

## READER'S NOTES: "THE DICE ON THE CROSS"

### Overall Message Tone:

- **Prophetic, not condemning** – Speak truth with tears, not anger.
  - **Convicting but hopeful** – The goal is repentance leading to freedom.
  - **Personal and communal** – Use "we," not "you." Include yourself in the challenge.
  - **Visually descriptive** – Help people *see* the scene at Calvary and *see* themselves there.
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## SECTION-BY-SECTION DELIVERY NOTES

### I. INTRODUCTION (5-7 minutes)

#### Key emotion: Holy curiosity

- Start calmly, almost quietly. Draw people in.
- "This morning, I want to share something sacred the Lord whispered to me..."
- When describing the dice, hold up imaginary dice. Look at them thoughtfully.
- Pause after: "They were gambling for scraps... while the Son of God was dying for them."
- Let that silence sit for 3 seconds.

### II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT (8-10 minutes)

#### Key emotion: Grave realization

- List the three groups slowly:
  1. "Religious leaders..." (shake head slightly)
  2. "Pilate..." (open hands as if washing them)
  3. "The crowd..." (gesture to congregation as if they're the crowd)
- Make eye contact across the room.
- When you say "They chose Barabbas..." lean into the microphone slightly, lower voice: "...the worldly hero... over the King of kings."

- Pause. Let the tragedy of that choice sink in.

### III. MODERN APPLICATION (10-12 minutes)

#### Key emotion: Loving confrontation

- Transition gently: "Now here comes the hard mirror..."
- Read the list of modern dice-throwing *slowly*. Pause after each one.
- When you say "So did Peter..." nod as if remembering his failure with compassion.
- Important: Smile slightly when you say "The enemy doesn't always make us hate Jesus..." – it's a revelation, not an accusation.
- The key line: "**Sometimes he just makes us distracted.**" Say this with parental concern, not judgment.

### IV. THE DANGER (5-7 minutes)

#### Key emotion: Urgent warning

- Contrast sharply:
  - "Dice say..." (flippant hand gesture)
  - "The cross says..." (firm, grounded tone)
- List the three "without's" with increasing intensity:
  1. "Without commitment" (matter-of-fact)
  2. "Without courage" (stronger)
  3. "Without consistency" (leaning forward)
- Quote the Holy Spirit's whisper: "**Do not be the dice.**" Say it as if hearing it again for the first time. Whisper it.

### V. THE SOLUTION (8-10 minutes)

#### Key emotion: Hopeful invitation

- Shift tone here – more gentle, pastoral.
- Number the steps on your fingers as you say them – helps people remember.
- **Crucial:** When you get to "See people as souls..." look at individuals in the congregation. See *them* as souls.

- Share briefly about a time you failed at this and what you learned. (Be human.)
- "Live with eternal stakes in mind" – point upward, then point to your temple.

## VI. RESURRECTION HOPE (4-5 minutes)

### Key emotion: Triumphant joy

- This is the turning point – voice lifts, pace quickens slightly.
- "But here's the HOPE!" (First real smile.)
- "The story doesn't end with dice in the dirt!" (Almost shout this.)
- "It ends with..." (dramatic pause, look around) "...an EMPTY TOMB!"
- Mention the soldiers' possible redemption with wonder: "Grace reaches even dice-throwers."

## VII. ALTAR CALL / CLOSING (5-7 minutes)

### Key emotion: Tender appeal

- Slow down again. This is holy ground.
- The question: "**What are you holding in your hands?**" – Look at your own empty hands as you ask.
- Offer the choice gently:
  - "Dice..." (open one hand, look at it with disappointment)
  - "Or the cross?" (open other hand, look at it with reverence)
- Extend the invitation to come forward *before* you start the closing prayer.
- During prayer: pray for specific groups:
  - Those addicted to approval
  - Those fearful of sacrifice
  - Those distracted by success
  - Those tired of playing games

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## TECHNICAL NOTES

### Pacing:

- Start: Slow, deliberate
- Middle: Build intensity
- Danger section: Most intense
- Solution: Calmer, instructional
- Hope: Joyful release
- Close: Reverent, soft

#### **Volume & Pitch:**

- Generally: Conversational, like telling an important story
- Key lines: Slightly louder, clearer
- Holy Spirit whisper: Actually whisper
- Empty tomb: Full voice, high pitch
- Final invitation: Soft, intimate

#### **Body Language:**

- Mostly stand still – movement distracts from heavy content
- Use hands for:
  - Holding imaginary dice
  - Washing hands (Pilate)
  - Pointing to heaven (eternal perspective)
  - Open palms (invitation)
- Eye contact: Sweep room slowly, linger on people in middle sections

#### **Pauses (where to breathe/let it sit):**

1. After "while the Savior dies before our eyes" (3 seconds)
  2. After "Do not be the dice" (4 seconds)
  3. After "empty tomb" (let applause/hallelujahs happen)
  4. Before final prayer (5 seconds of silence)
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## IF YOU FEEL LED TO IMPROVISE:

### Possible Personal Stories:

- A time you chose convenience over conviction
- When you realized you were "gambling" spiritually
- A moment you laid down your "dice"

### Possible Altar Call Variations:

- "Some need to come kneel here today"
- "Some need to stand where you are as a declaration"
- "Some need to find one person after service and say 'Help me lay down my dice'"

### Response Songs (if your church does this):

- **Conviction:** "I Surrender All"
- **Hope:** "Because He Lives"
- **Commitment:** "Take My Life and Let It Be"

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## REMINDER TO SELF:

You're not scolding. You're weeping over what we've missed.

You're not accusing. You're inviting us home.

You're not just preaching a sermon. You're offering a trade:

Our dice for His cross.

Our chance for His choice.

Our games for His grace.

**Now breathe. Pray. And speak as one who has held dice... and met the One who still bears the nail marks.**