

God's Story – Part 1

Designed by God, Dis-Integrated by Sin

The value of knowing God's grand story of creation, redemption, and restoration

What's wrong with the world today?

Creation

Triune God: three-in-one

- Father
- Son
- Holy Spirit
- *One* God, revealed in *three* Persons, in perfect unity and relationship

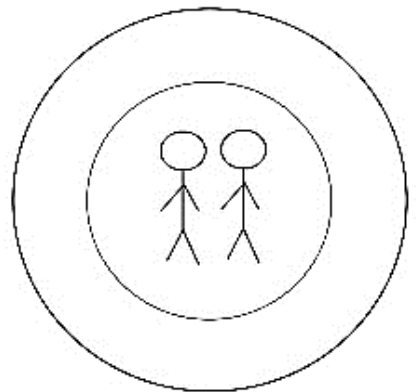
Genesis 1-2:

- Everything created out of **nothing**
- “In the beginning God created ... and God saw that it was **g**_____.”
- Humanity made in the **I**_____ of God

Perfectly **D**_____ by **G**_____

- Humanity in perfect relationship with God
- Individuals with perfect integrity and sense of identity
- People living in perfect relationship with each other
- Humanity in perfect relationship with creation

S_____: more than peace ... complete wholeness and order

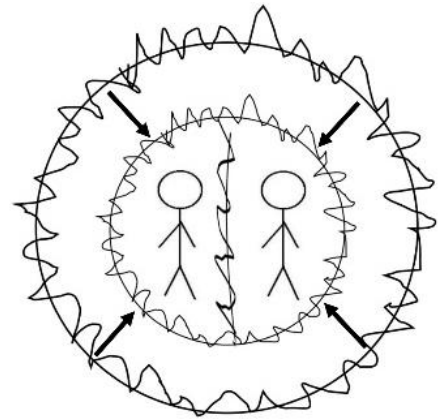


Dis-Integrated by Sin

Genesis 3-6:

S _____ brings chaos to God's order and damages those perfect relationships:

- With God
- With ourselves
- With each other
- With creation



When God created man, he made him **in the likeness of God**. ... When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son **in his own likeness**, after his image, and named him Seth. (Genesis 5:1,3)

Small-Group Discussion

- Review the list we made at the beginning of the session, about the things that are wrong in the world. Now that we have studied the first part of “God’s Story” – how everything was Designed for Good but then Dis-Integrated by Sin – do you feel you have a better understanding of why things are broken? Does the teaching of Creation and the Fall help explain why so much is wrong with the world?
- Can you think of other examples of brokenness (in our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others, and with creation) that you could now add to that list?
- Talk about some ways in which you have personally seen or experienced this brokenness in your life or in the lives of others around you.
- Do you ever get a sense of longing for “the way things ought to be”? A hope and a desire for healing and restoration in the world?

God's Story – Part 2

Israel: Delivered by Love

Scriptures

These are passages which we will look at during the presentation – or I will reference and you will have for future reference.

Genesis 12:1-3

Genesis 18:19

Exodus 19:4-6

2 Samuel 7:12-13

I Kings 10:8-9

I Kings 11:9-10

Deuteronomy 17:14-20

Isaiah 1:2-3, 13, 16-18

Psalms 137:1

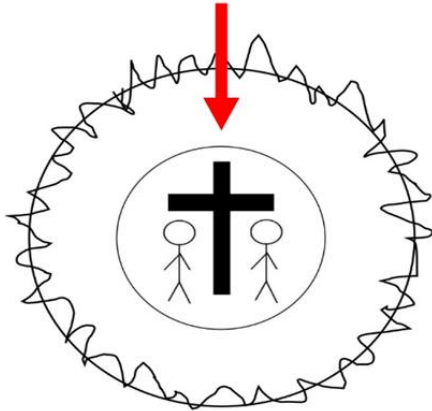
Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Questions:

- 1) How can we live lives of righteousness? What does that look like for you?
- 2) We live in a culture that desperately needs to know God's heart. As part of the "kingdom of priests," how can we help connect others with God?
- 3) How is God's Story different from all the other stories?
- 4) Which of these Old Testament themes resonate with you? Why?
- 5) Share with your group one story from the Old Testament that fascinates you. What do you learn about the character of God from this story?

God's Story – Part 3

Humankind: Delivered by Love



I _____ (John 3:16)

Ministry of the K _____ (Luke 4:18-19)

Death on the C _____ (John 19:30, Romans 5:10)

R _____ from the dead (Luke 24:5-6)

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:11-12)

The Bible word emphasized by Lutherans: G _____

- Undeserved gift of love
- Based on the love of the giver, not on the worthiness of the recipient
- Grace enabled because Jesus paid the price of justice

Grace in Literature: Les Miserables

Questions:

What reaction do you have to the story of Jean Valjean?

What does this illustration show you of grace?

How does the story relate to Christ's love for you?

