



Series Summary: Closing the Loop

Closing the Loop explores the transformative paths that Jesus calls his followers to walk: paths of life, mercy, grace, and hope. Each week focuses on a distinct aspect of living the “narrow way” of Jesus, inviting believers to embody his teachings in their daily lives. Anchored in Scripture, this series helps believers choose a life shaped by Jesus' example in all circumstances, even as they look forward to his return.

Weekly Themes and Key Messages:

1. **The Way of Life**

Drawing from Matthew 7:13-14, this first message challenges believers to choose the “narrow way” that leads to life in Jesus. This choice is not a single decision but a daily series of actions that lead to a fulfilling and joy-filled life. With insights from passages like Deuteronomy 30:15-20 and Romans 6:16-23, this message shows that following Jesus often means going against the grain, choosing obedience over the desires of the flesh. As believers take this path, they experience the abundant life Jesus promises, even as it calls them to a different standard than the world around them.

2. **The Way of Mercy**

Centered on Matthew 5:38-42, this message explores Jesus' radical call to mercy—returning good for evil and aiming for restoration over retribution. Through teachings on forgiveness and patience (Romans 12:9-21, James 2:12-13), believers are invited to see mercy as an active force that can transform relationships and reflect God's own character. The message also delves into restorative justice, challenging believers to embody God's merciful heart in their relationships and communities.

3. **The Way of Grace**

Focusing on Matthew 5:43-48, this message defines grace as “getting what we don't deserve” and underscores the profound depth of God's kindness and favor toward us. Jesus' command to “love your enemies” (Luke 6:27-28) illustrates that grace is extended not only to those who are easy to love but also to those who oppose us. Believers are encouraged to extend this unmerited favor to others, following the examples of Jesus and Stephen, who prayed for their persecutors (Luke 23:24; Acts 7:60). Grace, as defined in Ephesians 2:8, becomes the foundation for transforming interactions with others, even in the face of hostility.

4. **The Way of Hope**

The final message centers on the promise of Jesus' return, as highlighted in Matthew 24:42-44 and 1 Thessalonians 5:5-6. While awaiting his return, believers are called to an active hope that involves diligence, watchfulness, and steadfastness in service (1 Corinthians 15:51-58). This week focuses on the readiness, patience, and perseverance that mark the life of a disciple living with an eternal perspective. The message encourages believers to "wait in hope" (Psalm 27; Psalm 130) with hearts ready and hands willing to do God's work.

Key Goals:

This series aims to equip the congregation with a mindset of intentional discipleship, where each theme—life, mercy, grace, and hope—becomes a framework for living out Jesus' teachings. By embodying these ways, believers "close the loop" in their spiritual walk, aligning each area of their lives with Jesus' example and looking forward to his promised return.

Series Description:

Doing hard things requires inner conviction, commitment, and consistent effort. There are few things more challenging than getting our bodies in shape. Setbacks are inevitable, even with a well-planned regimen of daily movement and healthy eating. Even tools such as the Apple Watch help us plot our daily goals, setting our sights on "closing the loop" toward physical fitness. Spiritual transformation is not unlike getting into physical shape. Jesus invites us to specific ways of living. In this four-week series, join us as we explore practicing the narrow way of mercy, grace, and hope. Spiritual transformation requires ongoing effort. We can close the loop toward a transformative spiritual life by continuing to partner and walk with Jesus to experience abundant life.

Series Assets:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/7b14lqgm8440dofvijdo/05-Closing-The-Loop.zip?rlkey=y97swdghs1282ys8yokpjalxy&st=lfpx5ae3&dl=0>

- Bumper Videos (Different each week)
- Countdown Video
- Fonts Used
- Lower Thirds
- Other Graphics
- Series Graphics
- Series Resources
- Scripts (by Week)
- Outlines (by Week)

****These downloadable assets are FREE for your church to use. If you need any adjustments to the graphics to better fit your church's needs, please contact Jamison Advertising Group (JAG), the company*

behind these beautiful designs. They'll be happy to help with edits or customizations. Reach out to them at <https://jaghq.com>. ***

Week 1: The Way of Life

Description

This week, we're kicking off our "Closing the Loop" series with "The Way of Life," focusing on Jesus' teaching about choosing the right path in life. Just as an Apple Watch tracks fitness goals by encouraging you to "close the rings," this series is designed to help us close spiritual loops and grow in our faith. Today, we look at Jesus' challenge in Matthew 7 to choose between two paths: the narrow road that leads to life and the wide road that leads to destruction. Though our culture may offer endless options, Jesus makes it clear there are only two choices. His way may be less traveled and more challenging, but it leads to true life. This message is an invitation to move from being mere admirers of Jesus—enjoying his teachings from a distance—to becoming devoted followers who trust him completely. Join us as we learn how choosing Jesus' narrow path offers us not just a destination in heaven, but abundant life in the here and now.

YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_9jgo2Pcj8

Week 2: The Way of Mercy

Description

This week in our "Closing the Loop" series, we're exploring "The Way of Mercy." Jesus' call to "turn the other cheek" in Matthew 5 challenges us to break the cycle of revenge and live out true mercy—doing more than required, showing kindness even when it's least deserved. Mercy isn't just about following rules; it's a transformation of the heart that frees us from the demands of retaliation. As Jesus demonstrated on the cross, mercy overcomes hate with love, and he reminds us that the mercy we give is the mercy we receive. Today, as we take communion, let's reflect on who we may need to forgive, go the extra mile for, or show unexpected kindness to, and let's commit to closing the loop on mercy in our lives.

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLb2bua6eKw>

Week 3: The Way of Grace

Description

In this third week of our *Closing the Loop* series, we're focusing on *"The Way of Grace."* Grace is often misunderstood, but Jesus's teaching in Matthew 5:43-48 gives us a clear view of how radical grace truly is. Justice is about getting what we deserve, mercy is about not getting the punishment we deserve, and grace is about receiving blessings we haven't earned. Jesus challenges us to break out of the typical cycle of retaliation and victimization by choosing active love even for those we might consider enemies. This kind of love isn't passive or permissive—it's a courageous choice to love, do good, bless, and pray for others, following God's own example. God has loved us this way, transforming us from enemies into His sons and daughters, holy and blameless. As we reflect on God's grace in our lives, let's consider how we can close the loop on grace by extending it to others, even those we find difficult to love.

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gapMpSITp0>

Week 4: The Way of Hope

Description

In the final week of our *Closing the Loop* series, we're focusing on *The Way of Hope*. Just as in a Navy retirement ceremony, where a sailor is "relieved" and hands over the watch, we are called by Jesus to "stand the watch" and be ready, living with hope for His return. This idea of expectant watching is central to our hope as believers because Jesus's return means the end of sin, suffering, and death, and the beginning of all things made new. Jesus's second coming is often called our "Blessed Hope," as described in Titus 2:11-13, where we are reminded to live godly lives while waiting for His glorious return. Jesus's first coming brought us salvation, while His second will bring the resurrection of all things. But our waiting isn't passive—it's active, as Jesus calls us to be alert, ready, and engaged in His mission. Like sailors on watch, we are called to live as though He could come today, while working to bring His love, mercy, and grace into the world. This hope turns any hopeless end into an endless hope, reminding us that even in the hardest moments, Jesus has overcome the world. As we close in communion and baptism, we celebrate this endless hope in Jesus, the promise of new life now and in the world to come.

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4x8uFMSX8>