



Simple Words: No

Matt VanCleave
October 2, 2022

GROUP ICE BREAKER

Tell a story of a time in which you had to say 'no.'

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will step out of the darkness and into the light.
- I will bring my guilt, shame and regret before God and another person I trust.
- I will receive God's mercy, grace and love.
- I will live in confidence with God because I have nothing to hide.

THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

This week we are launching into a new series, Simple Words.

We all know that words hold power. We create in-group and out-group experiences through words, we have words that help us think about our favorite books or movies, and we feel emotions when words come to mind.

Sometimes, the simplest of words can change the trajectory of your life. The word Help can begin the healing process for those struggling with addiction. The word Yes can open the door to new possibilities. The word Sorry can bring healing to relationships. Using these simple words will allow God to do profound things in your life.

This week we begin with the word No. No is such an important word. It can liberate you. It can free you. It can help you to set boundaries. It can allow you to make space for God when your life is crammed and full of stuff, burdens, and obligations. No can be a wonderful gift, but we must use it in order to experience the beauty of the word.

This week we are exploring the word No through the temptations of Jesus. In Luke 4:1-13, Jesus said no to things that we often deem as valuable; he said no to material things, no to authority, and no to power. The no's of Jesus not only teach us but also stir within us a response to follow Jesus and say no to things. Maybe you need to start emptying your life in order to free yourself up. Maybe you need to say no to defining your identity through your work. Maybe you need to say no to an overwhelming schedule. Join us this week as we look at a man who mastered the art of No, Jesus, and see how a No can transform aspects of your life.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Matt starts with a story of parking; he was in a hurry and was frustrated that a person was taking forever to pull out of a parking spot. He was upset, until he realised that the person in the spot was someone he knew! We are all busy, and so over the next few weeks we are focusing on single words. Why is focusing on a single word helpful in your spiritual journey?

2. This week's word is NO. Why is no an important word? Why can it be a difficult word to use?

3. Shauna Niequist describes no as the 'scalpel wielded' as she remade her life. How do you think the word 'no' works as a scalpel in your life? How does it work as a scalpel in your faith?

4. Matt notes that in the Bible we see people saying NO. Read Nehemiah 6:3-4 as a community, what strikes you about Nehemiah's no?

5. When have you, like Nehemiah, been able to say no to things over and over again? When have you failed to say no?



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6. Nehemiah isn't the only Biblical figure to say NO, Jesus is the master of no. In fact, we see Jesus saying NO three times. Read together Luke 4:1-13. What word or phrase sticks out to you?

7. Matt highlights three NO moments for Jesus in this passage. The first NO is a no against defining who Jesus was by the things he had or could have. At times, we have to say no to the idea that we are what we have. This no leads to the practice of going without some stuff. Is saying no to the material things difficult in your life? How does saying NO like Jesus said no help you grow in your faith?

8. The second NO from Jesus is a no to authority. We are told that we are what we do, but through the practice of doing less we can reflect Jesus' NO. Is saying no to authority and identity in our work difficult for you? How does saying NO to work oriented identity shape you and your faith (and for parents how does saying no to identity around output change the way you as a family approach school and extracurricular activities)?

9 The last NO from Jesus was a no to approval. We are encouraged to go without human approval, finding who we are in God. Is seeking approval an area that you find yourself living in? What does it look like to say NO to seeking human approval for you this week?

10. We all have a NO that we can work on, growing our relationship with God as we lean out of our own ego or selfishness. What NO are you going to work on this week?

