

# SERMON OUTLINE 1

# I'M WITH YOU

**NOTE:** It is recommended that you read chapter 1, "I'm with You," in *Love Does* before the sermon so you will be well acquainted with the stories from Bob Goff.

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In high school, Bob Goff was a poor student. He couldn't even figure out how to take the test for a general equivalence certificate.
- B. In his junior year, Bob decided to drop out and get a job at Yosemite National Park, where he could rock climb in his free time. Bob decided to stop by his friend Randy's house to say good-bye. Randy was a Young Life leader in Bob's high school.
- C. To Bob's surprise, Randy requested to go with him to Yosemite and stay with him until he settled in. Little did Bob know what that request meant to Randy. Bob found encouragement in Randy's words, "I'm with you, Bob."

## II. TEACHING

- A. *"I'm with you" means presence:* to be actually present with someone.
  - 1. Randy left his house, got in Bob's VW Bug, and went with him to Yosemite.
  - 2. The two rode together, snuck together into a rental tent and slept, looked for jobs together, ate together, and rock climbed together.
  - 3. "I'm with you" is one of the names of God revealed in Jesus Christ.
    - a. From the beginning in the Garden of Eden, God sought to be with even a rebellious Adam and Eve. "Where are you?" (see Genesis 3:8–9).

- b. Isaiah prophesied that the coming Messiah would be named “Immanuel,” which means “God with us” (see Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:22–23).
    - c. Jesus promised to be with us even to the end of the age (see Matthew 28:20). He is truly our Immanuel (see Hebrews 13:5).
- B. *“I’m with you” means sacrifice*: it costs something to be truly present.
  - 1. Randy’s presence with Bob on the jaunt to Yosemite cost Randy time, effort, discomfort, and money.
  - 2. The astounding sacrifice is that Randy had left his brand-new bride so he could be with Bob. “[Randy] didn’t just *say* he was for me or with me. He was *actually* present with me. . . . Why? It was because Randy *loved* me.”
  - 3. At the heart of God’s love is sacrifice for each one of us.
    - a. Love does because love gives; it sacrifices (see John 3:16).
    - b. The sin that separates us from God has been once and for all removed by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 2:17).

### III. APPLICATION

- A. Bob writes, “[Randy] was committed to me and he believed in me. I wasn’t a project; I was his friend. I wondered if maybe all Christians operated this way. I didn’t think so, because most of them I had met . . . seemed to have opinions about what or who they were against [rather] than for who they were for.”
- B. Thank God for those people (perhaps it’s just one) in your life who have been with you and sacrificed for you. Their love for you was displayed in their behavior, not just in their words.
- C. Think of someone you know who needs “presence”; who needs someone with them. Commit to be that someone, knowing full well it will cost. Know also that the results may change a life, bring glory to God, and demonstrate *through you* genuine, Christlike love.

## SERMON OUTLINE 2

# FREE TO FAIL

**NOTE:** It is recommended that you read chapter 4, “The Reach,” in *Love Does* before the sermon so you will be well acquainted with the stories from Bob Goff.

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Bob Goff’s grandmother, Grandma Mary, used to tell him, “You’re nothing until you’ve been fired once or twice.”
- B. Bob tells the hilarious story of his first experience of being fired while wearing an expensive tux and being on duty as a new waiter in a very exquisite restaurant. Bob writes about serving his first table: “At the pinnacle of my full extension across the table with a plate of prime rib, out came the most impressive and lengthy gassing you can ever imagine. . . . It went on forever . . . I was fired on the spot.”
- C. Bob contends that “God intentionally guides people into failure.” What do we learn about ourselves and about God as we contemplate this theme: “free to fail”?

### II. TEACHING

- A. By accepting failure, we learn something humbling about ourselves.
  - 1. We are dependent beings who need God, our parents, and others. “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).
  - 2. We are wanderers who veer off the path of God’s will. “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6).
  - 3. We are slow, sometimes obstinate, learners. Jesus demonstrates this when He speaks to Philip (see John 14:8–9).
  - 4. We are people who fail.

- a. Peter boasted of loyalty to Jesus, yet denied Him (see John 13:36–38).
  - b. After his yearlong hard work as a busboy and money spent on a tuxedo, Bob was “fired on the spot” for his one embarrassing moment.
- B. By accepting failure, we learn something about God. Because God intentionally guides us into failure, we learn . . .
1. God is endlessly patient—a great theme of the Old Testament (see Exodus 34:6; Psalm 86:15; 103:8; Joel 2:12; Jonah 4:2).
  2. God, because He is love, keeps no record of wrongs/failures (see 1 Corinthians 13:5; 1 John 4:8).
  3. God trains us through our failures. Jesus restored Peter to God’s mission (see John 22:15–17).
  4. God transforms our thinking (see Mark 10:41–45; Romans 12:1–2).

