Introduction Ideas

- Have someone tell a story (live or on video) about how the service of a Christian changed their life.
- Have someone tell a story (live or on video) about how they grew in faith when they discovered the joy and value of living as a servant to others.
- Tell your own story about your journey of learning to be a servant and growing a heart of humility.
- Have a basin and a towel and actually wash someone's feet at the start of the service. Don't explain why, simply begin with a person sitting in a chair without shoes on and you, as the pastor, wash their feet. Then, read from John 13.

Scripture Reading

- Read Scriptures as you feel they fit your message: John 13:1-17, Mark 10:35-45, Colossians 3:15-17, Acts 1:7-8. Give exposition of texts you use.

Prayer

- Pray for God to reveal Jesus as the perfect example of humble service and for each person gathered to become more like the Savior as we learn to serve like He served.

Jesus Models Humble Service

- Walk through the John 13 passage and look at the attitude and action of Jesus.
- Look at the attitudes of the disciples (who had missed the opportunity to wash each others feet...and the feet of Jesus).
- Unpack Jesus' call to His followers to wash each other's feet. What does this look like in our world today?

Five Circles of Service

1. **Circle One:** Where You Live (your house)
2. **Circle Two:** Neighborhood (walking distance to where you live)
3. **Circle Three:** Workplace or School
4. **Circle Four:** Your Community
5. **Circle Five:** The World

As you move from the circle closest to us and go outward to the remote parts of the world, look at some of the practical ways people in your congregation can serve others in the name of Jesus. Discuss some of the things that get in the way of us serving and how to overcome these roadblocks. Be very practical about how your church can partner with and encourage each person to engage in serving God and people in each of the five circles.

Service Expo- Consider having a time at the end of your worship service where ministries in your church, community, and mission groups can come and present ways people can engage in serving. Have a space where those gathered for worship can go following the service and talk with leaders and volunteers who are already engaged in these ministries.

Service Hand Out- Have a flyer or hand out of some kind that is given to each person as they gather for worship. This can include many of the places and ministries in your church where there are needs for volunteers to serve right now. People can mark the areas of ministry they want to learn more about and explore the possibility of serving in. If you do this, have someone follow up with every single inquiry within the next three days. Let people know that checking a box on this card does not commit them to serve, but it is an expression that they want to learn more about this ministry. Then, have someone com-

municate with them, share the vision, and if they are interested, train and deploy them.

Two Warnings

Take a few minutes and articulate these two warnings when it comes to serving:

- **A Need Does Not Necessitate a Call.** Some people don't need to be challenged to serve more. They actually need to be encouraged to focus on one or two areas of service and do these well. They should not say, "Yes" to every opportunity that comes along. Some Christians act as if they must respond every time they see a need. This is not true. They should take action and serve every time there is a need that God wants them to meet. Sometimes God wants someone else to meet a need. Our part is to be available and prayerful. When God calls us to meet a need, we should always respond. But, there will be many needs in all five circles that we simply can't meet. People need to be freed from the pressure of responding to every need they see.
- **I Can't Meet Every Need...Only God Can Do This.** Remind people that God is very big and powerful. He can meet all the needs as He sees fit. We can't possibly meet every need. This truth is freeing to many who are over-extending in service.

Life Application

- Use the reckless prayers, actions, and thoughts at the end of chapter 5 to spur you on with life application ideas that will fit your distinct church culture and needs.

Closing Prayer

Thank God for how He has served us on the cross. Praise Jesus for washing feet and showing us the way of service. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak and lead each person to the acts of service that they should enter into in each of the five circles of influence we all live in.

Additional Resources: As you prepare this message you might also like to read chapter 11 of the book, *Seismic Shifts*. In addition, you could read chapter 6 of, *Leadership from the Inside Out*.

➤➤ MESSAGE 6 - Reckless Relationships

Preparation Suggestions

1. Pray for God's leading.
2. Read the biblical passages: Matthew 22:34-40, Acts 2:42-47, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Matthew 9:9-13, Matthew 11:17-19.
3. Read chapter 6 of *Reckless Faith*.
4. Watch week 6 of the *Reckless Faith* DVD.
5. Review the resources below.
6. Do your own original study and research on the topic and texts.
7. Write your sermon/message.

