



A Christian Sermon Guide

**for Mainstreaming Violence
Against Persons Prohibition
Law into Faith Teachings**



A Guide for Christian Clerics in Benue State, Nigeria

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Acronyms

FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HTPs	Harmful Traditional Practices
NIV	New International Version
VAPP	Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act

Acknowledgment

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to the creation of this Sermon Guide on Violence Against Persons. We recognize that this important resource would not have been possible without the dedication, support, and expertise of many individuals and organizations.

Introduction

In May 2019, the Benue State House of Assembly passed a significant law known as the **Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law, 2019**, which was signed by the Governor of Benue State and took effect on May 28, 2019. This law aims to prohibit all forms of violence—whether in private or public life—and provides effective remedies for victims, while ensuring that offenders are held accountable for their actions. It represents a crucial step toward promoting justice, peace, and protection for individuals within our communities.

This sermon guide has been specifically developed for **Christian clergy in Benue State** to align their ministry with the core principles of this law and the teachings of the Bible. As spiritual leaders, clergy are uniquely positioned to speak out against violence, support victims, and foster environments of safety, justice, and love in their congregations. The Bible calls us to "defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed" (Psalm 82:3), making it clear that the Christian response to violence must be one of compassion, action, and justice.

While this guide was crafted with clergy in Benue State in mind, its teachings are **universal** and can be applied in any context where violence, injustice, and the mistreatment of individuals occur. The principles of love, respect, and the protection of human dignity are relevant to all societies, and the Bible's message of peace and nonviolence transcends borders. Thus, the guide can serve as a valuable resource for clergy and Christian leaders in other regions and contexts as well.

In this guide, there is an exploration of key biblical teachings on violence, reflects on how our faith calls us to respond and offers practical steps for clergy to lead their congregations in standing against violence in all its forms. Through this shared commitment, people of faith can work to create a society that reflects the justice and love of God, providing support and healing to those affected by violence.

It is, therefore, a call to duty for Christians in Benue and beyond, to be beacons of peace, defenders of the vulnerable, and advocates for justice in their communities. May this guide bear the expected fruit as an instrument of God's work.

General Note on Delivering Sermon on the Using the Guider

Introduction

- Always begin with a warm welcome and a brief acknowledgment of the congregation's presence and the importance of addressing critical issues in our society through the voice of faith.
- Establish the theme of the sermon: Understanding and addressing key legal issues surrounding violence against persons from a faith perspective.
- Share relevant statistics: Provide statistics on the prevalence of violence against persons locally, nationally, or globally. Highlight the impact of violence on individuals, families, and communities.
- Discuss the responsibility of faith communities in addressing societal issues, including legal matters related to violence. Emphasize the importance of creating a safe and compassionate space within the faith community.

Understanding the Legal Issues

- Study the key legal concepts so that you can provide a basic understanding of legal terms and discuss the importance of legal protections for victims.
- Study how faith and religious teachings intersect with legal principles related to human dignity, justice, and compassion.

Recognizing the Impact

- Share stories or testimonies of individuals who have been affected by violence, either as survivors or advocates. Allow for a moment of reflection on the real-life consequences of violence.
- Discuss the emotional and spiritual toll violence takes on victims and perpetrators. Encourage empathy and understanding within the faith community.

Faith-Based Responses

- Use relevant passages from religious texts that condemn violence and promote love, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Discuss the role of faith in inspiring individuals to work towards justice.
- Encourage the congregation to become actively involved in supporting victims and advocating for legal reforms. Highlight the importance of promoting a culture of reporting and accountability within the faith community.
- Discuss the importance of faith communities collaborating with legal authorities, such as law enforcement, legal aid organizations, and social services. Share examples of successful partnerships.
- Encourage the congregation to engage in advocacy efforts to improve legal responses to violence. Provide resources for contacting legislators, attending community meetings, or participating in awareness campaigns.

Conclusion

- Summarize the key points of the sermon, emphasizing the importance of faith-based responses to legal issues surrounding violence against persons.
- Offer a prayer for healing, justice, and the strength to make a positive impact.

Invite the congregation to reflect on how they can contribute to creating a safer and more compassionate community.

- Express gratitude for their commitment to addressing these critical issues.

Closing Remarks

- Offer a final word of encouragement and hope, reminding the congregation of the power of faith, compassion, and collaboration in addressing legal issues related to violence.
- Invite congregants to connect with the faith community's resources and support networks.
- Dismiss the congregation with a blessing and a call to action.



Summary of the law

The offense of rape is committed when a person intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or the mouth of another with any part of his or her body or with anything else and the penetration was made:

a. Without consent.

The consent was obtained by use of force,
b. threat, intimidation, misrepresentation, intoxication or impersonation.

A person convicted of rape is to be sent to prison for life. A person below the age of 14 convicted of

rape is to be sent to jail for a maximum of 14 years. A person above the age of 14 years convicted of rape is to be sent to prison for a minimum of 12 years without an option of a fine. Where a group of people committed rape each person in the group will be sent to a minimum of 20 years in prison without an option of fine. The court will award appropriate compensation to the victim. The Chief Registrar of the High Court will keep a register of convicted sexual offenders.

Introduction:

Begin with a moment of silence to acknowledge the seriousness of the topic.

Emphasize the importance of addressing sensitive issues like rape within a faith community and highlight the need for compassion, understanding, and healing for survivors. Acknowledge the sensitive nature of the topic and the importance of discussing it within a biblical context. Emphasize that God's Word provides guidance on all aspects of life, including addressing difficult subjects like rape.

Sub-themes

I. Defining Rape in Light of Scripture

Explain what rape is, emphasizing its nature as a violent act of power and control. Highlight the physical, emotional, and spiritual trauma it inflicts on victims.

II. Share Biblical Perspective on Human Dignity

Cite Genesis 1:27 - "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Discuss how every human being is created in the image of God, deserving of respect, dignity, and protection.

III. Biblical Condemnation of Rape

Tell the Story of Tamar and Amnon (2 Samuel 13): - Narrate the story of Tamar's rape by her half-brother Amnon. - Discuss the consequences of Amnon's sin and the pain it brought to Tamar and her family. - Emphasize that God's Word does not shy away from addressing the reality of such sins.

Also, make reference to Deuteronomy 22:25-27, which expresses God's abhorrence of such acts. Explain that the Bible's stance against rape aligns with God's desire for justice, compassion, and protection of the vulnerable.

IV. Responding as a Faith Community

Make reference to Isaiah 1:17 - "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed."

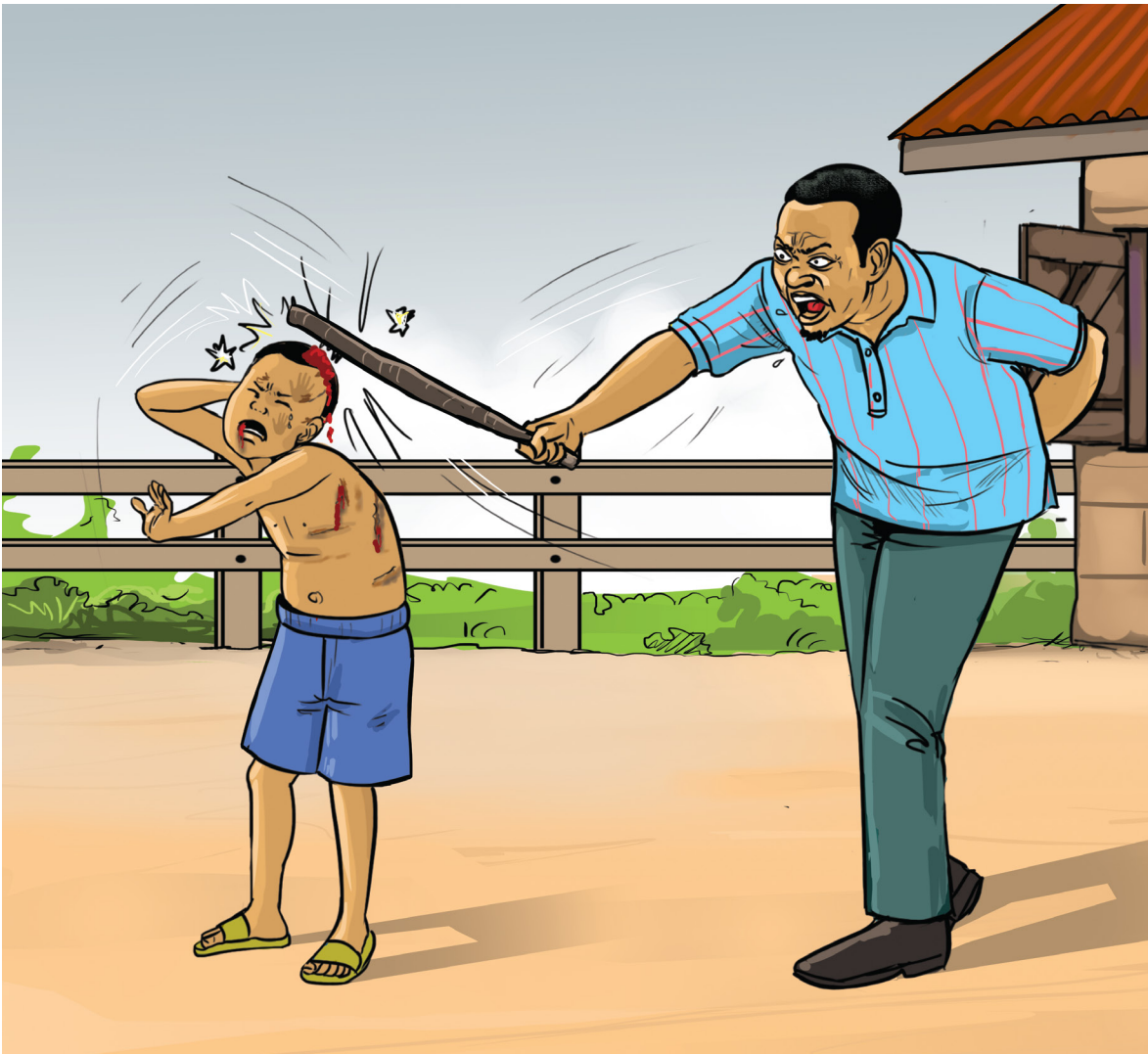
Emphasize the responsibility of the faith community to create a safe environment where survivors can find solace, support, and protection. Discuss the importance of addressing the actions of perpetrators and seeking justice while also praying for their transformation.

Share stories of healing and restoration, emphasizing that there is hope for survivors to find wholeness and purpose despite their past experiences.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points discussed during the sermon.
- Remind the congregation of God's love, compassion, and desire for justice.
- Encourage everyone to be a part of the solution by fostering a safe and supportive community that reflects God's heart for healing and restoration.

Sermon 2: Inflicting Physical Injury



Summary of the law

A person who intentionally causes or inflicts injury on another with a weapon or any other object will be sent to prison for up to 5 years or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both. A person who attempts to commit the offense, a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels the

commission of the offense and a person who receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offense will be sent to prison for up to 3 years or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. The court may award appropriate compensation to the victim.

The Sermon Guide: The Christian Ethic of Non-Injury: Following Christ's Example

Introduction:

Opening Prayer

Begin with a warm greeting, acknowledging the importance of addressing relevant issues that impact the well-being of individuals and communities. Express the Church's commitment to promoting physical, emotional, and spiritual health among its members. Emphasize the role of Christian leaders in providing guidance, support, and education on issues affecting the spiritual and physical need of the believers.

