

How to Use Sermon Resources

- **READ AHEAD TOGETHER** - MCG's should use the Devotional at the end of this resource as a reading plan for the week leading up to your meeting.
- **SIT UNDER THE WORD** - This resource is filled with scripture references. Read them aloud, together before you answer any questions.
- **APPLY TRUTH** - The goal is deep discussion and application, not necessarily to complete this resource. Don't squash a good discussion. If you get into something important along the way that's fine.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer [2 mins]

Use the Overview [5 mins]

- Cover any key points for people who missed parts or all of the sermon

Scripture Deep Dive [30-40 mins]

- Opening Question
- Read the scripture for each question then ask the question. Some have multiple scriptures.

Close in Prayer

- In this extended prayer time, ask others to pray as they feel led, pray in a circle, pray over one another, pray to your left, or pray for someone specific. Whatever seems best.

Split Time (if applicable)

- Men with men, women with women
- Share in a circle. "What's one thing you want to celebrate? What do you need prayer and accountability for?"
- After everyone shares, pray in a circle for the person to your left/right.

SERMON OVERVIEW

"Rescue to Ruin" 2 Kings 17:6-18

Sermon Summary: This sermon examines the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel as recorded in 2 Kings 17, using it as a warning against spiritual drift. The message traces how Israel's destruction came through a progressive pattern: forgetting God's grace, replacing Him with idols, and refusing His warnings through the prophets. Pastor Matt emphasizes that this drift happens gradually through small decisions, not one catastrophic choice.

Key Points:

- Israel's fall happened because of a gradual drift from God, not a single catastrophic decision
- The three-stage pattern of spiritual decline: forgetting God, replacing God with idols, and refusing God's correction
- Religion says "I obey, therefore I'm accepted" while the gospel says "I'm accepted, therefore I obey"
- Idolatry is not stopping worship but replacing God with something else as the center of our lives
- Our idolatry has consequences far beyond us, affecting future generations
- What we do in secret matters and leads to public consequences
- Jesus perfectly did everything Israel failed to do.
- Relationship with God is not a handshake but a continuous connection maintained through confession and repentance

Scripture Reference:

- 2 Kings 17:6-20 (primary focus)
- 1 John 1:9
- Romans 1

Stories:

- The blindfold game with students where they drift from the marked square while thinking they're staying in place
- MTV's "My Sweet Sixteen" showing entitled teenagers rejecting expensive car gifts, illustrating lack of gratitude
- The pastor's first car: a 1986 brown Buick Century with rust and no paint on the passenger side
- Working at a Christian summer camp 26 years ago and learning about confession versus re-salvation from a leader named J.E.
- A pastor counseling a man whose affair was discovered, who returned with a paper filled with moments God had warned him to stop
- The Assyrians' brutal practice of leading captives with fish hooks through their lips or noses, stripped naked and connected by string

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening Question

Read Hebrews 2:1 - “For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.”

According to Hebrews 2:1 and the Israel story in 2 Kings 17, what are some specific, practical ways believers today can “pay much closer attention” so that they don’t slowly drift from God without noticing?

A Heart That Forgot God

1. Remembering God’s Rescue

Read 2 Kings 17:7; Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 8:11–14

In 2 Kings 17:7, Israel’s sin is rooted in forgetting the God who brought them out of Egypt. Comparing this with Exodus 20:2 and Deuteronomy 8:11–14, what are two concrete practices God *commanded* Israel to use to keep His saving acts in constant remembrance, and how might those same practices translate into habits for us today?

2. Grace vs. Religious Entitlement

Read 2 Kings 17:7; Ephesians 2:8–10; Galatians 3:2–3

Looking at Israel’s ingratitude in 2 Kings 17:7 and Paul’s teaching in Ephesians 2:8–10 and Galatians 3:2–3, list two ways a “religion” mindset (“I obey, therefore I’m accepted”) can subtly show up in a Christian’s life, and explain how each one undermines genuine gratitude for God’s grace.

A Heart That Replaced God (Idolatry)

3. Identifying Modern Idols

Read 2 Kings 17:9–12; Romans 1:21–25

In 2 Kings 17:9–12 and Romans 1:21–25, what *two-step pattern* do you see in how people move from knowing about God to actively serving idols, and how might that same pattern show up today in areas like comfort, approval, or control?

4. Secret Sins and Public Consequences

Read 2 Kings 17:9, 16–17; Numbers 32:23; Luke 12:2–3

Comparing 2 Kings 17:9, 16–17 with Numbers 32:23 and Luke 12:2–3, what are two serious long-term consequences Scripture warns about when “secret” sins and idols are left unchecked in a believer’s life?

A Heart That Refused God (Unbelief)

5. Resisting God's Warnings

Read 2 Kings 17:13–15; 2 Chronicles 36:15–16

In 2 Kings 17:13–15 and 2 Chronicles 36:15–16, identify two specific descriptions of Israel's response to God's warnings (e.g., "obstinate," "mocked," "scoffed"), and explain how each description reveals a progression in hardening their hearts.

6. Unbelief Inside the Church

Read 2 Kings 17:14–15; Mark 9:24; Hebrews 3:12–13

When you compare Israel's unbelief in 2 Kings 17:14–15 with the man's prayer in Mark 9:24 and the warning in Hebrews 3:12–13, what is one practical way Christians can honestly confront areas of unbelief in their own hearts, and one way the church community is commanded to help each other do this?

Christ's Faithfulness and Our Repentance

7. Jesus as the Faithful Israel and Our Way Back

Read 2 Kings 17:18–20; Romans 5:18–19; 1 John 1:8–9

In light of Israel being "banished" in 2 Kings 17:18–20, and Paul's teaching in Romans 5:18–19 that Christ's obedience brings justification, how does 1 John 1:8–9 describe the ongoing role of confession in the life of someone who has already been saved, and what does that show about the difference between *losing salvation* and *restoring fellowship* with God?