PREACHING RESOURCES FOR WEEK 6

Basic Message Outline

- Introduction
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer
- God Exists in Perfect Community
- Growing Healthy Relationships with God's People
- Reaching Out to People Outside of God's Family
- Building Bridges
- Life Application
- Closing Prayer

Introduction Ideas

- You might want to use the illustration of three people with hands locked together climbing the hill of life and faith together. See the beginning of chapter six of *Reckless Faith*. Have a person who is a mentor to you and who influences your faith ahead, holding your hand and helping you along. Have a person that you apprentice and help grow hold your other hand and talk about how God uses you to help them forward in faith. Look at how this image and model can help us see the best way to walk through life...In community helping others and being helped.
- You might want to look at some of the "One Another Passages" in the Bible. These emphasize how believers are to love one another, serve one another, pray for one another, and so much more. If you do a Google search on "One another passages in the Bible" you will find many of these passages and example lists.

Scripture Reading

- Read Scriptures as you feel they fit your message: Matthew 22:34-40, Acts 2:42-47, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Matthew 9:9-13, Matthew 11:17-19. Give exposition of texts you use.

Prayer

- Pray for God to help each person see the importance of moving from isolation to community. Ask the Holy Spirit to help each person see the value of relationships with Christians and with those who are still spiritually seeking.

God Exists in Perfect Community

- Look at passages that emphasize the reality that God exists in eternal and perfect community as Trinity (Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7, Isaiah 6:8, John 14, and many other passages). God is our example of the importance of community. The first small group is actually God!
- You might want to read a portion of the Athanasian Creed. There is a piece in the book and you can find the whole creed online.
- Celebrate the fact that God, who is perfect, exists in community. This should cause us to realize that all of us need the blessing and support of relationships.

Growing Healthy Relationships with God's People

- Take time to celebrate the blessings and joys of being part of a local church. You might want to have someone share a testimony (Live or on video) of what it means to be part of a church family.
- Look at the reality that every Christian is also part of a bigger church, the body of Christ all around the world. Anywhere we go, we have brothers and sisters who love and serve God.
- Be honest that the church is, at the core, a gathering of Christians who are forgiven sinners learning to be more like Jesus with each passing day. But, we have not arrived yet. This means there will be pain, imperfections, and brokenness even in the church. We are not looking for our brothers and sisters in Christ to be perfect and we need to extend grace when they are not.
- Discuss how some believers today like to emphasize what they think is wrong with the Church and what they don't like. Some think they don't need the community and fellowship of a local church (Hebrews 10:19-25). Look at reasons we need to be in community and regular gatherings with other believers.

Reaching Out to People Outside of God's Family

- Reckless relationships include Christians making time and a commitment to have growing and healthy relationships (friendships) with people who are not yet part of God's family through faith in Jesus. We are to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). This demands time, prayer, and consistent commitment to nurture and invest in these relationships. It means authentically loving people who have not yet placed their faith in the Savior. You can gain some helpful insight on this topic by reading any of the three *Organic Outreach* books, *Organic Outreach for Ordinary People*, *Organic Outreach for Churches*, and *Organic Outreach for Families*.
- Christians should not see non-believers as enemies. They are actually victims of our common enemy, the devil. Encourage prayer, love, and intentional friendships with those who are still wandering like sheep without a shepherd.
- You might want to use one of the short teaching videos about Organic Outreach on: www.kevingharney.com.

- Look at the reality that Jesus was a friend of “sinners” and the outcasts of His day (Matthew 11:16-19). He liked them and they liked Him. Hold Jesus up as our best example of building God-centered relationships with spiritual seekers.

Building Bridges

- This is when relationships get really reckless and also very exciting. God wants us to bring our friends and family members who are believers into relationships with those who are not yet followers of the Savior. One of the best ways to reach out is to build bridges. Don't segregate your church friends from your work friends. Don't have an isolated bunch of friends from your church youth group who never connect with your friends from school or sports. Merge these two worlds.
- Look at the example of Matthew who becomes a follower of Jesus and then bridges his two worlds together in a beautiful connection of people in radically different places on the spiritual spectrum. But, great things happened (Matthew 9:9-13).
- Talk about ways people can use certain church events that can become a bridge between their Christian friends and those who are not yet believers.

Life Application

- Use the reckless prayers, actions, and thoughts at the end of chapter 6 to spur you on with life application ideas that will fit your distinct church culture and needs.