Sub-themes

I. Understanding the Christian Ethic of Non-Injury

- Explain the non-injury stance of the Church
- Explain Why is important in the Christian faith?

II. The Biblical Basis for Non-Injury

- Cite Matthew 22:37-39: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... Love your neighbor as yourself." - Explain how these verses summarize the core teachings of Jesus.
- Make reference to the Golden Rule - Read Matthew 7:12: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." - Discuss how this principle guides our actions towards others.

III. The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ

- Remind the congregants that Jesus is the ultimate example of non-injury virtues preached in Christianity
- Remind them of the teaching of Jesus's forgiveness - His crucifixion as an act of ultimate forgiveness Remind them of how Jesus responded to aggression (Matthew 26:51-53). Peter attempted to defend Jesus, but Jesus cautioned him on the consequences of inflicting injury or killing someone.

IV. Practical Application

Offer practical advice on how congregants can live out the principles of love and protection in their daily lives:

- Resolve conflicts peacefully.
- Seek reconciliation and restoration.
- Support organizations and initiatives that promote non-violence and the well-being of others.
- Encourage congregants to pray for the strength and wisdom to live out these principles in their interactions with others.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points of the sermon.
- Reiterate the importance of love, compassion, and non-violence in the Christian faith.
- Challenge the congregation to examine their own lives and commit to treating others with kindness and respect, refraining from inflicting physical harm.
- Close with a prayer for peace, healing, and the strength to live out the teachings of Christ in our daily lives



Summary of the law

A person who uses force to make another person do anything that will affect that person's physical or psychological well-being will be sent to prison for 3 years.

The Sermon Guide:

Against Intimidation, Coercion, Forced Decision, and Compulsion

Welcome the congregants with Christian Affirmation:

We affirm that as children of God, we are created in His image, endowed with free will, and called to live in love and freedom through Christ. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1).

Sub-themes

God Respects Free Will

Explain that God created us with free will and invites us to follow Him, but He never forces us. His love respects our freedom and never imposes control or manipulation.

Verses: Revelation 3:20

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

Explanation:

Jesus stands at the door of our hearts and knocks, inviting us into fellowship with Him. He does not force His way into our lives but waits for us to choose Him freely. This illustrates the principle of freedom in God's relationship with humanity. Just as God respects our freedom to choose, we are called to respect the decisions of others, avoiding intimidation or coercion.

The Spirit of God Brings Freedom, not Fear

Highlight that the Spirit of God empowers us to live in freedom and love, not under the influence of fear or intimidation. Coercion is not a characteristic of the Holy Spirit.

Verses: 2 Timothy 1:7

“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline.”

Explanation:

The Holy Spirit brings us power and love, not fear or control. Christians are called to reject any behavior that uses fear or force. Instead, we are to be led by love and respect for others' freedom, offering guidance without intimidation or manipulation.

Jesus Calls Us to Serve, not to Control

Explain that Jesus models leadership through service, not by exercising control or dominance over others.

Verses: Matthew 20:25-28

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”

Explanation:

Jesus contrasts worldly leadership, which seeks to control and dominate, with His way of servant leadership. As followers of Christ, we are called to serve others in humility and love, not to impose our will on them through compulsion or intimidation. True greatness in Christ's kingdom is found in serving others, not controlling them.

Freedom in Christ Must Be Respected

Explain that Christ has given us freedom, and we must live in that freedom while respecting the freedom of others.

Verses: Galatians 5:1

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

Explanation:

Christ has set us free, not just from sin but also from human control and compulsion. We must stand firm in that freedom and not allow ourselves to be manipulated or controlled. Similarly, we must respect others' freedom and not impose our will upon them. Any attempt to force decisions or manipulate others is a violation of the freedom Christ has given.

Ending with a Summary

- Remind the believers that they are called to live in the freedom and love of Christ, avoiding all forms of intimidation, coercion, or forced decisions.

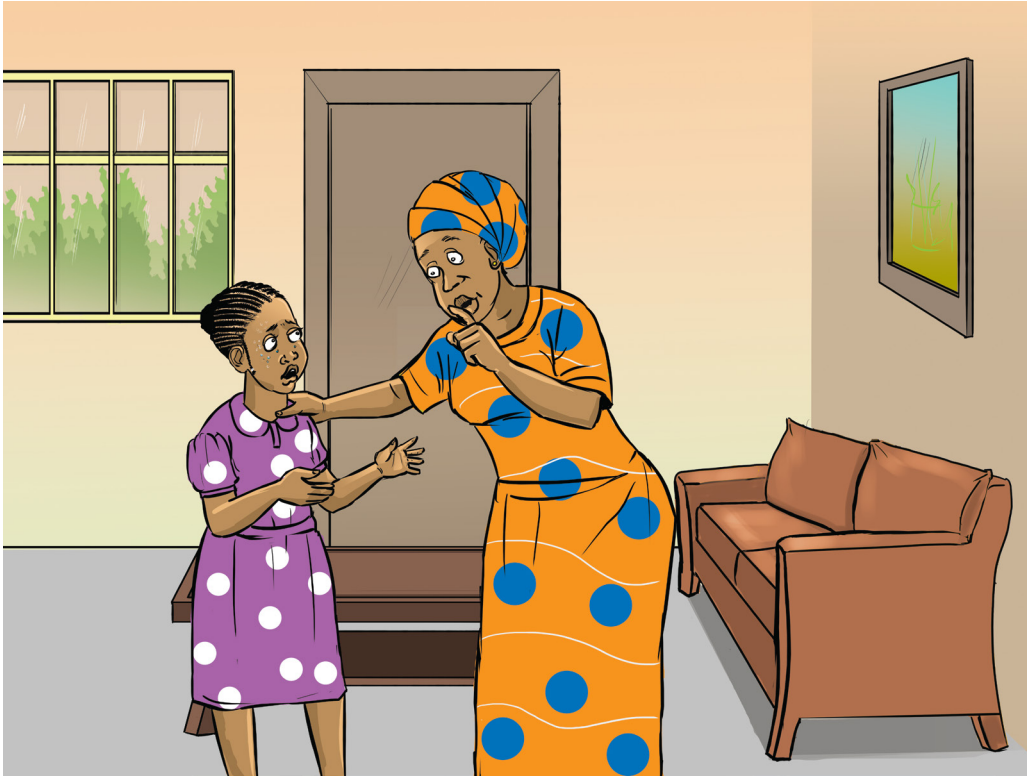
Highlight that our God is a God of freedom, love, and respect for each person's dignity and choices.

Explains that as we live out our Christian faith, let us reflect God's love by giving others the freedom to choose, just as He has given us.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, we thank You for the freedom You have given us through Christ. Help us to live in that freedom and to honor others' dignity by rejecting all forms of intimidation and coercion. Let us be filled with Your Spirit of love, patience, and self-control as we serve one another in humility. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Sermon 4: Placing a Person in Fear of Physical Injury



Summary of the law

A person who uses force to make another person do anything that will affect that person's physical or psychological well-being will be sent to prison for 3 years.

The Sermon Guide:

The Christian Response to Uttering Threats and Creating Fear of Physical Injury

Introduction

Welcome and Opening Prayer

- Start with a personal story or recent news event highlighting the prevalence of threats and fear in today's world.
- Explain the importance of addressing this issue from a biblical perspective.

Sub-themes

I. Recognizing the Sin of Threats and Fear

- Define what constitutes uttering threats and creating fear of physical injury.
- Discuss how such behavior contradicts God's command to love one another in Matthew 22:39 – "... And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Emphasize the need for Christians to be aware of their own actions and words in this context.

- Discuss the destructive effects of issuing threats: James 3:6 (NIV) - "The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell."

Explanation:

This verse illustrates the potential for harm that the tongue can cause when it is used to threaten, deceive, or speak untruths, emphasizing the importance of using words wisely.

II. Biblical Teaching on Words and Speech

Explain that humility and patience are essential for maintaining respectful relationships and avoiding offensive behavior. Pride and impatience often lead to conflict and hurt.

- Cite Colossians 3:8 (NIV): "But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips."

Use this verse to emphasize the importance of responding to others with love, gentleness, and a spirit of reconciliation rather than resorting to threats or violence.

- Read Proverbs 18:21 (NIV): "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

Highlight the significance of our words and the impact they can have on others. Share examples from the Bible where words were used to incite fear or violence.

III. Responding with Grace and Nonviolence

Highlight that offensive conduct often results from unresolved anger or bitterness. Christians are called to forgive others just as Christ has forgiven us.

- Read Matthew 5:38-39 (NIV): "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also."

Discuss Jesus' call to respond to hostility with grace and nonviolence. Share stories of individuals who chose peaceful responses to threats and violence.

- Cite Proverbs 15:1 - "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger".

This verse highlights the importance of responding to threats or conflicts with gentleness and kindness, as harsh words can escalate problems in relationships. You can give personal experience when you calmed a tense situation with calmness.

IV. Reporting Threats and Seeking Protection

- Cite Proverbs 31:8-9: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

This verse underscores the duty to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

- Read Psalm 82:3-4 (NIV): "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

This verse emphasizes the importance of defending and rescuing those who are vulnerable.

- Reference Ephesians 5:11 (NIV): "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."

This verse encourages believers to expose or bring to light deeds of darkness, which could be interpreted as a call to whistleblowing against harmful actions.

V. Rejecting the Culture of Threats

- Cite Ephesians 4:29 (NIV): "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Emphasize the importance of our words and the need to reject threatening language. Encourage a culture of kindness, encouragement, and building one another up.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the main points of the sermon.
- Reiterate the call to respond to threats and fear with grace, nonviolence, and faith.
- Invite the congregation to seek support and guidance if they encounter threats or situations involving fear of physical injury.
- Offer a closing prayer for wisdom, courage, and God's protection in challenging situations.

Sermon 5: Compulsion by Force or Threat



Summary of the law

A Person who compels another by force or threat to do any act sexual or otherwise that affects that person's physical or psychological well-being will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both. A person who attempts to commit the offense and a person who incites, aids, abets, or counsels another to commit the offense will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N300,000 or both. A person who receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offense will be sent to prison for up to 3 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Christian Sermon Guide: Against Compelling Others by Force or Threat

Begin with a Christian Affirmation:

As Christians, we affirm the inherent dignity, worth, and freedom of every human being, created in the image of God. The Bible teaches us to love one another as Christ has loved us (John 13:34). This love is not coercive but self-giving, patient, and kind. Our faith calls us to stand against all forms of violence, abuse, and coercion, protecting the vulnerable and upholding justice.

Sub-themes

I. The Sanctity of Free Will: God Does not Coerce

Explain that one of the foundational principles of the Christian faith is that God has given us free will. He invites us to follow Him, but never forces us. God's love is freely given, and He desires that our response to Him be equally free.

- Revelation 3:20 – "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

Explain that this passage illustrates God's respectful approach to our will. He knocks but does not barge in. He waits for us to choose to let Him in. In the same way, we must never force anyone to act against their will. To do so is to violate the image of God within them.

Love Does No Harm: Rejecting Coercion

The Bible calls us to love others with the same care that Christ has shown to us. Love, according to the Scriptures, does not harm others, nor does it seek its own selfish desires. Any act of coercion, force, or threat violates this fundamental command of love.

Key Scripture:

- Romans 13:10 – “Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.”

