

TEACHING GUIDE

# BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY

Love & Good Deeds

**OUTREACH**

# SERMON OUTLINE

**Title:** Love And Good Deeds

**Scripture:** Hebrews 10:24 // Ephesians 2:10

**Write Up:** You are each a masterpiece of God, crafted for good works. These acts of kindness and compassion aren't about earning His love; they're a natural outpouring of it, revealing God's love to everyone around us. The world will know we are Christians by our love and good deeds, not by our pride and self-service.

Sample

# SERMONMANUSCRIPT

**Back to Church Sunday** – “Love And Good Deeds”

**Scripture:** Hebrews 10:24-25 // Ephesians 2:10 // John 13:35

**Write Up:** You are each a masterpiece of God, crafted for good works. These acts of kindness and compassion aren't about earning His love; they're a natural outpouring of it, revealing God's love to the world. The world will know we are Christians by our love and good deeds, not by our pride and self-service.

**Think:** Being a part of the church means that I am a part of God's good work in the world.

**Feel:** I can make a difference by the way that I love others.

**Do:** Look for practical ways to demonstrate the love of Jesus to my family, neighbors, and community.

**Sermon:** Good morning, everyone. Today there will be congregations all over our nation who gather to take part in a National Back to Church Sunday initiative. It is an intentional effort to reach out and invite our friends and neighbors to come see what church is all about. So, first, I would like to say thank you for joining us this morning. We understand that for some of you, this might be your first time in a church ever, or perhaps it's been a while since you last attended. You might have certain expectations or feel a bit anxious about what today will be like. I would like to put your mind at ease: we are absolutely thrilled to have you here.

Our purpose is not to judge, lecture, or ask you for money. We are here to welcome you with open arms, introduce you to Jesus, and share the hope and love that His church brings to the world. Today, we want you to feel at home. Whether you're just curious, seeking answers, or looking for a community, you belong here.

For centuries, God has used groups of people, just like us, who have followed Him and dedicated themselves to being a part of His Kingdom in order to reach out in service to the world. The Church has played a significant role in society and contributed to some of the most amazing developments the world has ever seen. From education, to healthcare, food banks, to homeless shelters. The Church has been at the forefront of

human rights activism and social justice initiatives. Without a doubt, God has been on the move through a mosaic of unique and diverse people within churches, both big and small.

**STORY:** (*Consider having a stained glass picture on stage as this is shared. Also, consider handing out small individual pieces of glass to be held throughout the message and referred to often*). A fourteenth-century Italian stained-glass artist was summoned to design and create a huge portrait for the window of a cathedral in Chartres, France, a place well known for its stained-glass work. He laid all of the pieces he was going to use out on the floor of the cathedral. They were beautiful to behold; most of them were large and colorful. Among these awesome pieces of glass was a small, clear piece about as big as your fingernail. As the stained-glass portrait was assembled, that little piece remained on the floor. Only the big colorful pieces of glass were used. On the day of the window's completion, the tiny piece of clear glass was still lying on the ground. The entire city gathered to witness the unveiling of the brilliant and beautiful stained-glass portrait. The artist stood in front of the crowd, made his speech, and dramatically pulled down the cloth cover. The crowd gasped at the beauty of the colorful window glowing in the sunlight. After a few seconds, however, the crowd grew silent. They sensed that something was missing, that the portrait was unfinished. The great artist then walked over to where the little clear piece of glass lay, picked it up, and placed it in the portrait, right in the center of Jesus' eye. As the sun hit that little piece, it gave off a dazzling sparkle. The magnificent stained-glass window still draws visitors. The first thing they see is that sparkle in Jesus' eye. As small as that piece of glass was, it was very important to the portrait. (Still More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks, *Wayne Rice*)

Each of us are small glass pieces of God's beautiful work in the world. We may think we are insignificant, but, in God's eyes, we are important. That is why I am glad you are here. We all have the opportunity to be a part of making the world a better place for Christ's sake when we are pieced together like a mosaic, we will see amazing things happen.

### **POINT #1 – POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE**

The book of Hebrews was written by an unknown author as a letter to encourage the early Christians to remain dedicated to their faith in Jesus. They were facing persecution and false teaching that were threatening to cause them to abandon the convictions and the Church. But the author knew that it was paramount that their readers would stay strong because the growing Church was destined to be the hope of the world. So, they write this in chapter 10.

## READ Hebrews 10:24-25

In these verses we are given two challenges. The first one is to spur one another on. This is a very interesting phrase, but in the original Greek is the word *paroxusmos*. It means to stimulate, provoke, or irritate so that someone must respond. Hebrews says that we should be this kind of influence on one another to ensure that we don't neglect the gathering of the Church for the work of God. The author is so serious about their desire to see Christians regularly come together that they say we ought to use positive peer pressure to ensure that they don't forget or neglect to assemble for worship and service. The imagery for this becomes clear as the word *paroxusmos* is translated in English as "spur" one another on. Just like a cowboy might ride a horse and have spurs on the heels of their boots to jab into the side of the animal to keep them moving, we should be a constant reminder to one another as well. We do this by inviting others to church, by being consistent in our own commitment, or by regularly talking about your faith.

The second challenge given by the author is for us to motivate one another to take part in loving each other well and practicing good deeds to bless the world around us. What would happen if the Church today were to take the words from Hebrews 10 seriously? What if we were to commit ourselves to living out the instructions of Jesus to love our neighbors as ourselves, to feed the hungry, to heal the broken, and to serve the poor? What if we were to not just do it ourselves, but to also encourage others to join us for this eternally important work?

I think that is exactly how we could see the world change for the better. Each one doing their little part and doing whatever they can to not take part in it alone.

**STORY:** At a church that I served years ago, there was a simple ministry that provided backpacks full of food each weekend for children in local schools who had food insecurity. There were hundreds of students that benefited from this initiative each week. The most amazing thing about this ministry is its origin. It all began with a 7-year-old boy whose friend would go hungry on the weekends. The boy told his Sunday School teacher that he wanted to help his friend. So, the Sunday School teacher put together a single backpack for the boy to share with his friend. That little 7-year-old boy got so excited about the good deed he had done that he wanted his whole Sunday School to join him in his efforts to provide food for more children in his school. He was vocal and convincing about the service opportunity and it quickly grew to where it is today.

The passion of one single little boy has now touched untold children and positively pressured others to gather and take part in love and good deeds. That is the beauty of a church that takes Jesus at His word.

**POINT #2 – THE CHURCH SERVES BECAUSE OF GOD’S GRACE, NOT TO EARN IT**

**DOWNLOAD THE KIT TO READ THE REST OF THE SERMON**

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