# soul shaper

sermon notes

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These sermon notes are to be used in conjunction with *Soul Shaper: Becoming the Person God Wants You to Be* by Keith Drury (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2013).

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# about these notes

*Soul Shaper* by Keith Drury forms the basis of this four-week sermon series. Each outline brims with inspiration and practical application of biblical truth. As you and your congregation study *Soul Shaper*, you will discover that the disciplines recommended are intended to place you and your church in a strategic relationship with God. The result will be greater joy and holy living.

# listen up!

## week 1

### introduction

The sounds that pulsate against our eardrums can be deafening. Audiologists even attribute some deafness to listening to loud sounds like blaring music or loud tools. Perhaps there are some who don't care whether they hear the words of a song; what matters is that they hear its loud beat and jarring music.

It may seem out of touch with the times to advocate abstinence from sound, but silence is still golden. We ought to speak less and listen more. We need to listen to God, to the Word, and to wise counselors.

### sermon outline

I. Listen to God

A. Follow the Example of Samuel (1 Sam. 3)

God spoke to Samuel when he was silent and in bed. We can pray and meditate at night in the quiet of our bedrooms.

B. Escape to Nature (Ps. 8; 19:1–6)

David silently considered creation as a revealer of truths about God and himself. Escaping the busyness and the sounds of an urban environment and spending time in the solitude of nature may cause us to marvel at God's creation and gain a clearer perspective of him and ourselves.

II. Listen to the Word

A. The Word Is Priceless (Ps. 19:8–10)

We need to get away from the TV, Internet, social media, and other distractions in order to spend quiet time reading God's Word. It is our most valuable possession. How much do people spend to receive information and enjoy entertainment? It costs nothing but time to be quiet and draw wisdom from our greatest treasure, the Bible.

B. The Word Is Powerful (Ps. 19:11; 2 Tim. 3:15–17)

God's Word informs, instructs, and rewards. Do we listen often enough and quietly enough to receive the good God has given in his Word? In *Soul Shaper*, Keith Drury comments: "One reason we need silence is to allow God to enliven Scripture to us. God can speak to us by igniting a verse of the Bible" (p. 23).

Paul endorsed God's Word as capable of saving, maturing, and equipping believers to be and do everything God desires (2 Tim. 3:15–17). Do we avail ourselves of the powerful resource we call the Bible?

III. Listen to Wise Counselors

A. Seek Wise Counselors (Prov. 24:6; Isa. 9:6)

Instead of rushing about and searching desperately for answers to life's big questions, we ought to seek those who can impart wisdom to us. They are men and women who have studied God's Word and are in vital fellowship with God. Of course, the wisest counselor is our Lord and Savior. Do we seek his counsel in solitude and silence?

B. Be Silent and Listen to Wise Counselors (James 3:1–8)

Our ears are far less likely than our tongues to cause trouble. It has been observed that when the tongue is in overdrive, the mind must be in neutral. When we attend church, do we show the pastor proper respect by listening quietly and attentively to the sermon (see 1 Thess. 5:12–13).

## conclusion

We need to slow down, escape the hustle and bustle of a busy life and the noise that bombards us, and experience solitude and silence. God still speaks in a still, small voice!

# offering a hand up

## week 2

### introduction

Needy people abound in every country. Some are needy because they lost their jobs or have a severe illness. Others are needy because they have given up looking for work or have been victims of crime. Jesus told about what happened to a man who was a victim of a crime, and he presented the person who helped him as a model of the kind of love God wants each of us to exhibit.

### sermon outline

I. The Traveler's Need

A. The Traveler Was Near Death (Luke 10:30)

Robbers pounced on travelers bound for Jericho, a pleasure city where visitors spent money freely. Robbers pounced on the traveler Jesus spoke about, stripped him, beat him, and left him to die.

B. The Traveler Was Neglected (Luke 10:31–32)

Surely a traveling priest and Levite—religious men—would help the desperately needy victim. But they didn't. Both the priest and the Levite passed on the other side of the road when they saw the victim and refused to get involved. Merely glancing at the needy and then avoiding them is tantamount to sin, the failure to love our neighbors.

II. The Good Samaritan's Action

A. He Showed Compassion (Luke 10:33)

Samaritans and Jews were racially divided. Neither group loved the other (see John 4:9). But the traveling Samaritan refused to observe racial discrimination. Instead, he showed compassion when he saw the victim.

B. He Rendered Practical Assistance (Luke 10:34)

The Good Samaritan rendered first aid. He bandaged the victim's wounds, pouring in oil and wine to fight infection and soothe inflammation. We should take immediate action to help the needy, but our ministry to the needy should continue beyond the immediate. The Good Samaritan's assistance was long-term.

C. He Assumed Responsibility for the Cost (Luke 10:34–35)

In a display of love, the Good Samaritan placed the injured traveler on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he deposited two silver coins with the innkeeper and promised to pay the entire bill for the injured man's care. Are we willing to invest our time, energy, and money in caring for the needy? The answer is yes if we love as our neighbor as ourselves.

In *Soul Shaper*, Keith Drury states, "Serious Christians get into lifeboats and go to sea to rescue people in need, refusing to sit in our warm lighthouses waiting for the shipwrecked to wash up on shore" (p. 110).

III. The Good Samaritan Set an Example

A. He Was Truly a Neighbor to the Traveler (Luke 10:36–37)

An expert in the law had queried Jesus about the way to inherit eternal life. Jesus pointed him to the two greatest commandments in the law: Love God supremely and love your neighbor as yourself. When the expert asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, and then asked, "'Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him'" (vv. 36–37).

