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| **Slide** | **Sermon** |
| 1 | **Title Slide From Bait Stick to Supper Luke 17:1-10** |
| 2 | Intro: As I was growing up and spending time on my grandfather’s farm, hunting was an important activity. Most of the hunting my father and grandfather did was small game hunting like squirrel, rabbit, and bird hunting. We not only hunted with guns, but we would sometime set traps, esp. for rabbits. My grandfather taught me how to make a rabbit gun.  1 You make a long narrow wooden box with one end closed and the other with a sliding door that went up and down.  2 On top you made a trigger mechanism. It consisted of a leverage post in the middle, a long slender connecting stick, had the door attached by a string on one end and a trigger or bait-stick on the other.  3 The Bait-stick ran down through a hole bored through the top of the rabbit gum.  4 When the trap was set, you placed some food item – like a piece of apple right behind the bait-stick. You would also rub it on the end of the stick to get the smell on it. Then the bait-stick would hold up the door of the trap by using the connecting stick and a notch cut our on its side.  5 So, when the rabbit smelled the bait and entered the long narrow wooden box, it would crawl forward to the back and hit the bait-stick which would trip the door and it would slide down and trap the rabbit.  Exciting to go around in early morning to check rabbit traps.  In our scripture today, the words “things that cause people to sin” comes from the Greek word *scandalon* where we get the word scandal, meaning to *be embroiled/trapped in conflict*. Its root meant the bait-stick in a trap like I’ve just described. Later it came to mean a stumbling block placed in a person’s path. |
| 3 | We have lots of temptation/bait-sticks to deal with in our world today!  Note: Once I had a phone call in the states   1. Phone call – “Are you the man of the house? Answer one questions correctly and you’ll qualify to win a microwave or a TV or a set of wrenches.   Q: With which hand does the Statue of Liberty hold her torch?  (Are you kidding? ) The Right  Caller: Correct! TO choose your prize you must come to our location and view our new time-share homes and attend our presentation . . .  The gifts and question and answer were bait-sticks to get me to consider buying into a time share holiday arrangement.   1. Mail – *Buy 6 tapes for 99¢ (if you join the tape club and agree to buy 6 tapes during the next 12 months at regular price.*   More seriously, Jesus said its impossible to have a world with no temptation, no stumbling blocks, no bait sticks. They are sure to come. We will be tempted and encouraged to make ourselves #1 and to live life as if we were the center of the universe. |
| 4 | But woe to the person who lures others and teaches others to sin. It would be better for such persons to have a millstone tied around his or her neck and thrown into the sea.  Ones eternal life is at stake here. To be the avenue of intentional temptation, well it is an eternal question. It threatens ones very life. It can determine our eternity!  How have we been ‘bait-sticked’ in our lives?  (Pause)  May God forgive us for leading others astray! |
| 5 | II. Story – There’s a story told about F. B. Meyer, a pastor who was holding a revival meeting some years ago in a small rural town. August when crops laid by waiting for harvest. A time for revivals 2 weeks in time. He said the meeting was dragging along without signs of success until one evening an elder arose and said, “Pastor, I don’t believe there is going to be a revival as long as Brother Jones and I don’t speak to each other.”  He went to Brother Jones and said, “Brother Jones, we have not spoken for 5 years. Let’s bury the hatchet. Here’s my hand.” A sob broke out from the audience.  Soon another elder rose and said, “Pastor, I’ve been saying mean things about you behind your back and nice things to your face. I want you to forgive me.”  Then the dam broke lose. Many others arose and confessed their wrongs and God began to visit them. A revival swept over the community for 3 years. |
| 6 | Jesus told his disciples, if your brother or sister or friend sins, rebuke him or her. Tell them about it! But do it in a honest, truthful, helpful way! |
| 7 | If he or she repents, forgive them – even as much as seven times in a day. Which means forgive as long as that person repents and ask for forgiveness. There’s no limit on forgiveness.  How often do we withhold our forgiveness? To hold a grudge, to insist in our own righteousness means our lives stay apart from each other. It means God stays away. No renewal can take place. We stay alone.  The failure to forgive affects our present lives. It keeps us form having the fulfillment and joy we are meant to have. It eats away at us from the inside out. It blocks us!  Jesus said let us forgive those who repent and ask forgiveness. |