Explain that when someone uses force or threats to compel another person, they are acting out of a desire to dominate or control, not out of love. Such behavior is sinful and destructive, both to the victim and to the perpetrator.

I. Respect for Bodies and Boundaries: No Place for Sexual Coercion

Highlight that the Bible teaches us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Sexuality is a gift from God, meant to be shared in the context of loving, mutual, and consensual relationships. Any act of sexual coercion is a violation of the sacredness of both the body and the spirit.

- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 – “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 – “It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable.”

Explain that sexual relations must be built on mutual respect, love, and consent. To compel another person through force or threats into any form of sexual activity is to grievously sin against both the individual and God.

II. The Church as a Safe Place: Protecting the Vulnerable

Highlight that the church must be a place where people feel safe, loved, and protected. We have a responsibility to create environments that safeguard against abuse and to stand up for those who are vulnerable.

- Proverbs 31:8-9 – “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”
- James 1:27 – “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

Explain that our faith community must be a beacon of protection, offering support to those who have been victimized and ensuring that justice is pursued. We must speak out against any form of coercion or abuse and offer the healing love of Christ to those affected.

Ending with a Summary

- Remind the congregants that as Christians, they are called to live out the love of Christ in all their relationships.
- Explain that compelling others by force or threat goes against everything Christ stands for.
- Call on them to commit themselves to be people who promote love, peace, and respect, and who protect the dignity and freedom of every person.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your love that is freely given. Help us to reflect that love in all our actions, never seeking to control or harm others. Empower us to protect the vulnerable, to stand against all forms of abuse, and to create a world where love and justice reign. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Sermon 6: Genital Mutilation



Summary of the law

A person who performs circumcision or genital mutilation on a woman or on a girl will be sent to prison for up to 4 years or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person who attempts to commit the offence and a person who incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offense will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: A Stand Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Theme: Honoring God's Creation

Start with a Christian Affirmation

As children of the Most High God, we affirm our belief that every person is created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) and is inherently worthy of dignity, respect, and love. Today, we unite as a church community to speak out against practices that violate this sacred creation, specifically focusing on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). We are called to be defenders of the weak and to uphold the values of love and compassion that Christ exemplified.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You with humble hearts, asking for wisdom and courage as we address this important issue. May Your truth guide our words and actions. Help us to be instruments of Your peace, standing firm against injustice and violence. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Sub-themes

I. Creation in God's Image

Brief:

- Every person, male and female, is created in the image of God, which imbues them with inherent dignity and value.

Verses

- Genesis 1:27:
"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Explanation:

This verse emphasizes that both genders reflect God's image. FGM is a violation of this divine truth, as it inflicts pain and alters the created design of women and girls. We are called to respect and protect this image in ourselves and others.

II. Honoring Our Bodies

Brief:

- Explain that our bodies are sacred and should be treated with the utmost respect, as they are temples of the Holy Spirit.

Verses

- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

Explanation:

This passage teaches us that our physical bodies are not merely vessels but sacred spaces that house the Holy Spirit. FGM disrespects this divine dwelling, causing not only physical harm but emotional and spiritual trauma. We must advocate for honoring our bodies and those of others.

III. Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Brief:

- Highlight that God intricately designs each person, and we must celebrate and protect that design.

Verses

- Psalm 139:13-14
"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

Explanation:

This verse speaks to the uniqueness and intentionality of God's creation. FGM distorts the beauty of God's handiwork, inflicting physical and emotional pain. As a church, we should cherish and uphold the natural beauty and design that God has instilled.

Ending with a Summary

- Call on the faithful develop a renewed commitment to protect and honor all individuals created in God's image.
- Remind them to make a difference, standing firm against practices that harm and oppress, and have a community that reflects God's love and justice.

Closing Prayer

Gracious Lord, we thank You for the truth of Your Word that guides us in all areas of life. As we commit to standing against FGM, empower us with Your Spirit to be advocates for justice and love. May we reflect Your compassion and grace in our actions, bringing healing and hope to those in need. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Final Encouragement

Let us leave here today with renewed commitment to protect and honor all individuals created in God's image. Together, we can make a difference, standing firm against practices that harm and oppress, and fostering a community that reflects God's love and justice.

Sermon 7: Frustrating Investigation and Prosecution



Summary of the law

A person that intentionally frustrates the investigation or prosecution of an offense by destroying, altering, or mutilating any book, document, or other item or by omitting or participating in omitting any important thing from any document, book, or other items that will be used in court, will be sent to prison for up to 3 years or pay a fine of up to N200, 000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Obstructing Justice: A Biblical Perspective

Introduction:

Welcome and Opening Prayer

- Briefly introduce the topic of obstructing justice and its relevance in our lives today.
- Emphasize the importance of seeking justice in the eyes of God.

Sub-themes

I. The Biblical Call to Seek Justice

- Cite Deuteronomy 16:20 - "Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

Emphasize that God's command is clear about seeking justice.

- Reference Micah 6:8 - "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Explain the connection between justice, kindness, and humility.

- Cite Isaiah 1:17 - "Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause."

Highlight that Christians are saddled with the responsibility to correct oppression and help the vulnerable.

II. The Sin and Consequences of Obstructing Justice

- Cite Proverbs 17:15 - "He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord."

Explain that this verse highlights the sin of perverting justice by condemning the innocent or letting the guilty go free.

- Reference Proverbs 18:5: "It is not good to be partial to the wicked and so deprive the innocent of justice."

This verse speaks against showing favoritism to the wicked, which can obstruct justice for the innocent.

- Cite Isaiah 59:14: "So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter."

Explain that this verse portrays a society where justice is obstructed, and truth and honesty are compromised.

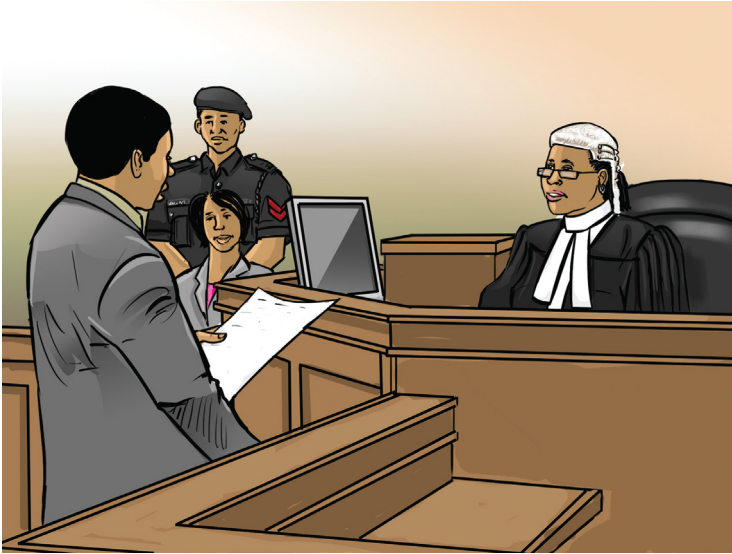
- Cite Amos 5:15: "Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph."

Explains that this verse calls for the maintenance of justice in the courts, implying that obstructing justice is against God's will.

Ending with a Summary

- Recap the main points discussed
- Emphasize that justice is the cornerstone of a just and peaceful society.

Sermon 8: Willfully Making False Statement



Summary of the law

A person who intentionally makes a false statement orally or in writing as part of the judicial process to investigate or prosecute any person for any offense under this law will be sent to prison for up to 12 months or pay a fine of up to N200,000.

The Sermon Guide: The Power of Truth: A Sermon Against Willfully Making False Statements

Introduction:

- Begin with a warm greeting and a prayer for guidance and wisdom.
- Share a personal anecdote or story that highlights the importance of truth in our lives.
- Explain the purpose of the sermon: to reflect on the sin of bearing false witness and the significance of truth in Christian living.

Sub-themes

I. The Biblical Position on Truth

- Read Exodus 20:16 (The Ninth Commandment) - "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."
Discuss this Commandment as the moral foundation for Christian ethics and emphasize the seriousness of lying as a sin in God's eyes.
- Cite Proverbs 12:22 - "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight."
Emphasize the divine disapproval of falsehood and highlight the centrality of truth in Jesus' teachings.
- Cite Proverbs 6:16-19 (NIV) - "There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood..."
Explain that lying is one of the things detested by the Lord.

II. The Consequences of Bearing False Witness

- Cite Matthew 12:36-37 - "But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words, you will be condemned."

Explain that this verse highlights the eternal significance of the words that come out of our mouths.

- Reference Proverbs 21:6: "A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare."

Discuss how ill-gotten gains through lies are ultimately worthless.

Ending with a Summary

- Recap the importance of truthfulness in the Christian walk
- Encourage self-reflection and repentance for any past falsehoods.
- Offer a prayer for God's guidance in speaking the truth and avoiding false statements.
- End with an invitation for anyone who needs to confess and seek forgiveness for bearing false witness to do so.

Sermon 9: Eviction of Spouse from Home



Summary of the law

A person that evicts his or her wife or husband from home or refuses his or her wife or husband access to the home will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N300,000 or both. A person that attempts to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person that receives or assists another

whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Against the Ejection of a Spouse from Home without Shelter

Theme: Love, Compassion, and Responsibility in Marriage

Begin with a Christian affirmation

As believers in Christ, we affirm that marriage is a covenant relationship instituted by God, rooted in mutual love, care, and respect. Each spouse is called to reflect Christ's love in their treatment of the other, ensuring that their partner is cared for and protected, not neglected or mistreated. Today, we address the harmful practice of ejecting a spouse, especially a wife, from the home without providing shelter, which not only violates marital responsibilities but goes against biblical principles of love, protection, and justice.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today to seek wisdom and understanding on how to uphold Your teachings in our relationships and marriages. Help us to be faithful stewards of the love and care You call us to show toward our spouses. Guide us to speak the truth and stand against injustice. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Sub-themes

I. The Mandate to Unconditional Love for Wife

Cite Genesis 2:24:

"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh."

Reflection:

The unity of marriage means that both husband and wife are bound together as one. To eject a wife from her home without offering her protection and shelter is a betrayal of this unity. The marital bond is meant to be a source of safety and security for both spouses, and any action that jeopardizes this goes against God's design for marriage.

Cite Ephesians 5:25-28:

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."

Reflection:

The Bible instructs husbands to love their wives sacrificially, as Christ loved the church. Ejecting a wife without providing shelter is an act of neglect and rejection, far from the sacrificial love Christ demonstrated. A husband's duty is to protect, cherish, and care for his wife, ensuring her physical and emotional well-being.

Cite 1 Peter 3:7:

"Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers."

Reflection:

Husbands are called to be considerate and respectful toward their wives, recognizing their shared inheritance of God's grace. Ejecting a wife from the home without shelter shows a lack of consideration, respect, and care. It places her in a vulnerable position and disregards her dignity as an equal partner in the marriage.

Cite 1 Timothy 5:8:

"Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

Reflection:

Providing for the needs of one's family, including shelter, is not just a practical duty but a spiritual responsibility. A husband who denies his wife shelter is failing to fulfill this basic obligation. The Bible teaches that to neglect one's household is to deny the faith, emphasizing the seriousness of this duty.

II. The Danger of Neglect and its Consequences

Explain that when a wife feels abandoned or neglected, the emotional void can lead to a breakdown in the relationship. This emotional displacement can push both spouses into dangerous territory, where temptations might arise.

Cite Ephesians 5:25-29

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her... In this

same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.”