Closing Prayer

Thank God that He exists in eternal community and models the importance of being in relationships. Pray for courage for believers to connect with local churches and with other believers, even if they have been hurt in the past. Invite the Holy Spirit to direct each person to new friendships with people who are still far from God. Ask for courage for each person to build natural bridges between their believing friends and those who are not yet in relationship with God through faith in Jesus.

Additional Resources: As you prepare this message you might also like to read chapter 10 and 12 of the book, *Seismic Shifts*.

»» MESSAGE 7 - Reckless Prayers

Preparation Suggestions

1. Pray for God's leading.
2. Read the biblical passages: Galatians 5:22-23, John 10:1-6, 1 Samuel 3, 2 Kings 6:8-23, John 11:35.
3. Read chapter 7 of *Reckless Faith*.
4. Watch week 7 of the *Reckless Faith* DVD.
5. Review the resources below.
6. Do your own original study and research on the topic and texts.
7. Write your sermon/message.

»» PREACHING RESOURCES FOR WEEK 7

Basic Message Outline

- Introduction
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer
- Grow Your Fruit
- Speak Lord, Your Servant is Listening
- Open Our Eyes So We Can See
- Let My Heart Feel What You Feel
- Life Application
- Closing Prayer

Introduction Ideas

- Consider beginning the message with the congregation praying/reading in unison, the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).
- Look at that dangerous and reckless part of the prayer, "Your will be done." Talk about how many of our prayers focus on my wants, my needs, my desires, and my dreams. These prayers are fine, but reckless prayer moves us into the territory of longing that God's will be done. This involves surrender, sacrifice, and humble following of God's plan.

Scripture Reading

- Read Scriptures as you feel they fit your message: Galatians 5:22-23, John 10:1-6, 1 Samuel 3, 2 Kings 6:8-23, John 11:35. Give exposition of texts you use.

Prayer

- Thank God that, through Jesus, we have direct access to His heart and throne room. Ask for courage and boldness to learn how to pray, “Your will be done,” and really mean it. Invite the Holy Spirit to teach each person how to pray with reckless faith.

Note: It could be very challenging to try and cover all four of these kinds of reckless prayers in one sermon. You might want to choose the two prayers that most fit the needs of your church members right now.

Grow Your Fruit

- Teach the process of praying through the fruit of the Spirit. Encourage parents to reflect on each of their children and ask the Lord which fruit each of their kids most needs right now in their life. Encourage them to spend a month praying for this one specific fruit for a few minutes each day (not telling the kids they are praying for this to grow in their life). Then, watch and see how God answers that prayer.
- Talk about how each of us can pray for the fruit of the Spirit to grow in our own life. We can humbly identify which fruit (or fruits) seems to be lacking and fervently pray for it to increase. Encourage each person to humbly confess their need for this fruit and willingness for God to discipline and shape their life so they are ready to grow in this area.
- Look at the value of praying for the fruit of the Spirit to grow in the lives of friends, pastors in the church, other family members. Make this kind of prayer a normal part of your daily life.

Speak Lord, Your Servant is Listening

- Walk through this amazing passage (1 Samuel 3) and look at how Eli taught young Samuel to listen for the voice of God. He actually learned to invite God to speak.
- Reinforce the reality that we can recognize the voice of God by studying John 10:1-6. Like a sheep, each of us should recognize the voice of Jesus, our Good Shepherd.
- Give an example from your life about a time when God led, prompted, whispered, or nudged you.
- Teach about the various ways God.

Open Our Eyes So We Can See

- Walk through the account of Elisha, his servant, and how God opened the servant's eyes to see the spiritual reality that God was present, protecting, and watching over them.
- Talk about the spiritual realities that are all around us. Acknowledge the spiritual battles that rage, but focus on the victory of Jesus through His cross and resurrection!
- Teach people to pray that God will give them confidence and spiritual eyes to see Jesus on the throne and victories over all creation, the spiritual world, and our lives.
- Consider reading: Revelation 1:12-18.

Let My Heart Feel What You Feel

- Look at John 11 and how Jesus wept over the reality of death. Even though Jesus knew he was going to raise Lazarus from the grave (at that moment and eventually for eternity) he still wept. Jesus felt the pain of Mary and Martha's sorrow and he cared about the friends who were gathered and mourning. Jesus, God in human flesh, felt deeply and cared more than we can understand.
- Talk about God's heart for the world, for the broken, for the spiritually lost, for the hungry, and for all those who are marginalized and rejected in this world.
- Teach people to pray, "Let my heart be broken by the things that break your heart, dear God!"
- Reflect on some of the things that break God's heart.
- Talk about how our lives might be disrupted and inconvenienced if we were to feel as God feels. How might we be changed? Why is this such a reckless prayer?
- How might Christians and the church change our community and world if we were to all feel what the heart of God feels toward the hurting and broken?

