

**WAY**  
**TRUTH**  
**LIFE**

Discipleship as a Journey of Grace

# **SERMON OUTLINES**

Written by Jeff Stark

# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

These sermon outlines, written by Dr. Jeff Stark, are meant to be a companion resource for David A. Busic's book *Way, Truth, Life: Discipleship as a Journey of Grace*. If you are a pastor planning to use this resource with your congregation, there are numerous ways you can get the most out of this download for your context, and the materials are flexible to fit your needs. Busic's book has six chapters, an introduction, and an afterword. These sermon outlines follow the six main chapters of the book to help you lead your congregation through a robust and meaningful preaching series about discipleship and grace.

# SERMON 1

## THE COMPELLING INVITATION

### SERMON TEXT

John 1:35–42

### SERMON OBJECTIVE

The objective of this sermon is to set the stage for the journey upon which you are embarking with your congregation. It will be important throughout this sermon to introduce your faith community to *discipleship as a journey of grace*. Many of our parishioners come front-loaded with assumptions about what Christian faith is. This sermon is an opportunity to shift the paradigm to emphasize a meaningful definition of grace derived from *Way, Truth, Life*. You will also want to emphasize the language of “journey.” People need to understand that the journey of grace begins *now*—where they are and how they are. However, it doesn’t end there. This sermon will explore the journey.

### SERMON FORM

Situation, Complication, Resolution, Celebration

## Situation

- Read John 1:35-42
- Start with a story of someone whose Christian life you found especially compelling.
  - What is (was) it about their Christian faith that stood out?
  - Discuss how grace was evidenced in their life and what that word “grace” means. (There are ample descriptions in *Way, Truth, Life* and the small group discussion guide.)
  - Help your congregation understand that what made this person’s life so compelling was that they followed Jesus daily. They didn’t just wear the name “Christian.” They were on a journey.
- Explain why “journey” language is so important.
  - Jesus was an itinerant preacher, prophet, and healer—he didn’t stay in one place. He moved from place to place and life to life.
  - Discuss how his early disciples didn’t wait for “the next time” that he would show up in their town. Instead they followed him wherever he went.
- Of course, this following must start somewhere. It begins with an invitation.
  - Explore the early stories of the disciples in our passage from John today.
  - Discuss how the journey of grace begins with an invitation to “come and see.”
  - Grace embodied in Jesus is so compelling that it’s not forced into our lives. It simply invites us along for the journey.

## Complication

- Trouble is coming—but don’t worry! It’s a good trouble.
  - Following Jesus begins at the point of invitation. It’s a simple “come and see.”
  - Jesus understands that no person follows him long without being confronted by the need to make a series of decisions. Following Jesus isn’t an extended spectator sport.
- There is a moment when “come and see” becomes “follow me.”
  - These sound similar, but they are different.
  - “Come and see” is about becoming acquainted with the journey. It’s about getting close enough to explore, even as a person is trying to decide if it is for them.
  - But eventually a decision is required.

- Before you make the decision, there are a few things you must know.
  - Your decision is made possible through the extension of God’s grace.
  - This grace is *personal* but not *private*. It will meet you in your uniqueness. It will challenge you on a deeply personal level.
  - This grace is also costly.
    - At this point you will want to explore some of the potential costs.
- Following Jesus into the journey of grace is costly and will require courage.

## Resolution

- This journey is deeply compelling and personally costly, but if you heed the call, it will transform you powerfully.
- It starts with “come and see” and moves to the challenge of “follow me” but is evidenced in the promise of Jesus that “you will be”—made radically different.
- Those who take seriously the journey of grace will be thoroughly transformed.
- It is often said that Jesus loves us enough to meet us where we are—but he also loves us too much to leave us there.
  - This is a good opportunity to point back to the person you shared about at the beginning of the sermon. What was it about their life, the way God had transformed them, that you found compelling? Their love for others, their kindness, their strength in trial? Share the difference that a life of following Jesus made for that person.
  - Remind your audience that when Peter and Andrew were called Jesus said, “I will send you out to fish for people” (Matt. 4:19). This simple call transformed how they saw themselves and gave them purpose.

## Celebration

- “I will send you out to fish for people!” This statement from Jesus points to a beautiful truth of the journey of grace: follow Jesus long enough, and you will be called and commissioned.

- It starts with “come and see,” moves to “follow me,” promises “you will be,” and then commissions with “go and do.”
  - Earlier we said that this work is personal but not private.
  - The journey of grace is compelling not only for us but *through* us, *to* others.
  - We are afforded the opportunity to join Jesus in partnership in his mission.
- This is a great opportunity to celebrate the ways in which this journey will fill our lives with meaning and purpose.