



## DESCRIPTION

### #FirstWorldProblems

“My coffee is too hot!” “My car takes too long to heat up!” “This YouTube video is taking forever to load!” These are the first-world problems that can dominate our lives. The reality is, there are much bigger problems in the world. In this series, we’ll learn about issues like poverty, modern-day slavery, and sex trafficking. We’ll discover how God feels about these issues and what He is calling us to do.

### #FirstWorldProblems Week 1 | GOD’S HEART

God has a really big heart for the people who are marginalized in this world. Jesus’s mission on Earth was more than just to forgive people of their sins and help get them into Heaven; He also came to meet the physical needs of the poor and the oppressed. As followers of Christ, this should matter to us, too!

**Grab the Room:** Share personal and funny examples of first-world “problems.”

**Create Tension:** Share an encounter with poverty that broke your heart.

**Engage the Text:** Luke 4:14–21; Psalm 10:14, 17–18

**Bottom Line:** God cares deeply for the poor and powerless.

**Clearly Apply:** How should God’s heart for the poor and powerless impact our “first world” lives? What is one thing you can do this week to become more aware of the needs around you this week?

## OUTLINE

### 1. #FirstWorldProblems

Introduce the message by sharing a funny example or story of a first world “problem.” Consider taking to social media for examples.

### 2. Experiencing Poverty

Talk about a time when you felt a disconnect between your everyday reality and poverty in the world. One example could be heading to the grocery

store to stock up on groceries and seeing a homeless person on the street corner begging for food or money.

### **3. Tension**

Ask, “Have you ever had a moment where you were deeply saddened by someone else’s reality?” Perhaps share another example of when you were even more severely wrecked by the reality of poverty in the world. Share that the goal of this series is to make us more aware of some really big issues in the world, learn about God’s heart for these issues, and find out how we, as Christians, can take action.

### **4. Reality Check**

Share a few statistics about poverty, modern-day slavery, and sex trafficking to paint the picture of the realities that exist in our country and around the world.

### **5. Inaugural Address**

The main text happens to be Jesus’s first ever recorded sermon. In it he shared His mission while on Earth. It’s sort of like the president’s inaugural address.

### **6. The Text**

Read Luke 4:14–21. This passage tells us that Jesus’s mission on Earth was focused on meeting both people’s spiritual AND physical needs. He came to “proclaim good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and set the oppressed free.” Jesus wants more for us than just saying a prayer and getting into Heaven; He wants us to seek justice.

### **7. God’s Heart**

Read Psalm 10:14 and 17–18. This passage reminds us that God has always cared deeply for the poor and powerless—even before Jesus came on to the scene.

### **8. Irresistible Revolution**

Read the Shane Claiborne quote from *The Irresistible Revolution*. Many people claim to be strong Christians but actually don’t do anything to care for the people who need the most help in this world.

## **9. Landing**

It’s time for us, as Christians, to realize that God cares deeply for the poor and powerless. We can no longer turn a blind eye.

**TEACHING SCRIPT**

## 1. #FirstWorldProblems

[**Author Note:** Introduce the message by sharing a funny example or story of a first world “problem.” Consider taking to social media for examples.]

A couple years ago, I was taken aback by something my sister-in-law said. She had just recently broken up with a guy she had been dating for a year or so. He happened to work for United Airlines and was able to get hooked up with free first-class plane tickets to just about anywhere. As a result, they took weekend trips to Hawaii and Paris and flew to New York City for New Year’s on a whim. I mean, who does that?

A few months after the breakup, our family was planning a ski trip out west. My father-in-law was booking plane tickets for the family, and here’s what my sister-in-law said: “Coach?! You want to fly me coach?! I only fly first class!” She was angry.

Seriously? You only fly first class? My father-in-law just about had a heart attack. The funny thing about this situation is that my sister-in-law really doesn’t have much money, and as we found out later, the guy she dated who worked for the airline was in debt up to his eyeballs.

Still, she insisted she only flies first class!

This is an example of what we like to call a “first-world problem.” The term “first world” is widely used to describe countries, such as the United States, that are typically fairly wealthy, stable, and well-educated.

Here in the United States, most families can afford to live in a decent-sized home, drive two or more cars, eat three meals a day, and take regular family vacations. Whether or not we’d like to admit it, we live fairly privileged lives, and we often experience problems that are unique to our privileged situations—again, what we call first-world problems.

Check out some of these tweets that we’ve pulled from #firstworldproblems:

“The leather seats in my car are so cold in the winter before my seat warmers kick in!” #firstworldproblems

“Ugh, why is Starbucks not within walking distance?” #firstworldproblems

“The hardest decision I’ve made in a long time: which chain restaurant to eat at today.” #firstworldproblems

“When houses block your view of a gorgeous sunset.” #firstworldproblems

“Had to scrape the inside of my car because the defroster wasn’t working.” #firstworldproblems

## 2. Experiencing Poverty

[**Author Note:** Talk about a time when you felt a disconnect between your everyday reality and poverty in the world. One example could be heading to the grocery store to stock up on groceries and seeing a homeless person on the street corner begging for food or money.]

The other day, my wife and I took our daughter to our local downtown children’s museum. Afterward, we decided to grab some lunch at the Downtown Market, one of the most expensive places to eat and shop in town. They have fresh fish and seafood flown in daily, expensive herbs and spices, locally and regionally grown organic produce, fresh-baked artisan breads, and several high-priced restaurants. Thankfully, we had a \$25 gift card to the market, and the taco place we planned to eat at fell within that budget.

As we were driving to the market, we were talking about how hungry we were. You would have thought from our conversation that we hadn’t eaten in days. We couldn’t wait to gorge ourselves on shredded beef tacos with fresh pico de gallo and guacamole, and wash it down with a chilled Coke out of a glass bottle.

As we were having this conversation, we turned onto South Division Street. Every time I drive on that street, I feel like I’ve entered a whole new world. In about a half-mile stretch, we passed dozens of men, women, and children on the sidewalks, many of them standing in line outside of the local soup kitchens and shelters. Overall, this group of people appeared cold, tired, and disheveled. Undoubtedly, many in this group had fallen on hard times and were in need of a hot meal or some assistance finding a new job.