B. He Was Truly an Example to Follow (Luke 10:37)

Jesus commanded the expert in the law to follow the Good Samaritan's example. He said, "Go and do likewise" (v. 37). The example is one we too should follow.

## conclusion

How can we help the needy? Our church can operate a food pantry and carry on a used clothing ministry. We can volunteer at hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, and victim assistance programs. We can take meals to the homebound and the homeless. The possibilities are limited only by our lack of creative thinking. We can be neighbors—Good Samaritans—to the needy.

# God honors a humble heart

## week 3

### introduction

Pride seems to make itself obvious in our egocentric culture. It shows in an athlete's statement after a big win. It floods résumés, permeates conversations, and characterizes social media. In *Soul Shaper*, Keith Drury writes, "Pride, an overabundance of self-appreciation, is sin. It is a corruption of the essential self love God expects us to have" (p. 188). Mark 10 exposes sinful pride in the selfish ambition that two of Jesus' disciples exhibited.

### sermon outline

I. Selfish Ambition Condemned

A. An Audacious Request (Mark 10:32–37)

James and John had the audacity to ask Jesus to do for them whatever they asked. When Jesus asked what they wanted, they said they wanted to occupy the most prominent positions in Jesus' glory. This request was particularly audacious, because Jesus had just told his disciples he would suffer and die in Jerusalem. However the disciples were focused on crowns not on Jesus' cross.

James and John's mother may have urged the two disciples to request the prominent positions. She certainly made the same request on their behalf (Matt. 20:20–21). All mothers want the best for their children, but every mother needs to let God decide what is best for them. Do we want Jesus to cater to our selfish desires? Do we harbor selfish ambition, wanting prestige and authority over others?

B. An Appropriate Rebuke (Mark 10:38–40)

Jesus rebuked the two disciples. He asked whether they were able to suffer as he would suffer. They proudly said they were able, but Jesus said the chief places of authority would be assigned "to those for whom they have been prepared" (v. 40).

II. Selfless Humility Commended

A. It Follows a Kingdom Principle (Mark 10:41–44)

When the other disciples heard James and John's request, they were indignant. They must have been angry that James and John made the request before they had a chance to do

so. At any rate, Jesus drew a sharp contrast between the kingdoms of the world and his kingdom. The Gentiles clamor for prestige and authority, he said, but a prevailing principle in his kingdom is this: Selfless humility shown in service to others constitutes true greatness.

B. It Follows Jesus' Example (Mark 10:45)

Jesus showed selfless humility by leaving the glory of heaven to live on a sin-plagued earth among sinners, "to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (v. 45). Instead of looking for a prestigious throne to sit on, shouldn't each of us be looking for a towel we can use to wipe each other's feet? Do we want to be sovereigns or servants, lords or lowly ministers? If we find sinful pride in our hearts, we need to repent and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

In *Soul Shaper*, Drury suggests some disciplines of humility. His examples are returning grocery carts to the store, picking up litter, changing someone's tire, and straightening up after church (p. 197).

## conclusion

May we serve God and others humbly, so the spotlight will shine on God and not on us!

# how to respond to impending death

## week 4

### introduction

Most people do not like to discuss the subject of death, but it is an extremely important subject, and knowing what the Bible teaches about the subject enables us to face it well and confidently. Each of us should approach our own impending death with acknowledgement, assurance, and anticipation.

### sermon outline

I. Acknowledgement

A. Life Is Tentative

We ought to acknowledge that life is tentative. At best, it lasts only a brief time. The apostle James described it as "a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (James 4:14). You may be keenly aware of the brevity of life when you glance in a mirror and wonder what happened to the boy or girl you used to be. Didn't time pass quickly? Life is also uncertain. The man, who kissed his wife good-bye as he left for work, never expected to die that morning in a traffic accident. Nor did the woman, who learned she had terminal cancer, expect to die so young. No one can count on leading a long life, because life is tentative. The Bible warns, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring" (Prov. 27:1).

B. Death Is Certain

Like taxes, death is certain (Heb. 9:27). Even the most righteous men and women die. Are you prepared for the inevitable?

II. Assurance

A. Of Forgiveness

We can approach our own death confidently with full assurance if we have received forgiveness for our sins. Fortunately, in Christ God has forgiven our sins (Col. 1:14).

B. Of Eternal Life

God has also given us eternal life as a gift (Rom. 6:23). The possession of eternal life is a sacred trust deposited in heaven. The apostle Paul testified, "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

III. Anticipation

A. Of Rapture

At Jesus' return, he will rapture—catch away—from the earth all who trust in him (1 Thess. 4:16–17), and our trials and suffering will be over (2 Cor. 5:1–5).

B. Of Reunion

We can anticipate seeing Jesus when we die (2 Cor. 5:8), and if Jesus returns in our lifetimes, we will see him then and be reunited with Christian friends and loved ones who died (1 Thess. 4:14–17).

C. Of Resurrection

Jesus has a resurrected, glorified body, and someday he will transform our bodies into resurrected, glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:50–54; Phil. 3:21).

D. Of Rewards

We should look beyond death and anticipate the reception of rewards for faithful service (1 Cor. 3:10–15; 15:58; 2 Tim. 4:7–8).

## conclusion

We do not walk through the valley of the shadow of death alone, because the Good Shepherd is with us (Ps. 23:4). He has removed the sting of death and has promised never to leave us (Heb. 13:5). Are you prepared for the inevitable? If not, believe in Jesus today.