

Sermon Series Resource:

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Sermon Series: Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation



**CANADIAN
BAPTISTS**
of Ontario
and Quebec

Introduction to the Sermon Series Guide

This sermon series, *Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation*, has been created to help churches engage God's Word considering the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. It parallels the 4-part Bible study resource, using the same passages, so that preaching and small group learning can reinforce one another.

The series focuses on four themes:

1. God's Heart for Justice (Micah 6:6–8; Isaiah 1:16–17)
2. Repentance That Repairs (Luke 19:1–10; Exodus 22:1–4)
3. Ambassadors of Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16–21; Ephesians 2:14–22)
4. Healing for the Brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1–4; Psalm 34:18; Matthew 18:21–22)

Each sermon follows an expository style: moving from Scripture to Interpretation to Application. They aim to faithfully unpack God's Word while also speaking clearly into the Canadian context of Indigenous reconciliation and the church's role in healing and justice.

How to Use This Guide

Pray First:

Begin with prayer, asking God to give humility and courage to both the preacher and the congregation/hearer.

Study Deeply:

Work through the outlines provided but also study the passages in your own preparation. Allow the Spirit to shape the message through your voice.

Be Contextual:

Speak about the history of residential schools and Indigenous experiences with respect and care. Avoid generalizations, and when possible, ground your message in the realities of your own region, location and context.

Adapt as Needed:

Expand, shorten, and/or adjust the outlines. Use illustrations, testimonies, and stories that will connect with your congregation.

Connect Head and Heart:

Move the congregation toward both understanding and action. Reconciliation is not just an idea. It is a lived out practice.

Offer Applications:

Each sermon includes personal, church, and community-level applications. Select those that best fit your church's stage of engagement.

Preach with Sensitivity:

Some may have Indigenous heritage, family members impacted by residential schools, or personal experiences of injustice. Hold the tension of lament and hope.

Sermon 1: What Does the Lord Require?

Text: Micah 6:6–8; Isaiah 1:16–17

Title: *Walking Humbly, Acting Justly*

Introduction

- ♦ Many Canadians wear orange on September 30 to remember the children who never returned from residential schools. But what does God require of His people now?
- ♦ Micah confronted people who thought God wanted a religious show while ignoring injustice.

Outline

1. Empty Religion vs. True Worship (Micah 6:6–7; Isa 1:11–15)

- ♦ God is not impressed with rituals without righteousness in fact it offends God
- ♦ Justice and mercy are part of worship
- ♦ The issue is not worship styles, but missing hearts.

2. What God Requires (Micah 6:8)

- ♦ Act justly: pursue fairness, advocacy for oppressed and restoration.
- ♦ Love mercy: practice compassion rooted in God's covenant love.
- ♦ Walk humbly with God: live in dependence and surrender, not arrogance.
- ♦ Justice, mercy and humility balance each other – activism without humility becomes pride

3. Justice as Worship

- ♦ Ignoring/neglecting justice misrepresents God's character.
- ♦ True worship flows into social righteousness.
- ♦ Without Justice - Worship is Empty
- ♦ Without Worship - Justice is merely Social Activism

Conclusion

God calls His people to a faith that makes wrongs right. In Canada, this means acknowledging painful truths about our history with Indigenous peoples and responding with justice rooted in worship.

Application

- ◆ Personal: Where do I need to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly?
- ◆ Church: How can we move beyond worship with symbolic gestures to considering/integrating sustained justice?
- ◆ Community: Partner, learn, listen to Indigenous-led initiatives as acts of worship with justice.

Sermon 2: Repentance That Repairs

Text: Luke 19:1–10; Exodus 22:1–4

Title: *Making Wrongs Right*

Introduction

- ◆ Zacchaeus was despised for exploiting people. Yet when he met Jesus, his repentance cost him something.
- ◆ Canada has said “sorry” for residential schools, but true repentance requires restitution.

Outline

- 1. Jesus Brings Transformation (Luke 19:1–6)**
 - ◆ Jesus takes the initiative – seeks out Zacchaeus
 - ◆ Zacchaeus’ shame (physical appearance, profession) meets Jesus’ call.
 - ◆ Grace initiates repentance.
- 2. Repentance Requires Restitution (Luke 19:7–8; Ex 22:1–4)**
 - ◆ Repentance is more than words – it involves visible sacrifice
 - ◆ Zacchaeus gives half to the poor and restores fourfold.
 - ◆ Restitution is biblical, not optional.
 - ◆ Restitution is costly but it brings credibility and is a form of stewardship
- 3. Salvation Shows Visible Change (Luke 19:9–10)**
 - ◆ Jesus declares salvation has come and links salvation with transformation
 - ◆ Repentance produces tangible fruit.
- 4. Corporate Repentance**
 - ◆ Nations, churches, communities, groups called to repent throughout scripture

Conclusion

True repentance is not only spoken but demonstrated. Like Zacchaeus, the church in Canada is called to match apology with repair embodying the salvation we proclaim.