Explanation:

Neglecting a wife’s emotional and social well-being contradicts the sacrificial love Christ modeled for us. A husband is called to love and nurture his wife, ensuring she feels valued and secure. Without this, both partners are at risk of straying from God’s plan, opening the door to temptations like infidelity or unhealthy emotional attachments.

III. The Risk of Economic Displacement Leading to Temptation

Highlight that in cases where a wife faces economic hardship due to her husband’s irresponsibility or societal pressures, she may become vulnerable to exploitation or harmful choices. This displacement can lead to temptations rooted in desperation.

Cite Proverbs 30:8-9

“Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.”

Explanation:

This proverb highlights the temptation that comes with poverty. When a wife is economically displaced, she may be tempted to seek solutions that compromise her faith or dignity. Husbands must ensure that their wives are not placed in such situations of need or desperation. By providing for their families, men safeguard their wives from the risk of falling into harmful or sinful situations.

IV. The Power of Unity in Marriage

Highlight that God designed marriage as a partnership. When a husband and wife are united in purpose and provision, they shield each other from the world’s temptations and provide mutual support in times of hardship.

Cite Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion... Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.”

Explanation:

Unity is essential to a strong marriage. When husbands and wives work together to maintain social, emotional, and economic stability, they create a fortress against harm and temptation. The wife should not feel isolated or displaced, but rather supported as an equal partner. A marriage rooted in love and cooperation reflects God’s plan and helps protect both spouses from external threats.

Ending with a Summary

- Emphasize that as Christians, we are called to live in love, reflecting Christ's sacrificial care in our marriages.
- Reiterate that ejecting a spouse, particularly a wife, without providing shelter is not an act of love, but of harm and neglect.
- Call on the faithful to care for our spouses, ensuring that they are protected, cherished, and given the shelter they need both physically and emotionally.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, we thank You for the gift of marriage and the love You have called us to reflect within it. Help us to honor our spouses, provide for their needs, and protect them as You have protected us. May we always act in love, compassion, and justice, upholding the sanctity of the marriage covenant. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Sermon 10: Depriving a Person of His/Her Liberty



Summary of the law

A person that deprives another of his or her liberty except by a court order will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both. A person that attempt to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence will pay a fine of up to N300,000 or both. A person that receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both

The Sermon Guide: "Freedom in Christ: Embracing Liberty"

Introduction:

- Begin with a warm greeting and an opening prayer.
- Share a brief personal story or anecdote that relates to the theme of liberty.
- Introduce the importance of liberty in the Christian faith and the biblical perspective on freedom.

Sub-themes

I. God's Heart Against Infringement of Liberty

- Read and reflect on Galatians 5:1: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."
Discuss how God has granted us the gift of liberty, both in our spiritual lives and as human beings. Emphasize that liberty is a fundamental part of God's plan for His people.
- Read and reflect on John 8:36: "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."
Discuss how Jesus Christ is the ultimate source of liberation from all forms of bondage. Share testimonies or stories of individuals who have experienced freedom and transformation through their faith in Christ.
- Cite Psalm 103:6: "The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed."
Highlight how God's justice system operates, emphasizing His love for justice and mercy.

Refer to Luke 4:18-19 (NIV): "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."

Emphasize the importance of Jesus' liberation plan and compassion in our own lives and why all Christians must align with the liberation agenda of Christ.

II. The Dangers of Deprivation of Liberty and Reward of Oppression

- Read and reflect on Proverbs 22:7: "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender."

Explain how various forms of deprivation of liberty can occur in our lives, such as financial bondage, addiction, or oppressive systems. Share personal or real-life examples of people who have experienced deprivation of liberty and its consequences.

- Cite these verses emphasize the importance of treating others with kindness and justice, warning against oppression and the consequences it may bring, both in this life and in the sight of God.

Proverbs 22:16:

"One who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and one who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty."

Isaiah 10:1-2:

"Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless."

Exodus 22:21-24:

"Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt. Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless."

Reference Isaiah 58:6-7:

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

Emphasize the desire of God in intervention and support for those who are oppressed, suffering, or in bondage, and the call to work towards liberation and justice.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points of the sermon.
- Reiterate the importance of liberty as a gift from God.
- Call for a moment of reflection and prayer, inviting those who may be struggling with deprivation of liberty to seek God's help.
- Remind those that are infringing on people's liberty about the wrath of God.



Summary of the law

A person who intentionally destroys or damages the property of another so as to cause disturbance or annoy that person will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N300,000 or both. A person that attempts to commit the offense, a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offense and a person who receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offense will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Respecting God's Provisions and Peace

Begin with a warm welcome and briefly explain the sermon's focus. Share a personal anecdote or a relevant story to capture the congregation's attention. Emphasize the importance of respecting what God has provided as a blessing to mankind, which includes the properties of others.

Sub-themes

I. Biblical Perspective on Property and Stewardship

- Read and expound upon Genesis 1:26-28, where God gives humanity dominion over the earth. Emphasize the responsibility to care for and steward God's creation and provisions.
- Explore Psalm 24:1, emphasizing that "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." Discuss how this verse underlines God's ownership of all property.

II. The Consequences of Damaging Property with Intent to Cause Distress

- Discuss the legal consequences of damaging property and the impact it can have on one's own life
- Explore the spiritual consequences of Wicked Actions

Cite Proverbs 6:16-19: "There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community."

Explain that this passage points to seven things that are detestable to the Lord and one of them is "a heart that devises wicked schemes." Wicked intents often involve plotting and carrying out schemes that are hurtful and this verse condemns such behavior.

- Reference Proverbs 14:22: "Do not those who plot evil go astray? But those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness."

Explain that this verse contrasts those who plot evil (Wicked intents) with those who plan what is good. It suggests that those who engage in mischief will go astray, while those who plan and pursue goodness will find love and faithfulness.

Cite Proverbs 24:2: "for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble."

Discuss this verse as highlighting the connection between the intentions of the heart and the actions that follow. Mischief often begins with wicked intentions, as people's hearts plot violence or trouble. It serves as a warning against harboring such thoughts.

Cite Proverbs 10:23: "A fool finds pleasure in wicked schemes, but a person of understanding delights in wisdom."

Explain that this verse contrasts the mindset of a fool, who takes pleasure in wicked schemes (mischief), with a person of understanding, who finds delight in wisdom. It encourages choosing wisdom over engaging in mischief.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points of the sermon.
- Invite the congregation to reflect on their own actions and attitudes toward property and their responsibility as stewards of God's creation.
- Offer a closing prayer, asking for God's guidance in respecting property and helping others in distress.

Sermon 12: Forced Financial Dependence or Economic Abuse



Summary of the law

A person who caused forced financial dependence or economic abuse of another will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both. A person that attempts to commit the offence and a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person who receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 6 months or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Breaking Free from Forced Financial Dependence

Introduction:

- Welcome the congregants to the day's sermon.
- Inform them of the need to explore a pressing issue that affects many lives – forced financial dependence or economic abuse.
- Remind them that the Christian faith calls us to love, care for, and support one another, and in the sermon, you will examine how this principle extends to financial relationships.

Sub-themes

I. Understanding Forced Financial Dependence

- Explain that forced financial dependence occurs when one person manipulates, controls, or abuses another by exploiting their economic vulnerability.
- Give examples as abusive partners, employers, or family members who misuse their financial power.

II. The Christian Perspective

- Quote Proverbs 22:16: "One who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and one who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty."

Explain that this verse warns against oppressing the poor to accumulate wealth or showing favoritism to the rich. It suggests that both actions can lead to poverty and are not in line with righteous living.

- Cite Amos 5:11-12: "You levy a straw tax on the poor and impose a tax on their grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine."

Explain that this passage criticizes the exploitation of the poor through unfair taxation and economic policies. It warns that even if the wealthy amass great wealth through such means, they may not ultimately benefit from it.

- Reference James 5:1-5: "Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days."

Inform the congregants that the Bible admonishes the rich who have accumulated wealth while neglecting the needs of the less fortunate and warns of the impending consequences for those who hoard wealth and exploit others, emphasizing the importance of using one's resources for good.

- Cite Isaiah 10:1-2: "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless."

Explain that this passage condemns those who enact laws and policies that perpetuate economic inequality and injustice. It emphasizes the importance of upholding the rights of the poor and oppressed.

Ending with a Summary

- Recap the key points of the sermon
- Remind the faithful that they are called to love one another and protect each other from harm, including financial harm.
- Call on the believers to recognize the signs of forced financial dependence, seek support, and trust in God's provision.



Summary of the law

Any person who forcefully isolates or separates another from family and friends without reasonable cause commits an offence and will be liable to a maximum of 6 months imprisonment or not more than N100,000 in fine or both. Any person who attempts to commit the offence commits an offence and is liable to 3 months imprisonment or a maximum of N50,000.00 or both. Any person who incites, aids, abets, or counsels another person to commit the offence receives a penalty of 6 months or to a fine not exceeding N100,000.00 or both.

The Sermon Guide: The Power of Unity: Overcoming Forces of Separation

Introduction:

- Welcome and greet the congregation.
- Share a brief personal anecdote or story about the importance of family and community.
- Introduce the theme of the sermon: How the Bible guides us to overcome forces that seek to separate us from our loved ones and community.

Sub-themes

I. The Divine Design of Family and Community

- Cite Genesis 2:18 "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"

Explain that God created us for companionship and community. He designed family and community as essential components of our lives. Therefore, forceful separation from family and

community is working against the design of God. The enemy often seeks to disrupt these bonds, causing division and separation.

II. Nurturing Community bond as Demanded by God

- Cite Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Explain that the community is vital for our spiritual growth and support., active participation and support within the church can help us resist the forces of separation.

III. The Sin of Breaking Family Bonds

God has ordained the family as a sacred institution. Forcing separation among family members, whether through unjust laws, societal expectations, or personal decisions, goes against the biblical model of familial unity.

- Matthew 19:6 – "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."
- 1 Timothy 5:8 – "Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

Explanation:

In Matthew 19, Jesus speaks directly to the sanctity of marriage, rebuking any effort to separate what God has united. This teaching can be extended to all family relationships that God has ordained—parents, children, and other dependents. Those who willfully separate families through actions such as withholding resources, unjust laws, or abandonment, are defying God's design. Similarly, 1 Timothy 5:8 issues a strong warning to those who fail to care for their family, stating that neglecting family members is a denial of the faith. Those who perpetuate separation must repent and restore the bonds of care and support.

IV. Condemning Actions That Cause Isolation and Loneliness

Isolation creates deep emotional and spiritual wounds. Those who force others into loneliness—whether through abandonment, neglect, or unjust practices—are acting in direct opposition to God's heart for compassion and fellowship.

- Proverbs 18:1 – "Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment."

Explanation:

Proverbs 18:1 condemns isolation as an act of selfishness. Those who enforce or perpetuate isolation, whether within families or communities, must understand that they are acting against God's will. This behavior must be confronted and corrected.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points from the sermon.
- Encourage the congregation to reflect on their own relationships with family and community.
- Invite them to pray for unity, strength, and resilience against the forces of separation.

Close with a benediction and a word of encouragement to actively work towards maintaining strong bonds with family and community.



Summary of the law

A person that subjects another to emotional, verbal or psychological abuse (by repeated insults, ridicule or name-calling, repeated threats, an exhibition of obsessive possessiveness, etc) will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person that attempts to commit the offense, a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offense and a person that receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offense will be sent to prison for up to 6 months or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide:

Breaking the Chains of Emotional/ Verbal and Psychological Abuse: A Biblical Perspective

Introduction:

- Welcome and open in prayer.
- Introduce the topic of emotional violence and its harmful effects on individuals and relationships.
- Emphasize the importance of addressing emotional violence from a Christian perspective.

Sub-themes

I. Recognizing Emotional/Verbal and Psychological Abuse

- Define Emotional/Verbal and Psychological Abuse
- Give examples of Emotional/Verbal and Psychological Abuse.
- Explain the impact of Emotional/Verbal and Psychological Abuse

II. Biblical Teachings Against Emotional Violence

- Cite Ephesians 4:29 - "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."

Explain that our words can be used to build up rather than tear down.

- Cite Proverbs 15:1 - "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Emphasize the importance of responding to conflict with gentleness.

- Quote Colossians 3:8 - "But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth."

Encourage believers to eliminate harmful speech and attitudes from their lives.

- Reference James 3:9-10 - "With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so."

Highlight the contradiction of praising God and cursing others with the same tongue.

Reference the following verse:

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV):

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what helps build others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Proverbs 12:18 (NIV):

"The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

Proverbs 15:1 (NIV):

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Proverbs 16:24 (NIV):

"Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

Colossians 4:6 (NIV):

"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

James 3:9-10 (NIV):

"With the tongue, we praise our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be."

Proverbs 21:23 (NIV):

"Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity."

Psalms 141:3 (NIV):

"Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips."

III. A Guiding Light out of the Sin of Emotional/Verbal and Psychological Abuse

- Cite Matthew 5:9 - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Explain that a true Christian promotes peace and reconciliation.

- Reference Romans 12:18 - "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."

Encourage believers to actively pursue peace in their relationships.

Quote Matthew 18:15

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother."

Teach the importance of addressing conflicts in a loving and constructive manner.

IV. Biblical Warning Against Hurtful Words

- Quote Matthew 12:36-37 (ESV): "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words, you will be condemned."

Explain that this passage from Jesus underscores the seriousness of our words, suggesting that we will be held accountable for the things we say.

- James 3:5-6 (ESV): "So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell."

James compares the tongue to a small but destructive fire that can have far-reaching consequences, staining one's whole life with unrighteousness.

Ending with a Summary

- Recap the key points from the sermon.
- Offer a prayer for healing, restoration, and a commitment to living out biblical principles in relationships.
- Invite anyone in need of support to seek help from the church community.

Remember that addressing emotional violence is a sensitive topic, and it's essential to create a safe and supportive environment for those who may be affected. Additionally, encourage open dialogue and the seeking of professional help when necessary.

Sermon 15: Harmful Traditional Practices on a Widow



Summary of the law

A person that subjects a widow to harmful traditional practices will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both. A person that attempts to commit the offence and a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person that receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 6 months or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Breaking Chains: Embracing God's Truth Over Harmful Traditions

Introduction

- Welcome the congregation and set a warm and inviting tone.
- Explain the purpose of the sermon: to shed light on erroneous and harmful traditional practices in light of God's Word.
- Share a personal anecdote or relevant story that connects with the topic.
- Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Sub-themes

I. Understanding the Power of Tradition.

- Emphasize the role of tradition in shaping our beliefs and actions.
- Mention that not all traditions are negative, but we must discern.
- Define what constitutes harmful traditions.
- Encourage self-reflection and congregational reflection

II. The Danger of Blindly Following Tradition

- **Read Mark 7:8-9:**

"You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."

Explain how following traditions without questioning them can lead us away from God's truth. Share stories or anecdotes of individuals who have been negatively impacted by harmful traditions.

- **Read Romans 12:2:**

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Emphasize the need for transformation through the renewing of our minds. Encourage the congregation to seek God's truth and guidance above all else.

III. Breaking Free from Harmful Traditions

- **Read Galatians 5:1:**

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Encourage the congregation to courageously break free from harmful traditions. Offer guidance on how to do so, including dialogue, education, and reliance on the Holy Spirit.

- **Read John 14:6:**

Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

Remind the congregation that Jesus is the ultimate truth. Share the joy and freedom that come from embracing God's truth in our lives.

Ending with a Summary

- Recap the key points of the sermon.
- Invite the congregation to reflect on their own traditions.
- Offer a prayer for guidance in discerning and breaking free from harmful traditions.
- Encourage ongoing study of God's Word and reliance on Christ for transformation.
- Remind the congregation that breaking free from harmful traditions is an ongoing journey of faith.



Summary of the law

A person that abandons his wife or her husband, children or other dependants without means of livelihood will be sent to prison for up to 3 years or pay a fine of up to N500, 000 or both. A person that attempts to commit the offence and a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person that receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Christian Responsibility: Providing for Our Families"

Introduction

- Welcome and opening prayer
- Emphasize the importance of family in Christian life
- Introduce the topic of abandonment of family without sustenance and provisions

Sub-themes

I. The Biblical Foundation for Providing for Family

Key Verses:

- Cite 1 Timothy 5:8 - "But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."
- Quote Ephesians 5:25 - "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

- Reference Proverbs 13:22 - "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous."

Explain the significance of these verses in emphasizing our responsibility to provide for our families.

II. The Consequences of Abandoning Family

Key Verses:

- Share real-life examples or stories illustrating the impact of family abandonment.
- Discuss the emotional, psychological, and spiritual consequences on family members.
- Highlight how abandonment contradicts Christian values of love, compassion, and responsibility.

Quote Ephesians 6:4:

- "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

Explain that while this verse doesn't explicitly address abandonment, it emphasizes the role of fathers in nurturing and instructing their children. Neglecting this responsibility can have a detrimental impact on the emotional and spiritual development of children.

Cite Matthew 18:6 :

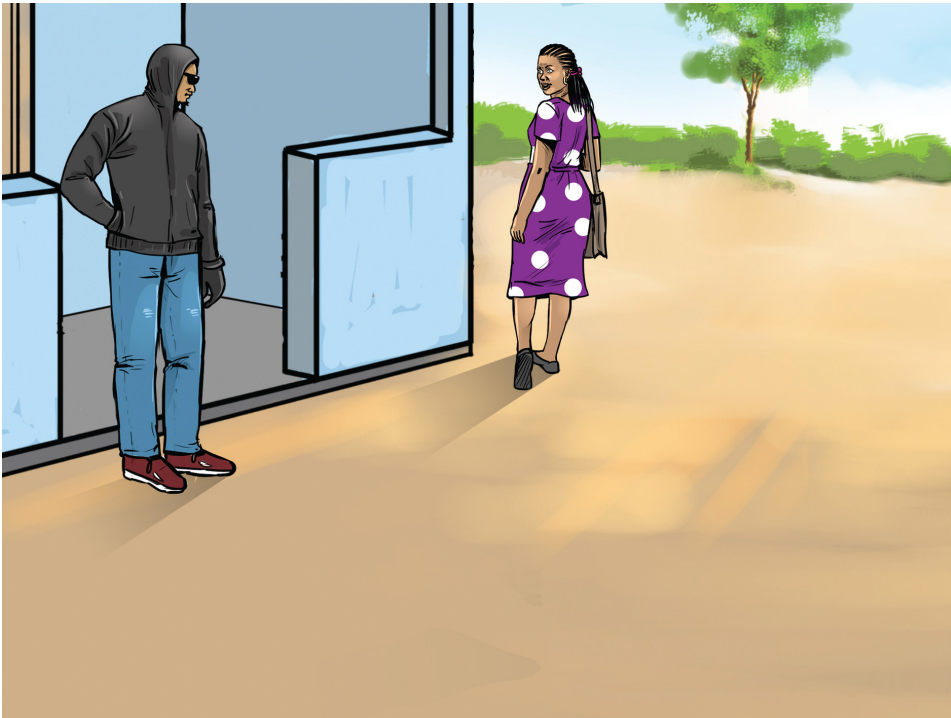
- "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

Explain that this verse is a stern warning about causing harm to children or leading them astray. Abandoning or neglecting the responsibilities of raising children can have serious consequences, both in this life and potentially in the hereafter, as it is seen as a grave sin.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize key points from the sermon.
- Reiterate the biblical call to provide for one's family.
- Offer a closing prayer for strength, wisdom, and grace in fulfilling our responsibilities.

Remember to personalize the sermon with relevant anecdotes, examples, and illustrations to connect with your congregation. Additionally, encourage open dialogue and questions to foster deeper understanding and application of the sermon's message in the lives of your church members.



Summary of the law

A person who stalks another (by watching or loitering outside or near residence, place of work, place of business, etc or by following, pursuing or accosting another in a manner that induces fear or anxiety) will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both. A person that attempts to commit the offense and a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offense will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person who receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offense will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Respecting Boundaries: A Christian Perspective on Stalking

Introduction:

- Welcome and open with a prayer.
- Introduce the topic of stalking and the importance of addressing it from a Christian perspective.
- Share a brief overview of the sermon's main points

Sub-themes

I. Understanding Stalking

- Explain stalking and its various forms (cyberstalking, physical stalking, etc.).
- Highlight the negative consequences of stalking on victims.
- Emphasize the importance of empathy and understanding for victims.

II. The Sin of Stalking

- Cite Proverbs 10:9 (NIV): "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out."

This verse highlights the idea that dishonest or deceitful actions will ultimately be exposed.

- Quote Proverbs 16:28 (NIV): "A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends."
- Reference Job 31:1: "I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?"

Explain that Job expresses his commitment to avoid lusting after women by maintaining self-discipline

- Cite 2 Samuel 11:2-4 (ESV): "It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, 'Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?' So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house."

Explain that this passage recounts King David's sinful actions, which began with him seeing Bathsheba and lusting after her, ultimately leading to adultery and other grave sins. These verses emphasize the importance of guarding one's thoughts and intentions, avoiding lustful desires, and treating others with purity and respect. Spying on someone with lustful intentions would be considered a violation of these principles. It's important to remember that the Bible encourages self-control and purity in thought and deed.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points of the sermon.
- Remind the congregation of the Christian call to respect, and protect one another.
- Close with a final prayer and a call to action, urging the congregation to be vigilant against stalking and to extend God's love to all.



Summary of the law

A person who intimidates another (by speaking or sending a threat that puts him/her in fear, anxiety, or discomfort) will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person who attempts to commit the offense, a person who incites, aids, abets, or counsels another to commit the offense and a person who receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offense will be sent to prison for up to 6 months or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Against Intimidation

The Consequences of Intimidation: A Biblical Perspective

Introduction:

- Welcome and open in prayer.
- Introduce the topic of intimidation and its relevance in our lives today.
- Emphasize the importance of addressing intimidation from a biblical perspective.

Sub-themes

I. Biblical Warnings Against Intimidation

Bible contains several verses that warn against intimidating or oppressing others. Here are a few passages that emphasize the importance of treating others with kindness, respect, and fairness:

Exodus 22:21: "Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt."

Proverbs 14:2: "It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy."

Proverbs 22:22-23: "Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the Lord will take up their case and will exact life for life."

Matthew 7:12: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

Colossians 3:19-21: "Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged."

James 2:8-9 (NIV): "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers."

These verses emphasize the importance of treating others with compassion, love, and fairness, and they serve as a warning against intimidating or mistreating others. It's important to remember that the Bible teaches encouragement.

II. The Consequences of Intimidation

- **Personal Consequences:** Discuss the emotional, mental, and spiritual toll that intimidation takes on individuals. Share personal anecdotes or stories of those who have been affected by intimidation.
- **Societal Consequences:** Talk about how intimidation can perpetuate a cycle of fear and silence in communities. Explain how it can hinder progress and justice.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points.
- Reiterate that intimidation has no place in the lives of those who trust in the Lord.
- Call for a commitment to confront intimidation with faith, courage, and love.
- Close with a prayer for strength and protection against intimidation.

Sermon 19: Spousal Battery



Summary of the law

A person who beats his wife or her husband will be sent to prison for up to 3 years or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both. A person who attempts to commit the offence, a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence and a person that receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N100,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Breaking Chains of Spousal Battery

Introduction:

- Welcome the congregation and introduce the topic of spousal battery.
- Remind them of the Christian call to live as examples of love, compassion, and justice.
- Use the sermon as a way to reflect on the Bible's teachings against violence and for healthy, loving relationships.

Sub-themes

I. Understanding Spousal Battery in Light of God's Word

Explain that Spousal battery directly contradicts God's design for relationships, where men and women are made in His image and called to live in mutual love, respect, and equality.

• Genesis 1:27

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Explanation:

Both men and women bear the image of God, and as such, every individual deserves respect and love. Violence of any kind, including spousal battery, dishonors this sacred image and contradicts God's design for humanity.

- **Genesis 2:18**

"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

Explanation:

God created woman to be a partner and equal companion to man. This verse emphasizes the mutual respect and support that should exist in relationships. Spousal battery violates this divine purpose of harmony and equality in marriage.

- **Ephesians 5:25**

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

Explanation:

Christ's love for the Church was sacrificial and pure. Husbands are called to reflect this love by treating their wives with kindness and care, not with violence or domination. Spousal battery is a sin because it goes against the model of love that Christ demonstrated.

II. Consequences of Spousal Battery

Explain that spousal battery not only affects the victims but also incurs divine judgment and damages the soul of the abuser, leading to broken families and communities.

- **Psalms 11:5**

"The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked, those who love violence, he hates with a passion."

Explanation:

God detests violence and those who perpetrate it. Spousal battery goes against the heart of God, who desires peace and love in all relationships. Those who engage in violence bring harm to their families and distance themselves from God's grace.

- **Galatians 6:7**

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

Explanation:

The Bible teaches that every action has consequences. Those who inflict violence on their spouses will eventually face repercussions, both spiritually and in their lives. Abuse leads to brokenness in families and damages the perpetrator's soul.

III. Responding to Spousal Battery

Christians must be proactive in addressing spousal battery, supporting victims and standing against violence in all its forms.

- **1 John 3:18**

"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

Explanation:

It is not enough to simply speak out against spousal battery; we must take action. This can include offering resources to victims, providing counseling, and creating a culture of love and accountability in the church. Love must be demonstrated through tangible acts of support.

- **Isaiah 1:17**

"Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."

Explanation:

God calls His people to seek justice and defend the oppressed. Victims of spousal battery are often vulnerable and powerless, and Christians are called to advocate for their safety, justice, and dignity. This includes challenging cultural norms that perpetuate violence.

- **James 1:19-20**

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."

Explanation:

Many cases of spousal battery stem from uncontrolled anger. This verse reminds us to practice patience, self-control, and active listening, promoting peaceful and respectful communication within families and communities to prevent violence.

IV. Confronting Spousal Battery: God's Call to Action

Explain that Christians are called to be agents of justice and mercy, taking active steps to oppose spousal battery in their homes, churches, and communities.

- **Micah 6:8**

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Explanation:

This verse calls every believer to live a life of justice, mercy, and humility. Spousal battery is an injustice that must be confronted with compassion and righteousness. Christians are called to protect the vulnerable and promote peace and love in every relationship.

V. Healing and Restoration: God's Promise of Wholeness

God offers healing to those affected by spousal battery and desires to restore broken hearts and lives through His love.

- **Psalms 147:3**

"He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds."

Explanation:

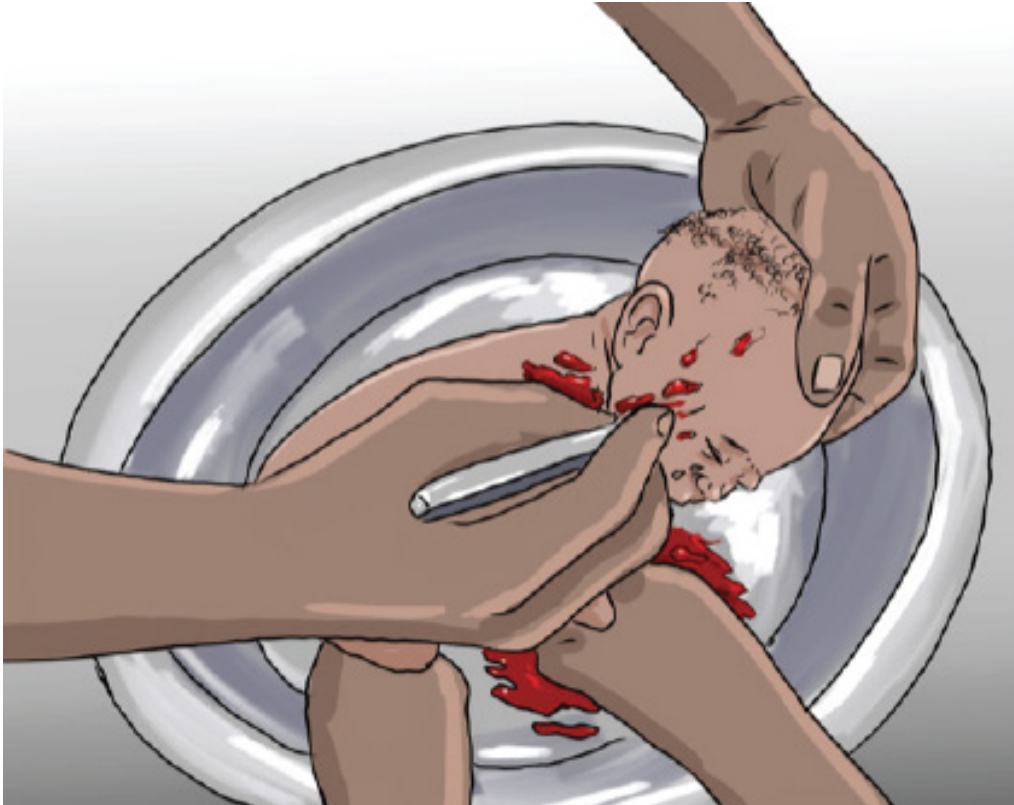
God is a healer of the brokenhearted. Victims of spousal battery often suffer deep emotional wounds, but God promises restoration. The church must provide a safe and supportive environment for healing, offering resources, counseling, and spiritual care.

Summary:

- Reiterate that Spousal battery is a violation of God's design for love, dignity, and justice in relationships.
- Point out that violence has far-reaching consequences for both victims and perpetrators.
- Explain that God calls us to act justly and protect the vulnerable.
- State that the church must be a source of healing, restoration, and education.

Closing Prayer:

Pray for healing for victims, strength to stand against violence, and guidance for the church to be agents of change, love, and justice. Ask for God's help in ending spousal battery in our homes and communities.



Summary of the law

A person that carries out any harmful traditional practice on another will be sent to prison for up to 4 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both. A person that attempts to commit the offence and a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N300,000 or both. A person that receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Protecting Human Dignity by Confronting Harmful Traditions

Introduction

Welcome the congregation and express gratitude for the opportunity to speak on a critical issue: harmful traditional practices (HTPs). These practices, deeply rooted in culture, often lead to the violation of human dignity, especially against vulnerable groups such as women, children, and marginalized communities. As Christians, we are called to stand against any act that devalues human life and defies God's design for justice, love, and respect for all. Let us explore biblical teachings that address human dignity and challenge us to take action against harmful traditions.

Sub-themes

I. Recognizing the Sanctity of Life

Harmful traditional practices, such as ritual killings, widowhood rites, and forced marriages, often degrade the sanctity of life. These practices strip individuals of their God-given dignity and subject them to suffering and abuse.

• Genesis 1:27

"So God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Explanation:

Every human being is made in the image of God and deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Harmful traditions that lead to the dehumanization or oppression of others defy God's plan for humanity. When we violate others through oppressive practices, we disregard the divine image they bear.

II. Defending the Oppressed and Vulnerable

Harmful traditional practices disproportionately affect the vulnerable—women, children, and those without power. The Bible calls us to defend the rights of the oppressed and stand up for those who are unable to defend themselves.

• Proverbs 31:8-9

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Explanation:

As believers, we are charged with the responsibility to defend those who are voiceless and vulnerable. Harmful traditions that subject others to suffering go against this biblical mandate. We must advocate for justice, challenge harmful cultural norms, and seek to protect the vulnerable from these practices.

III. God's Judgment on Unjust Practices

Harmful traditional practices often result in great injustice. God is a God of justice, and He condemns practices that oppress or harm others.

• Isaiah 10:1-2

"Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people."

Explanation:

God speaks against any form of oppression, whether it is through law, custom, or tradition. Harmful practices that deprive people of their rights and dignity invite God's judgment. As Christians, we must confront these practices and work to bring justice to those who suffer under them.

IV. Freedom in Christ: Breaking Cultural Chains

Harmful traditional practices often bind individuals in fear, superstition, and cultural oppression. The Bible teaches that through Christ, we are set free from all chains, including those imposed by unjust traditions.

• Galatians 5:1

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Explanation:

Christ has called us to freedom, not just from sin, but from all forms of oppression. Harmful cultural practices can act as a form of slavery, holding people in bondage to fear and superstition. As Christians, we are called to break these chains by promoting the freedom, dignity, and love that Christ offers.

V. The Church's Role: Advocating for Change

The Church has a crucial role in leading the fight against harmful traditional practices. As a body of believers, we must be a voice for the voiceless and work toward cultural transformation that aligns with God's will for justice and love.

- **Romans 12:2**

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Explanation:

The Church should not conform to harmful traditions just because they are culturally accepted. We are called to challenge the status quo and transform society through the teachings of Christ. As the body of Christ, we must advocate for cultural practices that reflect God's love, justice, and mercy, actively working to abolish harmful traditions.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

Recap the key points:

- Harmful traditional practices violate human dignity and contradict God's Word.
- Christians are called to act justly, defend the vulnerable, and love others as themselves.
- The Church must advocate for justice, healing, and cultural transformation.

Closing Prayer:

Pray for wisdom and courage to confront harmful practices in society. Ask God to bring healing to those affected by these traditions and to empower the Church to be agents of change, bringing light, love, and justice to every corner of the community.



Summary of the law

A person that attacks another with any chemical, biological or any other harmful liquid will be sent to prison for life without option of fine. A person that attempts to commit the offence, a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence and a person that receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 25 years without option of fine.

The Sermon Guide: Challenging the Wickedness of Substance Attack

Introduction:

- Start with a brief explanation of acid/substance attacks and their devastating consequences.
- Highlight the need for the Christian community to address this issue with faith, truth, empathy, and justice.

Sub-themes

I. The Sanctity of Human Life

- Reference Genesis 1:27 "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Emphasize the intrinsic value and dignity of every human being as created in God's image. Explain how substance attacks violate this sanctity of life.

- Reference Psalm 139:13-16: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

Explain that this Psalm succinctly expresses the fact that God is responsible for the creation of each human life. It emphasizes that God knows and cares for us even before we are born, emphasizing the value and sanctity of life from conception.

- Reference Proverbs 3:29: "Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you."

Explain that this verse emphasizes the importance of living peacefully, refraining from harming others, and promoting love and kindness.

II. Biblical Warnings Against Wicked Actions Like Substance Attack

- Reference Genesis 9:6: "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind."

Explain that this verse emphasizes the divine origin and value of human life. It teaches that humans are created in the image of God, and taking a human life is a serious offense, punishable by death in this context.

- Cite Genesis 9:5-6 (NIV): "And for your lifeblood, I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being. Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind."

Explain that this verse underscores the sacredness of human life by emphasizing that humanity is created in the image of God. It also establishes a moral imperative for not taking another person's life, with the consequence of punishment for those who do.

- Cite 1 John 3:15 (NIV): "Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him."

Explain that this verse equates harboring hatred or ill-will towards another person with murder. It emphasizes the spiritual and moral consequences of such attitudes

III. Taking Action as People of Faith

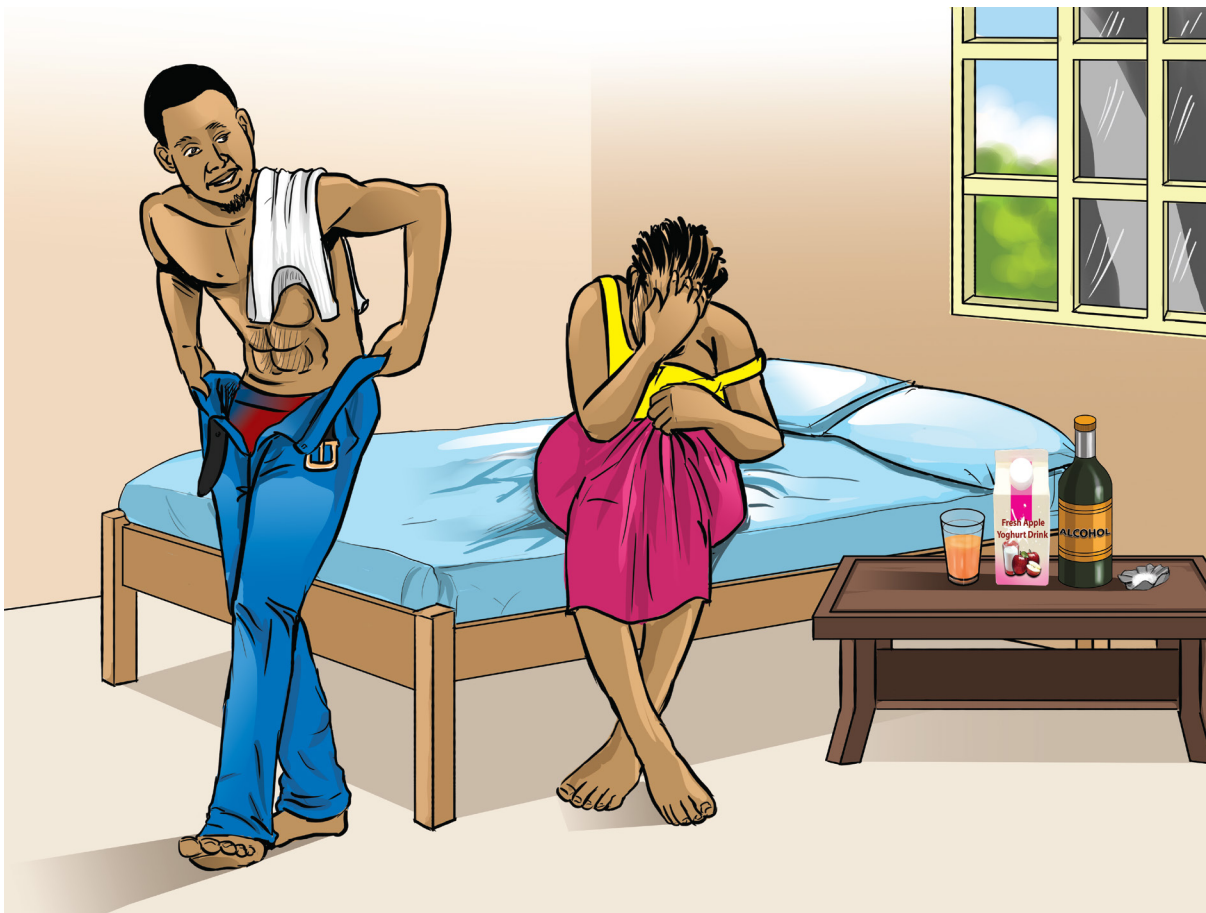
- Reference Proverbs 31:8-9 "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Encourage the congregation to raise awareness about substance attacks.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points of the sermon.
- Call for the congregation to take action, showing love, compassion, and a commitment to justice in addressing the issue of substance attacks.
- Conclude the sermon with a prayer for healing, justice, and an end to violence against vulnerable individuals.

Sermon 22: Administering Substances with Intent



Summary of the law

A person who intentionally gives to another or makes someone give to another anything that will make him lose his sense so as to commit sexual activity with the person will be sent to prison for up to 10 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Administering a Substance with Intent

Introduction: Protecting Human Dignity by Confronting Harmful Traditions

- Begin with a warm greeting and a prayer.
- Introduce the topic of administering a substance with harmful intent, emphasizing the importance of ethical behavior and love for one another.
- Emphasize the importance of aligning our actions with God's word and the principles of love and compassion.

Sub-themes

I. Understanding Administering a Substance with Intent

Define the concept of administering a substance with intent: - This refers to deliberately giving someone a substance (e.g., drugs, alcohol, poison etc.) with harmful intentions, such as causing harm or taking advantage of them. Highlight the seriousness of this act in both legal and moral terms.

II. The Consequences of Such Actions

- Read Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap."

Discuss the consequences individuals may face, both in this life and in the afterlife, for harming others intentionally. Highlight the importance of repentance and seeking forgiveness for such actions.

- Quote 1 Corinthians 3:17 (NIV): - "If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple."

Explain how our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and should not be harmed intentionally.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points from the sermon.
- Encourage the congregation to live a life guided by love, compassion, and forgiveness.
- Invite anyone involved in harmful actions to seek forgiveness and change their ways.
- Offer a prayer for wisdom, strength, and a heart filled with love and compassion.
- Thank the congregation for their presence and attention.

Sermon 23: Political Violence



Summary of the law

A person who commits political violence (by acts of thuggery, use of force to disrupt meetings or use of dangerous weapons during political activities) will be sent to prison for up to 4 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both. A person that attempt to commit the offence and a person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N300,000 or both. A person that receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N200,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Rejecting Political Violence

Christian Reflections on Political Violence: A Call to Peace and Love

Introduction:

- Welcome the congregation and set the tone for the sermon.
- Begin with a brief introduction, emphasizing the importance of addressing political violence through a Christian lens.
- Highlight the need for Christians to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ in their response to political conflicts.
- Emphasize the importance of addressing the issue of political violence from a Christian standpoint.
- Briefly introduce the topic of political violence and its prevalence in today's world.

Sub-themes

I. The Christian Call to Peace

Reference Matthew 5:9- "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

- Discuss the Christian commitment to peace and reconciliation.
- Emphasize the role of Christians as ambassadors of God's peace in a divided world.

II. Understanding Political Violence

- Define political violence and provide examples of different forms (e.g., riots, terrorism, civil war).
- Emphasize the impact of political violence on individuals and society.

III. The Biblical Position Against Violence

- Reference Matthew 5:9 : "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Explain that this verse, part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, emphasizes the importance of being peacemakers. It encourages followers to actively seek peace and reconciliation rather than resorting to violence. By doing so, they are seen as reflecting the character of God.

- Reference Romans 12:17-19: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."

Explain that this passage from the book of Romans teaches Christians not to seek revenge or repay evil with evil. Instead, it encourages them to strive for peace and to leave matters of justice and vengeance to God. It underscores the importance of living peacefully with others and trusting in God's justice.

- Cite Matthew 26:52: "Put your sword back in its place,' Jesus said to him, 'for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.'"

Explain that this verse occurs during Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane when one of His disciples, Peter, attempts to defend Him with a sword. Jesus rebukes this act of violence, emphasizing that those who resort to violence will themselves face violence. It teaches the principle of non-violence and relying on divine guidance in times of conflict.

- Reference Proverbs 16:32: "Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city."

Explain that this proverb highlights the value of self-control and patience over the use of force. It suggests that a person who can exercise self-control and patience is stronger and wiser than a warrior who conquers through violence.

IV. Submission to Authorities

- Reference Romans 13:1-2 (NIV) "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted."

Explain that God has established human authorities for order and justice. - While we may disagree with political leaders, we are called to submit to authority as long as it does not violate God's commands.

- Reference 1 Timothy 2:1-2: "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

Explain that praying for leaders, even when we disagree, is a Christian responsibility. - Our prayers can influence their decisions and bring about peace.

- Quote Titus 3:1: "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good."

V. The Destructive Impact of Political Violence

- Reference Exodus 21:12-14: "Anyone who strikes a person with a fatal blow is to be put to death. However, if it is not done intentionally but God lets it happen, they are to flee to a place I will designate. But if anyone schemes and kills someone deliberately, that person is to be taken from my altar and put to death."

Explain that in this passage from the book of Exodus, the Bible recommends very extreme penalties for violence based on intention. This underscored how God frowns at violent actions that may lead to human life.

- Reference Matthew 26:52 (NIV): "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."

Explain that in this New Testament verse, Jesus discourages the use of violence as a means of resolving conflicts. He emphasizes the consequences of violence, suggesting that those who resort to it will ultimately suffer violence themselves.

- Reference Romans 12:19: "Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."

Explain that this verse from the book of Romans advises against seeking personal vengeance. It implies that God will be the ultimate judge and dispenser of justice for violent actions, encouraging forgiveness and leaving room for divine justice.

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points about the Christian call to peace, the dangers of political violence, and the appropriate Christian response.

Encourage the congregation to actively seek peace, pray for reconciliation, and follow Jesus' example in promoting love and forgiveness in a world often marred by political violence.



Summary of the law

A government agent or official that engages in political violence will be sent to prison for up to 4 years or pay a fine of up to N100, 000,000 or both. A government agent or official that attempt to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 3 years or pay a fine of up to N700,000 or both. A person that incites, aids, abets or counsels another to commit the offence will be sent to prison for up to 2 years or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both. A person that receives or assists another whom he knows has committed the offence will be sent to prison for up to 1 year or pay a fine of up to N300,000 or both. Government must pay compensation awarded to victim by the court.

The Sermon Guide: Speaking Against Violence by State Actors

Theme: Justice and Compassion: God's Call Against Oppression by Those in Power

Preamble

Begin by welcoming the congregation and expressing gratitude for the opportunity to discuss a critical issue — violence by state actors against other persons. Remind the congregation that God's Word is clear on justice, mercy, and the value of human life. As Christians, we are called to stand against oppression, especially when those in positions of authority abuse their power. Let us reflect on the biblical truths that condemn such violence and call us to seek justice and peace for all.

Sub-themes

I. The Injustice of State-Sanctioned Violence

Violence and oppression by state actors, including unjust laws, corruption, and brutality, are condemned in Scripture. God despises any form of leadership that inflicts suffering on the weak and vulnerable.

- **Isaiah 10:1-2**

"Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people."

- **Proverbs 29:2**

"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan."

Explanation:

Isaiah condemns leaders who enact policies that perpetuate injustice and violence. Proverbs reinforces the idea that wicked leadership causes widespread suffering. When state actors harm others, they create an atmosphere of fear and oppression, which is contrary to the justice and peace God desires for His people.

II. Standing Against Violence by State Actor

Violence by state actors will ultimately bring judgment upon them. God's justice is swift against those who abuse their power to oppress and harm others.

- **Psalms 72:14**

"He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight."

- **Matthew 26:52**

"Put your sword back in its place... for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."

Explanation:

Psalms 72 speaks to God's promise to rescue the oppressed and hold accountable those who inflict violence. Matthew 26:52 serves as a warning to those who rely on violence—it will lead to their downfall. The cycle of violence cannot produce peace or justice, and state actors who perpetuate violence will eventually face the consequences of their actions.

III. Responding to Injustice and Violence

Christians are called to speak out against violence and oppression, advocating for justice for the oppressed and holding authorities accountable for their actions.

- **Proverbs 31:8-9**

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

- **Micah 6:8**

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Explanation:

Proverbs 31 challenges us to be the voice for the voiceless, particularly those who suffer at the hands of violent state actors. Micah 6:8 calls us to act justly and extend mercy. As believers, we must not remain silent in the face of injustice but instead take active steps to confront violence and advocate for fair treatment of all people.

IV. The Wickedness of Unjust Politicians

- **Proverbs 29:2**

"When the righteous rule, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan."

Explanation:

Wicked rulers bring suffering and oppression to the people. Politicians who exploit their power, enact violence, and neglect the needs of the people are condemned by Scripture. Their actions lead to the suffering of the innocent and the groaning of the oppressed. As Christians, we must recognize the responsibility of leaders to ensure the welfare of their people, and we must stand against those who use their positions for evil.

V. Condemning Political Violence and Oppression

- **Isaiah 59:2-4**

"Your iniquities have separated you from your God... Your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken falsely, and your tongue mutters wicked things. No one calls for justice; no one pleads a case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments, they utter lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil."

Explanation:

Politicians who incite or commit violence, and whose actions lead to the bloodshed of innocent people, stand condemned before God. Their lies, deceit, and injustice are sins that separate them from the righteous path. Christians must stand against such wickedness, calling for justice and integrity in leadership.

- **Jeremiah 22:3**

"This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place."

Explanation:

The Bible calls for leaders to protect the most vulnerable in society—the foreigner, the orphan, and the widow. Politicians who inflict violence on the innocent, fail to protect the vulnerable, or enrich themselves at the expense of others are acting in direct defiance of God's commandments. It is the duty of Christians to hold them accountable and advocate for justice.

VI. The Consequences of Wicked Leadership

- **Proverbs 28:15-16**

"Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a helpless people. A tyrannical ruler practices extortion, but one who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long reign."

Explanation:

Wicked rulers who practice oppression and violence are compared to dangerous animals that prey on the helpless. Such leadership brings fear and suffering to the people. However, rulers who reject corruption and pursue justice will lead with longevity and the favor of God. Christians must denounce tyrannical leadership and pray for righteous governance.

- **Hosea 8:4**

"They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves, to their own destruction."

Explanation:

When politicians rise to power through dishonest means—corruption, violence, or manipulation—they lead themselves and their people to destruction. God does not approve of leaders who serve their own interests over those of the people. Christians are called to reject such leadership and seek leaders who reflect God's heart for justice and righteousness.

VII . God's Justice Against Wicked Leaders**• Psalm 94:20-23**

"Can a corrupt throne be allied with you—a throne that brings on misery by its decrees? The Lord will repay them for their sins and destroy them for their wickedness; the Lord our God will destroy them."

Explanation:

Politicians who incite or commit violence, and whose actions lead to the bloodshed of innocent people, stand condemned before God. Their lies, deceit, and injustice are sins that separate them from the righteous path. Christians must stand against such wickedness, calling for justice and integrity in leadership.

• Isaiah 3:14-15

"The Lord enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: 'It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?' declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty."

Explanation:

Leaders who oppress the poor and exploit the vulnerable will face God's judgment. God holds those in authority accountable for the way they treat His people. Politicians who enact violence and crush the innocent will be judged by God, and Christians must stand firm in denouncing such wickedness.

Ending with a Summary

- Reflect on the responsibility that state actors have to protect and serve, not harm. Violence by those in power contradicts God's mandate for leadership, and such actions will not go unpunished.
- Emphasize that as Christians, we must speak up for the oppressed, work for justice, and pursue peace.
- Encourage the congregation to pray for state actors to act justly, to advocate for the protection of the vulnerable, and to take practical steps in standing against state-sanctioned violence.

Closing Prayer:

Pray for justice and peace to reign in society, for wisdom and integrity for those in power, and for courage for the congregation to stand up for the oppressed. Ask for God's guidance as we seek to bring His justice to a world plagued by violence and oppression.



Summary of the law

A person who engages in sexual intercourse with another within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity or affinity with or without consent (except the consent was obtained by fraud or threat) will be sent to prison for a minimum period of 10 years without an option of fine.

The Sermon Guide:

Introduction:

Begin by welcoming the congregation and acknowledging the sensitive nature of the topic. Emphasize that the church must address all aspects of life according to God's Word. Today's message will focus on understanding God's clear boundaries regarding sexual relationships within the family and the spiritual, emotional, and social consequences of crossing these boundaries

Sub-themes

I. Understanding Incest

Define incest as sexual relationships or marriage between close relatives, contrary to God's design. Highlight the potential physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences of incest, including the disruption of family dynamics and damage to individual well-being.

II. Understanding God's Design for Family Relationships

Explain that God established the family unit with specific emphasis on where one should not marry.

Cite Genesis 2:24: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

Explain how this verse establishes the principle of leaving and cleaving, underscoring the importance of new family relationships distinct from parent-child relationships.

Also, cite Leviticus 18:6-18, where God provides a list of prohibited relationships, emphasizing the boundaries He has set to protect the sanctity of family ties.

6 “No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the Lord.

7 “Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her.

8 “Do not have sexual relations with your father’s wife; that would dishonor your father.

9 “Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere.

10 “Do not have sexual relations with your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter; that would dishonor you.

11 “Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father’s wife, born to your father; she is your sister.

12 “Do not have sexual relations with your father’s sister; she is your father’s close relative.

13 “Do not have sexual relations with your mother’s sister, because she is your mother’s close relative.

14 “Do not dishonor your father’s brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt.

15 “Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife; do not have relations with her.

16 “Do not have sexual relations with your brother’s wife; that would dishonor your brother.

17 “Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness.

18 “Do not take your wife’s sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

III. Consequences of Incest: A. Distorted Relationships

- Cite Deuteronomy 27:22 - “Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother”
- Discuss the negative effects of incest on family dynamics, trust, and emotional well-being. Reference the story of Amnon and Tamar in 2 Samuel 13 as an example of the devastating consequences of incestuous desires
- Make reference to Genesis 19:30-38 - The Story of Lot's Daughters. Narrate the account of Lot's daughters and the consequences of their actions.

Ending with a Summary

- Encourage reflection on their role in preserving the sanctity of family relationships.
- Urge them to seek help, guidance, and forgiveness where needed.
- Commit to supporting those affected by incest or sexual immorality within families through prayer, counseling, and loving action.

Closing Prayer:

End with a prayer for healing, purity, and strength to live according to God’s Word. Pray for those who have been harmed by incest to find peace and restoration in God’s love.

Sermon 26: Indecent Exposure



Summary of the law

A person that exposes his or her genital organs or a substantial part of the organs to make another see it and be attracted to commit an offense under this law or to make the person touch or massage the genital organs to get sexual pleasure, will be sent to prison for a minimum of 1 year or pay a fine of up to N500,000 or both.

The Sermon Guide: Maintaining Decency and Modesty

Honoring God's Temple: A Sermon Guide on Indecent Exposure

Introduction:

- Begin with a warm greeting and a prayer for guidance.
- Introduce the topic of indecent exposure and its relevance in today's society.
- Emphasize the importance of treating our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Sub-themes

I. Understanding Indecent Exposure

- Define indecent exposure in the context of modern society.
- Explain the harmful effects of indecent exposure on individuals and communities.
- Stress the need for modesty and self-respect.

II. Biblical Teachings on Modesty

Genesis 3:21 - The first clothing provided by God for Adam and Eve. B. 1 Timothy 2:9-10 - Instructions for women to dress modestly and decently. C. 1 Peter 3:3-4 - The inner beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

- Reference 1 Timothy 2:9-10: "I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God."

Explain that in this verse, the Apostle Paul advises women to dress modestly and focus on inner qualities and good deeds rather than extravagant outward appearances. The emphasis is on humility and prioritizing one's relationship with God over materialistic displays.

- Reference 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

Explain that this passage reminds believers that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and should be treated with respect and modesty. It emphasizes the importance of honoring God through how one presents themselves, including their clothing choices.

III. Consequences of Indecent Dressing

- Reference Proverbs 11:22 - "Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion."

Explain that this verse highlights that external beauty without discretion or modesty is like a valuable ring wasted on an inappropriate setting. It teaches us to exercise discretion in our clothing choices.

- Reference Matthew 5:28 : "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Explain that while this verse doesn't specifically address clothing, it underscores the importance of modesty and purity not only in one's attire but also in one's thoughts and intentions. It reminds believers to avoid dressing in a way that may lead others to lustful or impure thoughts.

- Read Matthew 18:6-7: "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

Explain that dressing immodestly can cause others to stumble in their faith.

- Reference Proverbs 31:30 (NIV): "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

Discuss how immodest dressing can affect how others perceive us and our character

Ending with a Summary

- Summarize the key points of the sermon.
- Reiterate the significance of honoring our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit.
- Invite the congregation to commit to living lives of modesty and self-respect.
- Close with a prayer for God's guidance and strength to uphold these principles in daily life.

Appreciation

Dear Respected Religious Leaders,

We want to express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for your unwavering commitment to the well-being of our faith communities and society at large. Your dedication to addressing the critical issue of violence against persons through the sermon guide we provided is a testament to your profound leadership and compassion.

Your willingness to engage with and use the sermon guide demonstrates your commitment to creating safe and nurturing spaces within our faith communities. By tackling the legal issues surrounding violence against persons from a faith perspective, you are not only providing spiritual guidance but also promoting justice, healing, and positive change.

Through your sermons, you are shedding light on the pressing challenges that many individuals face and inspiring hope for a more compassionate and just world. Your efforts in conveying the importance of faith-based responses, community engagement, and collaboration with legal authorities are making a meaningful impact on the lives of those affected by violence.

As you deliver these sermons, we encourage you to continue fostering open dialogue, empathy, and support within your congregations. Your roles as religious leaders extend beyond the pulpit, and your influence can help bring about lasting change in our communities.

Thank you for being beacons of hope, justice, and healing. Your dedication to addressing these vital legal issues is a powerful testament to the transformative potential of faith.

May your sermons be a source of inspiration and guidance, and may they contribute to a more peaceful and just world for all.

With deep appreciation and blessings,

Ipas Nigeria Health Foundation.

Ipas Nigeria Health Foundation works to empower women and girls to have bodily autonomy and exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights. As partners for reproductive justice, we build collective action that transforms societies to enable women, girls, and vulnerable persons to manage their fertility and realize their full potential.