### **III. APPLICATION**

- A. Bob writes, “And for me, I’ve realized that I used to be afraid of failing at the things that really mattered to me, but now I’m more afraid of succeeding at things that don’t matter.” How does failure clarify your values?
- B. Recall a failure in your life. Ask yourself, *What did God have in mind for me by that experience?* What do you learn about yourself and about God as you reflect?
- C. How will you allow God to change your thinking about others who fail . . . including your children, your spouse, your relatives, and your friends?

## SERMON OUTLINE 3

# AUDACIOUS LOVE

**NOTE:** It is recommended that you read chapter 3, “Ryan in Love,” in *Love Does* before the sermon so you will be well acquainted with the stories from Bob Goff.

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Bob Goff heard these words from a young man who serendipitously walked past his backyard: “Hi, I’m Ryan, and I’m in love.” Bob says the love-glazed kid asked if it was okay to ask his girlfriend to marry him in Bob’s backyard. Bob said yes.
- B. Ryan’s requests of Bob multiplied like rabbits as this “wonderfully goofy, glazed-over, *I’m-in-love*” grinning kid planned out a great surprise for the love of his life. Ryan not only asked to marry her in Bob’s backyard, but asked to have dinner for two on Bob’s back porch—served by twenty of Ryan’s friends, and music and dancing after the dinner—and then he asked, “Do you have a boat?” Bob did and offered to take Ryan and his girl out on the bay so Ryan could pop the question. Ryan expressed an audacious love.
- C. When love does, love does big.

### II. TEACHING

Ryan’s love for his girl is a reflection of Jesus’ love for His bride, the church.

- A. Love is strategic and focused.
  - 1. Bob told Ryan, “Go get that girl!” Ryan had big plans.
  - 2. God told Jesus, “Go save that world!” (John 3:16–17).
  - 3. Jesus is winning His bride! (see Ephesians 5:25–27; Revelation 19:7).
- B. Love is audacious and makes us “all in.”
  - 1. Love made Ryan ask for outrageous things: “Do you have a boat?”
  - 2. Jesus, too, was all in (see Mark 10:45).

- C. Love is whimsical and creative.
  - 1. Ryan saw everyone as “coconspirators” in winning his bride.
  - 2. Jesus invited others to spread His world-changing message (see Luke 9:1–2; Acts 1:8).
- D. Love is tenacious.
  - 1. Ryan kept coming back to Bob with bigger dreams.
  - 2. Jesus was resolute to finish His work of salvation (see Luke 9:51). “Yet not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).
- E. Love is contagious.
  - 1. Ryan’s “beautiful ridiculousness” magnetized Bob and set Bob in motion to help Ryan. Bob even got a Coast Guard officer to lend a Coast Guard firefighting boat to make the night more festive for Ryan.
  - 2. Jesus’ love is contagious, too. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35; see also 12:32). Tertullian, an Early Church Father, wrote that the pagan Romans hated each other and killed one another. Of the Christians he said, “See how they love one another; and they will die for one another.”

### **III. APPLICATION**

- A. Bob writes, “Ryan’s audacious love is some of the best evidence I’ve found of the kind of love Jesus talks about, a love that never grows tired or is completely finished finding ways to fully express itself.”
- B. Love is not depleted but actually energized by loving more. How do we heed Jesus’ exhortation to renew “our first love” (Revelation 2:4)?
  - 1. Ask the Spirit to renew your love for God and others (see Romans 5:5).
  - 2. Contemplate God’s audacious love for you.
  - 3. Commit to the “beautiful ridiculousness” of being in love with Jesus. Let love allow you to never meet a stranger.

## SERMON OUTLINE 4

# BE NOT AFRAID

**NOTE:** It is recommended that you read chapter 27, “The Story,” in *Love Does* before the sermon so you will be well acquainted with the stories from Bob Goff.

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Bob Goff’s son, Adam, found a boat for sale on Craigslist, met the owner, and bought a forty-year-old, twenty-seven-foot sailboat for less money than a set of new golf clubs. Bob was with Adam at the sale in order to protect his son from a scam.
- B. The sailboat sported abused fiberglass, fasteners missing (which held the sail to the mast), sails that were washed out and limp like bedsheets, teak rails that looked like driftwood, running lights that didn’t work—and the engine coughed from its overuse of oil.
- C. Bob notes, “Adam saw this tattered sailboat completely different than most people would.” Adam bought it, and he and Bob sailed it down the coast and into San Diego Bay to their dock.
- D. Adam named his boat *The Story*. Goff writes, “For Adam . . . *The Story* wouldn’t be a sailing machine; it would be a story machine.”