Application

- ◆ Personal: Where do I need to make amends?
- ◆ Church: How can our congregation participate in restitution (resources, advocacy, partnerships)?
- ◆ Community: Consider learning and supporting Indigenous initiatives for land, language, and opportunity.

Sermon 3: Ambassadors of Reconciliation

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:16–21; Ephesians 2:14–22

Title: *Breaking Down the Walls*

Introduction

- ◆ Walls divide us (politics, culture, gender, race). Residential schools were among the highest walls in Canada's history.
- ◆ Paul proclaims that Christ has broken down dividing walls and entrusted us with reconciliation.

Outline

- 1. A New Perspective in Christ (2 Cor 5:16–17)**
 - ◆ New creation calls us to see differently
 - ◆ We no longer view people from a worldly perspective.
 - ◆ Identity is redefined in Christ (not race, status, culture etc.)
- 2. God's Reconciling Work (2 Cor 5:18–19)**
 - ◆ God reconciled us through Christ first
 - ◆ He entrusts us with the ministry of reconciliation with others
 - ◆ We are the messengers and demonstration of reconciliation (not the source)
- 3. Ambassadors of Reconciliation (2 Cor 5:20; Eph 2:14–22)**
 - ◆ Ambassadors represent their King (country) not themselves
 - ◆ Christ broke dividing walls.
 - ◆ The church is called to embody reconciliation in how we live
- 4. Cost of Reconciliation**
 - ◆ Requires humility, risk, persistence
 - ◆ Reconciliation involves truth-telling, listening, enduring difficulty

Conclusion

Reconciliation is not optional but central to Christian identity. In Canada, our witness requires building bridges with Indigenous peoples, reflecting the reconciling power of Christ.

Application

- ◆ Personal: How can I embody reconciliation in my relationships?
- ◆ Church: Host listening circles, build bridges with Indigenous communities.
- ◆ Community: Support Indigenous churches by learning from them, not speaking for them.

Sermon 4: Healing for the Brokenhearted

Text: Isaiah 61:1–4; Psalm 34:18; Matthew 18:21–22

Title: *The God Who Heals*

Introduction

- ◆ Survivors of residential schools carry deep wounds. Some have offered forgiveness, others cannot, and we must respect that.
- ◆ God promises healing for the brokenhearted and restoration for communities.

Outline

1. God's Anointed Heals (Isa 61:1–3)

- ◆ Messiah brings good news to the poor, healing for the brokenhearted.
- ◆ The great exchange: ashes to beauty, mourning to joy, despair to praise

2. God Restores Communities (Isa 61:4)

- ◆ Broken cities, languages and cultures can be rebuilt with God's values
- ◆ Healing is communal, not just individual.

3. The Tension of Forgiveness (Matt 18:21–22; Ps 34:18)

- ◆ Forgiveness is part of discipleship, but the timing belongs to God
- ◆ God is near to the brokenhearted. He does not rush them. God does not pressure people to “get over it”.

4. The Church's Role in Healing

- ◆ Provide safe spaces for lament, sharing and storytelling
- ◆ Standing in support for those who still carry wounds
- ◆ Modeling patience and compassion and presence (and reflecting God's presence).

Conclusion

Healing is God's work, but He invites His church to walk alongside. We cannot demand forgiveness, but we can embody God's healing presence as signs of His coming restoration.

Application

- ◆ Personal: Pray for survivors and families. Be present in lament.
- ◆ Church: Create safe spaces for storytelling and remembrance.
- ◆ Community: Support Indigenous-led healing projects (language, culture, land).

Next Steps for Your Church

This Sermon Series is only a beginning. Truth and reconciliation is an ongoing journey, and CBOQ desires to walk alongside our churches as we seek justice, healing, and renewed relationships with Indigenous communities.

Here are a few concrete action steps your church can take:

1. Contact CBOQ for Feedback

- ◆ Share how your church used this Bible study and what you learned.
- ◆ Contact Rev. Dr. Ken Foo (Director, Church Life and Leadership) for feedback on the resource and to let CBOQ know how it served your community
– kfoo@baptist.ca

2. Connect for Future Conversations

- ◆ Ask CBOQ: “Would our church like to be part of future conversations with our First Nations churches and communities?”
- ◆ Express your willingness to listen, learn, and build relationships.

3. Clarify Your Best Contact Method

- ◆ Let CBOQ know how you would like to be contacted (email, phone, Zoom, in-person).
- ◆ Provide the name of a key contact person from your church who can follow up on next steps.

4. Consider Local Engagement

- ◆ Research the First Nations territory and history of your own area.
- ◆ Explore ways your church can partner with Indigenous-led organizations or ministries.