| 8 | EX: Leonardo Da Vinci, who as you know, was one of the outstanding intellects of all history, for he was a draftsman, an engineer, and a thinker. Just before he commenced work on his “Last Supper”, he had a violent quarrel with a fellow painter. So enraged and bitter was Leonardo that he determined to paint the face of his enemy, the other artist, into the face of Judas, and thus take his revenge and vent his spleen by handing the man down in infamy and scorn to succeeding generations. The face of Judas was therefore the first that he had finished, and everyone could easily recognize it as the painter with whom he had quarreled.  But when he came to paint the face of Christ, he could make no progress. Something seemed to be baffling him, holding him back, frustrating his best efforts. At length, he came back to the conclusion that the thing which was checking and frustrating him was the fact he had painted his enemy into the face of Judas. He therefore painted out the face of Judas and commenced anew on the face of Jesus, and this time with success which ages have acclaimed. |
| 9 | III. These are two difficult saying.  A. How can we live so perfectly that we do not tempt the little ones to stray away? That we are not a bait-stick, a *scandalon*, an avenue of temptation?  B. How can we have such forgiving spirits? |
| 10 | It seems impossible! How is it that we can obey these teachings of Jesus? The disciples thought so too. Their response was to cry out, ***Increase our faith!!!***  Faith and Mercy were twin girls in a play school. Cute little girls! Joe was a little boy also in the play school who loved playing with the twins. One day, Joe came home and announced, “I’m getting married!” Mom asked, “Who are you going to marry?” “Faith and Mercy!” he answered. “But which one?” Mom asked. Joe hesitated for a minute and said, “Both! – they go together!”  Faith and Mercy do go together. Faith is needed to have the mercy to forgive. Faith is needed to order our lives so that we do not become the bait-stick for sin. The disciples knew this relationship. |
| 11 | In each of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, this request for increased faith is made.  In Mark – The disciples are having trouble learning how to pray so they ask for more faith!  In Matthew – they can’t heal and exorcise demons, so they ask for more faith.  In Luke, the situation as you can see is different.  The disciples are faced with difficult moral and ethical demands –   * Not to be the avenue of temptation * To offer unlimited forgiveness. |
| 12 | And Jesus’ response is that even if the tiniest bit of faith is exercised, it would be sufficient to fulfill such demands. We all have at least such a bit of faith.  David Guzik says “A small amount of faith – as much **as a mustard seed** – can accomplish great things, if that small amount of faith is placed in a great and mighty God.  Our task is to use it and develop this gift God has given.  “Jesus is concerned not about faith's volume but about its presence. God can work with even a little faith.  Do not fret about how great your faith is; only apply what you have and watch it work. The disciple's main responsibility is to trust God. “  [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) \_Commentary) |
| 13 | IV. Finally, Jesus closes out his teaching by telling the parable of the dutiful servant. The servant is expected to plow in the filed all day, tend the sheep. And when evening comes the servant must come in, fix supper for his master and wait on the master until he is finished. Only then can the servant eat and relax. And the servant is never thanked for doing what he/she is told. That’s what is expected.  So, it is with us. “Out of faith comes service. The service of God's servant is not a matter for negotiation but is a duty.” (biblegateway)  We are to do our duty. We as Christians are to carry out the demands of our faith without expectation of recognition!   1. It is our duty to not be a bait-stick that lures others into temptation. 2. It is our duty to forgive freely and often. To do this we must depend on and use God’s gift of faith. |
| 14 | But let’s hang on a minute. It sounds like we are now talking about duty and it being the way to God. If we do our duty, we’ll make it to heaven. If we do our duty, then that’s all that Christ requires!  NO! That’s not it. Why? Because we still remain UNWORTHY! Our actions of duty must become actions of thanksgiving. We avoid being temptation and we forgive others because we want to show God how thankful we are that God loves us enough to save us through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Serving God will always be a privilege.  Think of your life and how temptations enter it.  Think of grudges you hold or forgiveness you withhold.  To avoid giving in to temptation, To be willing to forgive. If you try to do these by a sense of duty, then it is impossible!  But to see theses as an acts of thanksgiving – Well it makes it a whole new story! They not only become possible but they become life-giving forces in our lives and in the lives of those around us!  May our lives become continual acts of gratitude to God who loves us beyond all measure! |
| 15 | We come to this table now – not because we deserve it or have earned the right – not because we are better than non-Christians.  We come out of gratitude – we eat this bread and drink this drink as a way of thanking God that God loved us so much that He gave Jesus to die for us and with us.  We come to this table as a way of saying Thank you for meeting us where we are.  We share this meal with another as a way of saying to God we love each other and Thank God for each other. Eat and Drink and be thankful! |