Life Application

- Use the reckless prayers, actions, and thoughts at the end of chapter 7 to spur you on with life application ideas that will fit your distinct church culture and needs.

Closing Prayer

Pray through the specific "Reckless Prayers" you taught in this message. Pray them for yourself, for each person gathered, and pray them for your whole church!

Additional Resources: As you prepare this message you might also like to read chapters 5 and 6 of the book, *Seismic Shifts*.

»» MESSAGE 8 - Reckless Words

Preparation Suggestions

1. Pray for God's leading.
2. Read the biblical passages: Ephesians 6:10-13, Romans 10:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.
3. Read chapter 8 of *Reckless Faith*.
4. Watch week 8 of the *Reckless Faith* DVD.
5. Review the resources below.
6. Do your own original study and research on the topic and texts.
7. Write your sermon/message.

»» PREACHING RESOURCES FOR WEEK 8

Basic Message Outline

- Introduction
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer
- Words Are Not Optional
- Can I Tell You My Story?
- Can I Tell You His Story?
- The Cross, Jesus, and Eternity!
- Life Application
- Closing Prayer

Introduction Ideas

- Tell a story about a child, teenager, or elderly person who made a reckless decision to live for God and share the message of Jesus with others. What happened when this person began to articulate their faith and share the life-changing message of Jesus with others?
- Talk about how all of us want to share the love and message of Jesus. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) is in all of our hearts and we long for friends and family to meet the Savior and encounter His love, grace, and friendship. But, for many of us, we play it safe, hold back, and don't put our faith into action or words. Invite people to give their mouths to God and prepare to speak reckless words.
- Look at the spiritual battle that wages every time a Christian prepares to express the good news of Jesus in words that will impact another person's life (Ephesians 6:10-13).

Recognize that speaking reckless words of the life and hope that are found in the name of Jesus can provoke spiritual battle. Brace yourself!

Scripture Reading

- Read Scriptures as you feel they fit your message: Ephesians 6:10-13, Romans 10:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Give exposition of texts you use.

Prayer

- Pray for God to open the heart and mouth of every person in your congregation to speak the good news of Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to give boldness for each person to share their story of faith and the world-changing story of Jesus when the moment is right.

Words Are Not Optional

- Tell about one or two people who prayed for you to know Jesus, loved you with God's love, and actually spoke to you about the message, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Tell about someone who shared their experience of coming to faith in Jesus with you. Let the congregation know how thankful you are that these people took a risk and spoke the life-giving and eternity-changing words of life to you.
- Look at the apostle Paul's exhortation in Romans 10:14-15. Talk about how words are always needed. It is great to show love and compassion, it is critical that we be kind and reflect the grace of Jesus to others, but there always comes a point where we need to share the true and life-changing message of the gospel.
- Walk through the message of the Gospel. Present it clearly and as simply as possible.
- Remind people that little children can understand and embrace the gospel. Too often we make it more complex than it needs to be.

Can I Tell You My Story?

- Share the importance of every Christian being willing, able, and excited to tell their story of faith. Walk through the apostle Paul's conversion experience and look at how he told this story again and again, as he had opportunity (Acts 9, 22, 26). Paul loved to talk about how he came to the place of receiving Jesus as his Savior.
- Share your own story of coming to faith in Jesus. As a leader, it is important for you to be comfortable sharing about how you received and decided to follow Jesus with all your heart.
- Have a church member tell their story of coming to faith in Jesus (this can be live or on video).
- Share about how powerful and impactful it is for spiritual seekers to hear a person talk about how real their faith is and when it all began.

- Encourage people to practice articulating how they came to faith in Jesus, what they believe about God, and the difference their relationship with the Savior has made in their life.
- ***Stories of God's power and presence.*** Along with telling about how you came to faith in Jesus, we all need to be ready to talk about what God is doing in our lives today. Many non-Christians think that Christians are just playing religion and they don't realize we have a living relationship with God. They wonder if faith in Jesus actually makes a difference in our life. If we tell stories of God's work in our life, this has huge impact.
- Share a story (your own or someone else's) about a recent time God has worked in a powerful way, shown up, and done something that had a real impact. These kinds of testimonies are fresh and new because God does new things in our lives all the time.