God's Story – Part 4

Destined for Good

The Story Continues: Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit

Jesus' Promise:

"All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:25–26, NIV84)

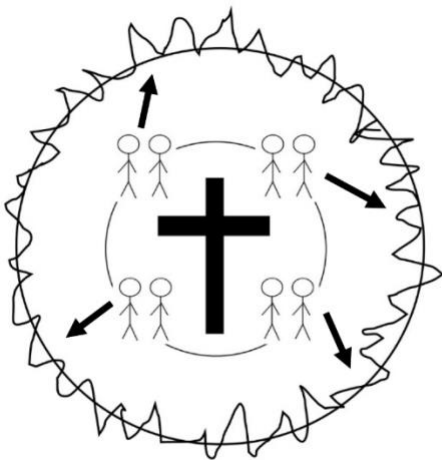
Promise Fulfilled-Pentecost

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." (Acts 2:1–4, NIV84)

The Spirit is our "Paraclete" -

Come alongside us ...

- Instills faith (1 Corinthians 12:3)
- Provides God's presence within us (John 14:16-18)
- Forms us to be like Jesus (Romans 8:5-6)
- Teaches us God's truth (1 Corinthians 2:9-12)
- Gives guidance and wisdom for life's challenges (Acts 13:2)
- Comforts (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
- Encourages (Acts 9:31)
- Inspires and challenges (Acts 4:8)
- Sends us out as Jesus' witnesses (Acts 1:8)



The Spirit's Work of Forming

My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you ... [Galatians 4:19 (NIV)]

Each of us is (or can be in Christ) an *e*_____ life in the making and equally remarkable is that God us invites into the formation process in helping each other.

Abiding in Christ, stretched by service, and sharpened by relationships, we can grow in remarkable *f*_____ and *f*_____.
John 15:5



DISCOVER

... experience in a fresh way the love and truth of God as received through Jesus in his Word.

GROW

... personally experience the presence of Jesus as you walk in genuine Christian community.

GO

... take the gift of God's love to others through witness and service.

The Spirit's Work of Sending

The changes the Holy Spirit works in our lives are in part an end in themselves as our lives more fully honor God. They are also a means to an end as the Spirit sends us out as changed people to love and serve the world. This takes two major forms:

Christian Service, Influence, and Generosity

All Christians are called, in general, to serve others, to be sources of godly influence, and to be generous in giving.

Individual Calling

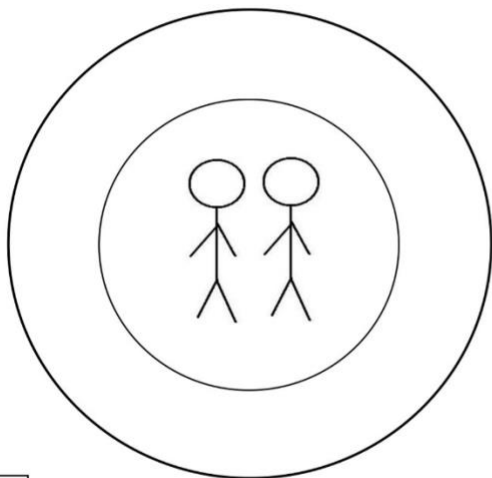
Every Christian is called individually in each season of life to identify a focused area of service in which you are able to make your greatest c_____.

- paid employment
- family service
- volunteer work
- a ministry vision

God's Story – Part 5

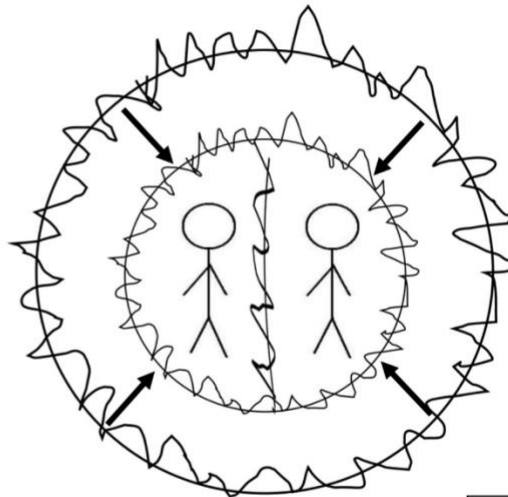
God's Story and Your Story

Designed by God



1

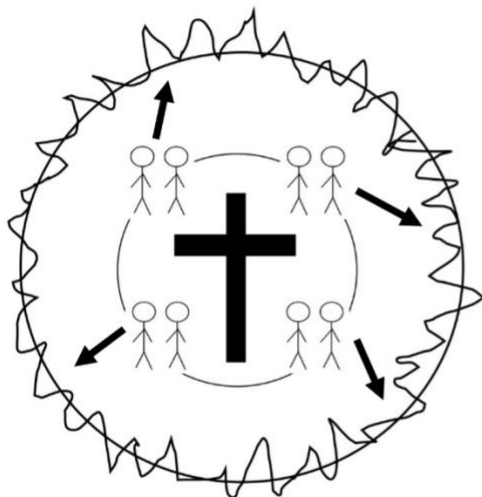
Dis-Integrated by Sin



2

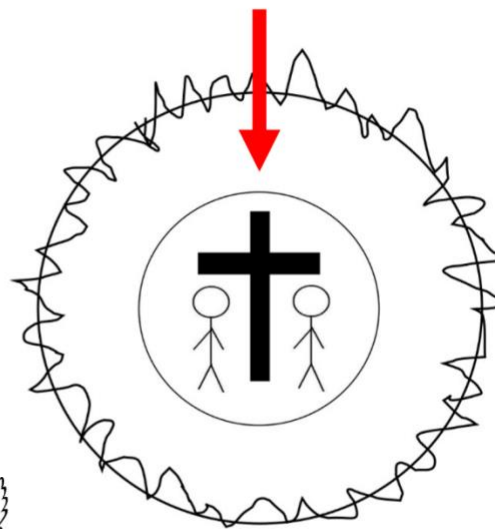


Destined for Good



4

Delivered by Love



3



God's Story, Your Story

Your God-Story

One of the most powerful tools for sharing your faith is to tell your own God-story: how God has been at work in your life. We suggest developing your own “elevator speech” regarding the difference God has made in your life. The four main chapters of God’s Story suggest four different themes that can serve as a starting point for you to develop your story.

Suggested Approach

- 1) Read through the God-story themes below and reflect on the questions.
- 2) Choose one or more of the themes that seem to match how you think about your personal God-Story.
- 3) Write a 3- or 4-paragraph God-story of how He has made a difference in your life.

Want some help? Contact a Peace staff person to help coach you through the process.

Life Blessings Theme (Designed by God): a story that emphasizes God’s blessings on your life through the years and how he has gifted you to serve.

For reflection:

- Identify the most significant blessings that you have experienced from God.
- What are events or experiences in your life in which God’s love and goodness have been particularly evident?
- What are your God-given strengths and abilities that have helped shaped your person and purpose?

Before and After Theme (Dis-Integrated by Sin/Delivered by Love): a story that focuses on before/after: how your life had been greatly by sin and evil (could be your own or that of others) and yet God in his love has restored your life by bringing forgiveness, freedom, and healing.

For reflection:

- What was your life like before you came to faith in Christ? How did you experience bondage to sin or its consequences?
- What changed in your life after coming into a more significant faith relationship with him? How have you experience freedom from sin and healing?

Benefits of Christ’s Work Theme (Delivered by Love): a story that emphasizes the difference that being in a saving relationship with Jesus has made in your life. Examples of benefits include love from God, forgiveness, compassion for others, joy, peace, character change, purpose, forgiveness, strength, hope, guidance and wisdom, relationship with other Christians, etc.

For reflection:

- How has knowing Jesus as your Savior most impacted your life?
- When you think about the character of Jesus and his death and resurrection for you, what has especially moved you to trust and follow him?
- Which of the benefits that flow from being in a relationship with Christ have brought you the greatest joy and fulfillment?

Mission and Service Theme (Destined for Good): a story that emphasizes how Christ shifted your priorities from typical American pursuits of money, possessions, and pleasure to a life focused on a mission that matters. This mission involves service to others and making a significant contribution through your work, a set of relationships, or a volunteer passion.

For reflection:

- What are most significant contributions you have made to individuals and your community during the seasons of your life?
- What particular issue or need in the world are you especially moved by? How can you make a difference?
- In this season, how would you describe your calling from God?

Your Next Step(s) With God's Story

Now that you have a better understanding of the grand story of Scripture and how it reveals God's story of salvation, you are prepared to dig deeper into the Word of God. The more you spend time in the Word, the more deeply God reveals himself to you and the more you learn about the living the full life, that God is leading you into.

What will you do now to engage in God's Word and discover more clearly your place in the Story?

Here are some options for you to consider

- Weekly Bible Readings and Reflection questions connected to the weekend message.
- Read the Gospel of Mark (Devotional guide available)
- Start following a Bible Reading Plan (Contact Lynette or David)
- Read "The Story" – this is a special version of the Bible that walks through all of the narrative sections of the Bible to give you the grand story from beginning to end without bogging down with a lot of the teaching portions of Scripture.
- Watch Brad Gray's 73-minute take on "The Restoration of All Things" (<https://walkingthetext.com/the-restoration-of-all-things/>)
- Meet with Lynette Schulz or Pastor David to explore more options.
LynetteS@mypeacechurch.com DavidF@mypeacechurch.com

Feel free to add any ideas you may have to the list. Then start by marking at least one option that sounds interesting to you. Next, spend some time praying and reflecting over the option(s) you have chosen. Finally, choose one that you will pursue over the next 6 months to a year.

Be sure to let us know how we can help you accomplish your next steps in connecting with the Word of God.