

Media and Graphics Notes

Word of Witness Video?	No
Sermon Starter Video?	Yes
Sermon Notes?	I will read one scripture from the bulletin. There are three scripture verses to be displayed on screen with no additional sermon notes.
Other Notes	We will baptize a child at the 11 a.m. worship service. At the 8:30 a.m. worship service, we will recognize the child we we will be baptizing at 11 a.m. At both the 8:30 and 11 a.m. service we will say the Apostles' Creed responsively after recognizing or celebrating baptism and before Joys and Concerns.

Key Questions and Metadata

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about seeing Jesus today.

Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because it reminds us that Jesus is active in our world today, not just long ago and far away in the world of the Bible.

What is the context of this sermon?

This is the fifth sermon in the Renegade Gospel series. It is the Sunday after the official start of spring and the first weekend of NCAA basketball tournament. This sermon and series were developed using *The Renegade Gospel*¹ by Mike Slaughter as a guide.

What are the next action steps?

To see Christ today:

- Wake up and stay alert...
- Remain connected to a community of disciples who will hold us accountable.
- Constantly to be aware of our dependence on God.²



¹ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel: The Rebel Jesus* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014)

² Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 94.

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that we can live in a vital relationship with the rebel Jesus today.

Metadata

1. Topic(s)
 1. Serve
 2. Changing Lives
 3. Making Disciples
 4. Transformation of the World
2. Sermon Books of the Bible
 1. John
 2. Matthew
3. Series
 1. Renegade Gospel
4. Speaker
 1. Andrew Conard
5. Tags
 1. Church, Methodist, United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church, El Dorado, Kansas, worship, sermon, see, Jesus, spiritual, drowsiness, sleepiness, expectation, Holy Spirit, parable

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Matthew 25:1-13, CEB

1 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten young bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. 2 Now five of them were wise, and the other five were foolish. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but didn’t bring oil for them. 4 But the wise ones took their lamps and also brought containers of oil. 5 “When the groom was late in coming, they all became drowsy and went to sleep. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Look, the groom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 “Then all those bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. 8 But the foolish bridesmaids said to the wise ones, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps have gone out.’ 9 “But the wise bridesmaids replied, ‘No, because if we share with you, there won’t be enough for our lamps and yours. We have a better idea. You go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 But while they were gone to buy oil, the groom came. Those who were ready went with him into the wedding. Then the door was shut. 11 “Later the other bridesmaids came and said, ‘Lord, lord, open the door for us.’ 12 “But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’ 13 “Therefore, keep alert, because you don’t know the day or the hour.

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

Introduction

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

*** Start Sermon Timer ***

Series Review

Jesus didn’t come to start a religion. The rebel Jesus came with a renegade gospel to start a revolution. Join First United Methodist Church in worship as we discover Jesus all over again.

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

Opening

Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Daily Time with God

Every morning, I spend about 30 minutes with God in prayer and reading the Bible. I have found that this works best when I am able to wake up before anyone else. When I sleep in and miss the time, I can tell later in the day. I tend to be grumpier and less patient with others when I don't spend time with God. Even within twenty-four hours, I can begin to fall away from God.

On the other hand, I sometimes fall into the trap of the same old thing in my relationship with God. Sometimes this means that I find myself "basing my entire relationship with Jesus on rereading the same two-thousand-year-old stories or reminiscing how I experienced Jesus in the past. If I limit myself to reading the old stories, hearing the same sermons, and reliving past moments, I fail to seek the real and present Jesus of the here and now."³

Transition

As important as it is, the Bible does not tell the story of God's work today. What is God doing right here in El Dorado today?

You may have had transformational experiences with God some time in the past. How is God at work in your life today?

Today, we focus on seeing Jesus today.

³ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 77-8.

The Power of Expectation

Parable of the Bridesmaids

Tradition of Wedding Procession

“In Matthew 25:1-13, Jesus told a parable of ten virgins who are standing with their lamps outside at night awaiting the arrival of a wedding procession. In biblical times, that procession traditionally would travel from the bride’s home to the new husband’s. In the parable, Christ is the awaited bridegroom.

Five Foolish and Five Wise

Jesus noted that five of the women were foolish and five wise. The foolish women had their lamps but had failed to bring oil for them. The wise women were fully stocked with both. Because the groom’s arrival was delayed, the waiting women became drowsy and fell asleep.”⁴

Scripture

Let me read what happens next from Matthew 25:6-13:

Read scripture from bulletin

6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Look, the groom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 “Then all those bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. 8 But the foolish bridesmaids said to the wise ones, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps have gone out.’ 9 “But the wise bridesmaids replied, ‘No, because if we share with you, there won’t be enough for our lamps and yours. We have a better idea. You go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 But while they were gone to buy oil, the groom came. Those who were ready went with him into the wedding. Then the door was shut. 11 “Later the other bridesmaids came and said, ‘Lord, lord, open the door for us.’ 12 “But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’”⁵

Power of Expectation

“This parable of the bridesmaids is about the power of expectation.

If we want to see the bridegroom, if we want to see and experience Jesus today, we need to seek him expectantly and actively. The bottom line is that you will find Jesus only if you are looking for him.”⁶

⁴ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 78.

⁵ Matthew 25:6-13, CEB.

⁶ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 79.

Car Games on Family Vacation

When I was growing up, we took family vacations by loading up into our minivan and heading out across the country. In different years we drove to Yellowstone National Park, North Carolina and many times to our cabin in Woodland Park, Colorado. To pass the time, my brother, sister and I would read, sleep and play car games.

License Plates

One of those games was keeping track of license plates which we saw from different states. On a trip from Kansas to Colorado, it was not uncommon to see fifteen or twenty different state license plates.

Alphabet Game

We also played, the Alphabet Game. We each kept track of the letters we saw on signs or vehicles to see who could complete the alphabet first. Only one person could use a particular letter, so you had to look fast. You had to pay attention in town because being the first one to see a QuikTrip could make the difference between winning or losing.

“[Even when you are driving from here to Wichita we can be surrounded by license plates from other states], but we don’t see them because we are not looking for them. The power of expectation means that you find what you are looking for.

Ask, Seek, Knock: Expectation in Scripture

“This power of expectation is why Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-8:

“Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Whoever seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door is opened.”⁷

It’s important to note that in the original Greek, the verbs used in that passage are in present continuous tense—that is, a more accurate reading of the verbs might be, “Ask and keep on asking. ... Seek and keep on seeking. ...”

Expectation needs to be constant and ongoing—a daily, intentional, whole-life priority of seeking the presence of Christ today, of actively listening for Christ’s voice in the present.”⁸

Seeing Jesus Today

Promise of Seeing Jesus

“In John 14:15-17, Jesus made a promise about experiencing Jesus in the here and now:

⁷ Matthew 7:7-8, CEB.

⁸ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 81.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. I will ask the Father, and he will send another Companion, who will be with you forever. This Companion is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world can’t receive because it neither sees him nor recognizes him. You know him, because he lives with you and will be with you.”⁹

Holy Spirit > Bible

“The Bible, to which I dedicate the first moments of my day, is the most important book in the world; but note that when Jesus left he didn’t say he would leave us with a book, but with his presence in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Fresh Experience of Jesus

Jesus knew that we would need fresh information and inspiration, not just the ancient stories about what he told the woman at the well, how he healed the leper, or how he called Zacchaeus out of the tree. ...

When Jesus walked [the earth], everyone could see him in the flesh—friends, followers, and foes. We no longer have that opportunity. Now that Jesus’ physical presence is removed, the world can no longer see him, but we can. Those who are born of the Spirit are able to experience and see him today. When we ask, seek, and knock in expectation, we find what we are looking for.”¹⁰

Experience of Seeing Jesus

Sheep and Goats

In the parable of the sheep and the goats from Matthew 25, Jesus describes what it is like to see him today.

“Then those who are righteous will reply to him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and give you clothes to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ “Then the king will reply to them, ‘I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.’”¹¹

Jesus in Everyday Life

“Where do we find Jesus today? He is not an otherworldly being to be sought out among the clouds. He has more to say about life, about us, and about our mission than what we can read in the Bible each day. We don’t have to retreat to a monastery or temple to find him.

⁹ John 14:15-17, CEB.

¹⁰ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 81-2.

¹¹ Matthew 25:37-40, CEB.

The world is his temple; we are his temple. We experience Jesus when we live out his mission and listen attentively and expectantly to the voice of the Holy Spirit, the companion that Jesus promised will guide us into all truth and tell us what is to come.”¹²

“We all think we want to see God, but the Divine often shows up in places we least expect. We will see Jesus when, with an expectant heart, we ... discover him in the everyday occurrences of life.”¹³

Transition

Yet, sometimes we miss Jesus.
Why?

Missing Jesus

Faulty Expectations

“Sometimes [we do not see Jesus in the life around us] because we have faulty expectations.”¹⁴

Looking for a Book

Over the last 6 months or so, I have increasingly been purchasing electronic books and reading them on my phone or computer. However, I still have several bookcases filled with seminary text books, reference materials and books about faith.

A couple months ago, I was looking for a particular book which I pictured in my mind as having a red cover. I keep my books alphabetized by author on the shelf and I was pretty sure of the author. I went to that shelf and started scanning the spines. I couldn't find it. I scanned every book on every shelf and I still couldn't find it. I was frustrated because knew I had a copy of it but I could not find it.

A couple days later, I went back to the shelf and looked closer at the shelf. There it was. Right where it should be on the shelf with the other books by that author. Here it is...

Show book - Key United Methodist Beliefs

It was a red cover, but the spine was brown. I could not find the book because I was looking for the wrong color.

¹² Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 85.

¹³ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 87.

¹⁴ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 87.

Looking for Jesus

“When we have not been seeking the living and active Jesus, if we have tucked him away to be dusted off periodically only when the mood strikes us, we risk looking for [a Jesus that does not look like the real Jesus], a Jesus of our imagination, not a living Savior and Lord who is among us today.”¹⁵

Spiritual Drowsiness

Another reason that we do not see Jesus today is because we have fallen asleep [spiritually] and are no longer attentive to the Spirit’s voice.

Physically Sleepy

Sleepiness can be a significant problem. “In a December 2013 article entitled “5 Other Disastrous Accidents Related to Sleep Deprivation,” *The Huffington Post* reviewed just a few of the many accidents attributed at least in part to sleepiness that have resulted in loss of life as well as material damage.

The Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion was one example. The engineers working that night had been on duty for thirteen hours or more at the time of the explosion. Likewise, the Three Mile Island nuclear incident in 1979 was “attributed to human error due to sleep deprivation.” A few NASA managers supporting the disastrous Challenger space shuttle launch in 1986 had only two hours of sleep before reporting for duty. The Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 and American Airlines Flight 1420 crash in 1999 also had crew members working at far less than their best capacity and skill level because of sleep deprivation.

Short-term risks of sleep deprivation include decreased performance and alertness, memory impairments, and stress, as well as occupational and automobile accidents. Long-term health risks include high blood pressure, heart failure, stroke, and even obesity. Sleepiness is a serious issue!

Spiritually Sleepy

Likewise, spiritual drowsiness is dangerous to our long-term health and well-being, not to mention to the efficacy and fruitfulness of the church. When we first encounter or recognize the rebel Jesus, for many of us there is a kind of adrenaline rush. We are all things Jesus all the time. But as that first love and passion fade, we become spiritually drowsy and are no longer able to see clearly the Christ to whom we committed our lives.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 88.

¹⁶ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 92-3.

Conclusion

Good News

“The good news is that “we can live in a vital relationship with the rebel Jesus today. We do not have to rely simply on the written word or ancient stories to sustain our faith and battle our doubts when the living Word is accessible right in this moment.”¹⁷

Call to Action

To see Christ today:

- Wake up and stay alert...
- Remain connected to a community of disciples who will hold us accountable.
- Constantly to be aware of our dependence on God.¹⁸

Invitation

“It begins with the power of expectation.

We will find what we actively seek and hear that for which we earnestly listen.”¹⁹

We can see Jesus today:
in El Dorado and
In our lives.

Will you pray with me?

Closing Prayer

O God, give us a spirit of wisdom and the ability to see you in our lives and in the world around us.

Open the eyes of our heart and soul so that we can see your hopes and dreams for us and experience your grace and forgiveness.

Send us strength to go where you lead us and join in your work in the world.

We offer ourselves to you, in Jesus’ name,

Amen.²⁰

	8:30 AM	11:00 AM
Sermon Time		

¹⁷ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 94.

¹⁸ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 94.

¹⁹ Mike Slaughter, *Renegade Gospel*, 94.

²⁰ Adapted from Ephesians 1:17