Can I Tell You His Story?

- Along with sharing how you came to faith in Jesus, and along with telling current stories of His presence and power, pray for opportunities to tell the story of the Savior. The simple message of the gospel changes lives and unleashes the power of God.
- Walk through the message and content of the gospel. This is found in chapter eight of *Reckless Faith*. Help people see that children can understand and embrace the truth of who Jesus is and what He has done for us through His life, death, and resurrection. If kids can get it, everyone can!
- Walk through one or two ways to share the gospel. There are ideas in the "Extra Resources" section at the end of this document to help with ideas for various ways to share the gospel.
- Consider playing a short clip from YouTube that has an atheist (Penn Jillette- from the duo- Penn and Teller: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owZc3Xq8obk>). In this clip Penn explains why he believes Christians should share their faith and take chances to tell non-believers about Jesus. As an atheist he says, "I don't respect Christians who refuse to share their faith."
- Look at biblical passages where the message of the gospel is presented with clarity including (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

The Cross, Jesus, and Eternity!

- Talk about the importance of asking people, "Do you want to know more about Jesus?" We can share our story and His story, but the truth of the gospel needs to intersect with their story. After we share the good news of Jesus, we can ask if they want to know more. This can open the door to ongoing conversation, study, or even a point of commitment to the Savior.

- Each person must come to a point of decision and commitment to Jesus. They need to accept and confess their need of the Savior. We can't, and should not, force this. But, we can ask the simple question, "Would you like to receive Jesus as the leader of your life and the one who forgives your sins? Are you ready to enter a life-changing relationship and friendship with Jesus?" Talk about the reality that there will always be spiritual resistance at this moment. We need to press through and make the offer that Jesus has made possible...forgiveness of sins, new life, cleansing, and a relationship with the God of heaven.
- Leading in a simple prayer. If a person is ready, we can lead them in a prayer of confession and embracing of Jesus. Some guidelines and an example prayer are provided in chapter eight of *Reckless Faith*.
- You might want to provide this short prayer on a card or on your church web site. Encourage people to keep a copy of this prayer on a card in their purse or wallet, or to keep an electronic copy in their phone or on a computer or tablet device. Remind them that they don't have to memorize the prayer, but can have it written somewhere.
- Make sure to remind people that conversion is not the end of the journey, but the beginning. Offer ideas for how a Christian can walk with a new believer through first steps of growing in: Bible study, prayer, worship, spiritual disciplines, generosity, and more. You might even want to take new believers through *Reckless Faith* to help them in first steps of a bold walk with Jesus.
- If you want to be creative, you could even have a person join you on the platform and walk them through the prayer so others can see how to do it slowly and reflectively, with short and clear sentences.
- This would be a great service to include an invitation for people to pray and receive the reckless love of Jesus. Even if this is not a part of your church tradition, it would make all the sense in the world, since you have presented the gospel, to invite people to respond to Jesus' offer of forgiveness and friendship.
- Be ready to meet with people who have made a commitment to Jesus after the service. Begin a process of follow up and discipleship.

Life Application

- Use the reckless prayers, actions, and thoughts at the end of chapter 8 to spur you on with life application ideas that will fit your distinct church culture and needs.

Closing Prayer

Thank God for His amazing love and grace. Pray that every person present will be so amazed by God's grace and so in love with Jesus that they will share His good news in natural and organic ways. Pray for those who have made a first time commitment to Jesus.

Additional Resources: As you prepare this message you might also like to read chapters 16-18 of the book, *Seismic Shifts*. In addition, you could read, *Organic Outreach for Ordinary People*.

Additional Thoughts:

- **Additional Passages-** You can find additional Scriptural passages for each of the messages in the endnotes at the back of the book, *Reckless Faith*.
- **More Bible Passages-** Remember that there is a reading guide provided for each week of the Reckless Faith experience. There are passages in this resource that are not included in the book or preaching materials.
- **Responsible Recklessness-** Remember to weave in the idea of responsible recklessness into each message. This is a chance to reinforce the value of being **prayerful**, gaining wise **perspective** (from the Word of God and from godly people in your life), and being **patient** as we seek God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength!