

The Stories We Tell: Course Introduction: Class 2, April 29 – Stories of Redemption

As humans, we love stories, and they effect the way we see our world. As Christians, true story of scripture is a metanarrative that reflects the “one big story” of God’s love woven through many smaller stories and characters. Our world offers other narratives –some adding to the cacophony of our modern culture and some echoing the divine author. Stories have incredible power. They can help bring order and context to our lives, pointing us to God as the source of life. Our own stories also have power, so we seek to share stories of God’s work in our lives. God’s Story, the stories of our culture, and our stories. These are the the stories we tell.

What is the story of Scripture? (or the Biblical Metanarrative)

The Bible is one big, complete story, which can be referred to as a metanarrative.

1. The Bible is one big story.
2. The story has a plot line. (Creation, Fall, Rescue, Restoration)
3. The theme of this story is God’s grace: Jesus’ rescue of sinners and redemption of the world.
4. We are all participants in this ongoing story. (Participators with agency)

Creation → Fall → Rescue/Redemption → Restoration/Consummation

How do stories help us make sense of the world?

The Questions We Are Asking: (Metaphysics)

1. Where did I come from?
2. Why is there such a mess in the world?
3. Is there any hope?
4. What am I here for?
5. What happens to me when I die?

God: Who is God/god in our life?

Creation: Who am I or who should I be?

Rebellion: What’s wrong with me and the world?

Rescue: What’s the solution?

Home: What do I hope for and where am I going?

“A worldview is an outlook or perspective, a set of paradigms that are a comprehensive, controlling, communal, contagious, construal of reality.” (Cunningham)

“While worldviews are important, people don’t live simply according to cognitive propositions and principles, but according to stories.” (Cunningham)

“I can only answer the question “What am I to do?” if I can answer the prior question

“Of what story do I find myself a part?” -Alasdair MacIntyre

“A story can ‘tell truth’ in ways more subtle – and more ‘true’ – than propositional. L’Engle points out that this approach to truth is biblical – the Bible contains few propositions (God ‘is’) but hundreds of stories (God ‘did’ or ‘is doing’), and Jesus in particular told stories and refused to define their ‘meaning.’” (Glorious Companions)

Why are stories powerful?

Consider some of your favorite stories...

Why are they good stories?

Exposition — The Creation
Rising Action — The Fall
Climax — The Rescue
Resolution — The Restoration



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What sort of story are you in?

Video clip: Stranger than Fiction

What about our story? Where do we fit in God's Big Story?

The Bible isn't just a story we like or dislike. It is a book of truth, beauty, power.

Do we read the Bible, or does the Bible read us? "As we lay bare it's pages, it lays bare our hearts."

Dr. James Choung, evangelist, and the Big Story framework:

We are designed for good. We are damaged by evil. We are restored for better. We are sent to heal.

"It, I think, is the only story big enough to make sense out of everything you've been through and everything you and the people you love will face in the future." (Buzzard)

If I asked you to tell me your story, what would you say?

"Everyone has a story. Put another way, everyone's life is a story. But most people don't know how to read their life in a way that reveals their story. They miss the deeper meaning in their life, and they have little sense of how God has written their story to reveal himself and his own story." (Dan Allender)

"God, of course, is the Master Storyteller. His self-revelation is captured in a sweeping narrative and then given to us in the Book that grips our heart and captures our soul. God also creates a story with each person's life – a story that we are meant to tell." (Allender)

What is a "testimony"? How do I share my story with others?

Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Testimony: speaks of my experience (not necessarily about transcendent truth). It tells a story of why one loves the Lord, but it doesn't have to explain why the Lord loves him or her.

What if I don't have the answers? Are people loved into the faith or argued into the faith?

Different Stories: Paul (Acts 9) and Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5)

Reflect on these questions:

- **Before you came to faith in Jesus, what was your life like and where did you seek answers?**
- **What were the circumstances of your life that caused you to consider and trust in Christ?**
- **What truth of the gospel story has particularly impacted your faith?**
- **How have you seen God meet your needs or impact the story of your life?**
- **Are there any current challenges where you are trusting God to work?**

Next Week: Class 3, May 6 – God's Story: Walking it, Talking it, Sharing it (Dr. David Olshine)

Considering the stories and myths of our culture, how does God's story counteract and redeem the stories of our lives? How are Christians called to walk in, talk about, and share the story of faith?