

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.

Practical Applications [10 mins]

- This section is optional but there for you should you need a final thought or something to challenge your group with.

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

“Two Failed Kings, One Faithful God” - 1 Kings 20

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores 1 Kings 20, examining the story of King Ahab's encounters with Ben-Hadad and God's intervention in battle. Through Ahab's failures and God's faithfulness, we learn about the unrelenting mercy of God who gives second and third chances even to the most stubborn hearts.

Key Points:

- The unrelenting mercy of God is extended even to those who seem furthest from Him, like King Ahab
- God is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in faithful love, maintaining mercy to a thousand generations
- We cannot outrun or out-sin the mercy of God that is available to us today
- The unlimited power of God transcends all circumstances and locations—He is God of both hills and valleys
- God's power applies to missions in neighborhoods and nations, victory over recurring sin, and restoration of broken relationships
- We must stop relying on our own effort and instead turn to the King and His unlimited power
- The unavoidable justice of God will eventually say "enough" to those who treat Him lightly, treat sin casually, and make themselves ultimate authority
- Grace is displayed when another steps in to pay the punishment we owe—Jesus paid our debt on the cross
- We must confess our sins, surrender our lives to Christ, and make Him Lord rather than living for ourselves

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Kings 20:1-43 (primary focus)
- Exodus 34:5-7 (God's proclamation of His character to Moses)
- 2 Peter 3:9 (God's patience and desire that none perish)

Stories:

- Ahab's misplaced priorities—willing to give up family but not possessions
- The two battles where God defeats the Arameans despite overwhelming odds (7,000 Israelites vs. vast Aramean army)
- The prophet's disguised encounter with Ahab, using a parable about a lost prisoner to reveal Ahab's disobedience
- The illustration of the speeding ticket (going 83 in a 70 mph zone) to explain mercy, justice, and grace
- Reference to Humpty Dumpty as a metaphor for broken relationships that seem beyond repair

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening Question:

Reflect on a time when you witnessed or experienced an act of mercy. How did it affect your understanding of God's mercy toward us?

1. The Unrelenting Mercy of God

Read 1 Kings 20:13 - How does God's promise to deliver Israel despite Ahab's unfaithfulness illustrate His mercy? Compare with Lamentations 3:22-23 and discuss how God's mercy is demonstrated continually.

Read Exodus 34:6-7 - How do these attributes of God challenge or align with your perception of His character, especially in the context of Ahab's actions? Reflect on how these attributes are evident in today's world.

2. The Unlimited Power of God

1 Kings 20:23 - How does the Syrian assumption about God's power reflect common misconceptions about God's omnipresence? Consider Psalm 139:7-10 and discuss how the omnipresence of God might provide comfort or conviction in your daily life.

1 Kings 20:28 - How does God's demonstration of power in the valleys encourage you in your personal "valley" experiences? Cross-reference with Romans 8:37 and discuss how recognizing God's power in all circumstances can influence your faith and actions.

3. The Unavoidable Justice of God

1 Kings 20:4 - In what ways does Ahab's disobedience and subsequent judgment illustrate the concept of divine justice? Consider Deuteronomy 32:4 and Revelation 20:12 for where these themes appear elsewhere in scripture.

2 Corinthians 5:10 - How does understanding God's justice influence your daily decisions and your relationship with Him? Discuss the balance between God's justice and mercy, particularly in your own life experiences.

Practical Applications:

1. Reflecting on God's Mercy in Daily Life

How can you intentionally remind yourself of God's mercy throughout the week, especially during times of distress or failure?

Suggested Answer: Consider setting a daily reminder to read Lamentations 3:22-23, which speaks of God's mercies being new every morning, or keep a gratitude journal specifically acknowledging God's mercies in your life.

2. Responding to God's Power Over Challenges

In what ways can recognizing God's unlimited power transform your approach to a current personal challenge?

Suggested Answer: Start each day by submitting that challenge to God in prayer, asking for His strength and wisdom, and consider memorizing Philippians 4:13 to reinforce the belief that you can overcome challenges through Christ who strengthens you.

3. Evaluating Personal Priorities

How can Ahab's misplaced priorities serve as a cautionary tale for addressing your own priorities? What steps can you take to ensure your life reflects the correct priorities?

Suggested Answer: Conduct a "priority audit" by listing your recent activities and assessing whether they align with your values and God's calling. Commit to making any necessary changes, perhaps by involving a trusted friend for accountability.

4. Engaging in the Mission of God

How can awareness of God's desire for all to know Him inspire you to take concrete steps in sharing your faith with others?

Suggested Answer: Identify one person in your life to pray for and seek opportunities to share your faith. You could also participate in church outreach activities or initiatives designed to reach those who do not know Christ.

5. Approaching Relationships with God's Power and Mercy

What practical steps can you take to restore or strengthen a strained relationship in light of God's mercy and power?

Suggested Answer: Begin by seeking reconciliation through open communication and forgiveness, praying for wisdom and strength. Apply Ephesians 4:32 by practicing kindness, being compassionate, and forgiving as Christ forgave you, perhaps scheduling regular check-ins to nurture the relationship.

5 Day Devotional

Day 1 Reading: 1 Kings 20:1-12, Romans 5:8

Devotional: In the face of apparent doom from King Ben-Hadad, God surprisingly assures Ahab of victory. This promise comes despite Ahab's history of rebellion, highlighting God's mercy towards even the most unlikely individuals. This mirrors God's love for us, shown by Christ dying for us while we were still sinners, offering us grace beyond our worthiness.

Reflection/Prayer: Consider areas in your life where you feel unworthy of God's love and mercy. Pray for the ability to accept His grace, knowing that His promises are not based on your merit but His love.

Day 2 Reading: 1 Kings 20:13-21, Matthew 6:33

Devotional: Ahab's initial willingness to surrender everything valuable without consulting God reflects his faulty priorities. Jesus teaches us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. When God is prioritized, everything else falls into place, aligning our lives with His will and provision.

Reflection/Prayer: Evaluate your current priorities. Are there areas where God is not first in your life? Pray for guidance to re-align your priorities, placing God at the center of all decisions and actions.

Day 3 Reading: 1 Kings 20:22-30, Ephesians 3:20

Devotional: The Syrians underestimated God's power, believing it was limited to the hills. God demonstrates His omnipresence and power by granting Israel victory in the plains. This reminds us that God's power is not confined by circumstances but is immeasurable and working within us beyond what we can ask or imagine.

Reflection/Prayer: Reflect on a situation where you need to rely on God's power more fully. Pray for faith and courage to trust in His limitless power, regardless of your current circumstances.

Day 4 Reading: 1 Kings 20:31-43, James 4:17

Devotional: Ahab's disobedience in sparing Ben-Hadad led to personal and national consequences. James reminds us that knowing what is right and failing to do it is sin. This highlights the importance of obedience to God's directive and the consequences when we choose our desires over His commands.

Reflection/Prayer: Identify an area where you struggle with obedience to God. Pray for strength and wisdom to follow His commands, trusting in His plan and purpose for your life.

Day 5 Reading: 1 Kings 20:13-34 (Focus on initial battles and outcomes) Hebrews 4:16

Devotional: God extends mercy repeatedly to Ahab, yet justice ultimately prevails when His instructions are ignored. We are invited to approach God's throne of grace confidently, receiving not only mercy but also grace to help us in our time of need. Understanding the balance between mercy and justice can deepen our reliance on Him.

Reflection/Prayer: Contemplate how God's mercy and justice have played roles in your life. Pray for the discernment to live in a way that honors God's justice while appreciating His mercy, seeking His help in times of need.