### II. TEACHING

The Bible reveals God and His will to us primarily through stories.

- 1. We teach children, and we ourselves learn from the great stories of the Old and New Testaments. A few examples . . .
  - a. Old Testament: the Creation story, the Joseph story, David and Goliath, Daniel and the lions’ den.
  - b. New Testament: the birth of Jesus; Jesus healing the leper, feeding the 5000, raising Lazarus from the dead, dying on the cross, rising from the dead.

2. We live by stories, not by principles, abstractions, and guidelines. “Story is the gospel way. Story isn’t imposed on our lives; it invites us into its life. . . . Story is the primary means we have for learning what the world is, and what it means to be a human being in it” (Eugene H. Peterson, *Leap Over a Wall: Earthy Spirituality for Everyday Christians*, p. 4).
3. Bible stories teach us to see life “completely different” than most people and to be unafraid (as Ryan did with his boat). “Fear not, for I am with you” is repeated often in the Bible.
  - a. God saw fearful Gideon as a “mighty warrior” (Judges 6:12). Gideon became just that with God’s help.
  - b. Jesus saw His hiding-in-fear disciples as world-changers (see Luke 24:33–36, 48.)

### **III. APPLICATION**

- A. Bob Goff writes that a friend named Don led “discussions about the story we are telling with our lives and that we could be telling a better story.”
- B. As you reflect, what story is your life telling right now? Does your story satisfy you? Does it invite others in?
- C. If fear were no obstacle to you, what (new) story do you want your life to tell? The Jesus story reminds us that we can find evidence of Jesus’ presence in the ordinary stories of our lives. Be not afraid.



## SERMON OUTLINE 5

# FOLLOW ME

**NOTE:** It is recommended that you read chapter 28, “Skin in the Game,” in *Love Does* before the sermon so you will be well acquainted with the stories from Bob Goff.

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Being a bully doesn’t have any age limits. Bob tells the story of when he was young and intentionally picked a fight with a huge seventh-grader named Dale. Dale was a bully who picked on smaller kids, and Bob’s sense of justice was so offended that he challenged Dale to a fight. Bob wanted to defend the little guy. Bob got bloodied for his efforts and suspended from school for two days.
- B. After graduating law school and passing the bar, Bob—poor and unknown, yet still wanting to help the vulnerable—met two adult bullies who *claimed* to be Christians. The two men hated each other with vile hatred. They wanted to use the law to inflict great pain on one another.
- C. Because mediation did not work for the two, Bob challenged them to literally fight it out in a boxing ring. Bob rented the ring, a referee, and two sets of headgear and gloves. The time and place was set. The two men were no-shows, and he never heard from them again. For bullies, it’s not about resolution; it’s always about fighting.
- D. Disputes happen even among Christians. How will Christians settle disputes? What fights will Christians pick?

### II. TEACHING

- A. Jesus experienced disputes.
  - 1. Between family members (see Luke 12:13–14).
  - 2. Between His disciples (see Luke 22:24–30).
  - 3. Between religious leaders (see Luke 20:1–8).

- B. Jesus proclaimed love as the primary weapon for “fights.”
  - 1. Love keeps on forgiving (see Matthew 18:21–35).
  - 2. Love is willing to lose (see Matthew 26:52–54).
- C. Whose side is God on in a dispute? God doesn’t take sides (see Joshua 5:13–15). God asks, “Who is on My side?” He asks who will pick a fight for Him . . .
  - 1. Against injustice toward the weak and vulnerable (see James 1:27).
  - 2. Against neglect of the hungry, the homeless, and the prisoner (see Matthew 25:31–46).
  - 3. Against the sin, despair, and hopelessness of this world (see Romans 1:16–17).

### **III. APPLICATION**

- A. Bob writes that love requires “close contact. . . . Love is always that way.”
- B. “God wants us to get some skin in the game and help make a tangible difference.”
- C. What fight will you commit to? What injustice will you call out? “Picking a fight isn’t neat either. It’s messy, it’s time consuming, it’s painful, and it’s costly.”
- D. Taking God’s side in this world of conflict and disputes puts you in a good place. “It sounds an awful lot like the kind of fight Jesus took on for us when He called out death for us and won.” With skin in the game, will you fight the good fight of faith?