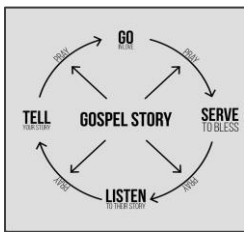


## "Telling the Gospel Story" / Speaking of Jesus 6

**Pic of Eric Alexander & Eric Weihenmayer** – climbing Everest and at the summit. Eric W is blind. He lost his sight to juvenile Retinoschisis as a teenager. An amazing athlete that was an all-state wrestler, he became the first blind mountaineer to summit Everest and climb the highest peaks on all 7 continents. Only 150 have done this. Eric A. is a Christ follower and best friend of Eric W. He has been speaking of Jesus with his friend through story for almost 16 years now in his actions and words. Not sure if He is a believer but listen to this forward Eric W wrote for Alexander. **(READ forward)** And hear this last thought – Eric helped me see that my story doesn't define me. There is a bigger story going on – that gives texture, meaning, and hope to my story whether my story is going great or being drown in tragedy and suffering. His faith in the bigger story of God – is changing my life.

"Our lives must find their place in some greater story, or they will find their place in some lesser story." *"God Stories"* - H. Stephen Shoemaker

When telling the gospel story, we must share the greatest story of God's grand redemption. This story has four parts: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration.



The greatest story is the **gospel story** & to engage others in this story requires actions & words. Today we are going to learn how we share in words, the greatest story, the gospel story. Together in the gospel, for the gospel, to the glory of God. Couple of thoughts ...

- 1) Never are we called to live this life alone. Our lives together demonstrate the reality of Christ. So, let's learn to go together in love, to serve, to pray, to listen and to tell this great story.
- 2) Rarely – will you get to engage someone with the whole Gospel story – Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration. Most often – you will get to engage in one or two or maybe even three

parts. That's ok. Pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and tell you what to say. He said He would. And engage in love – listening and dialoguing. Here we go-

**Creation** - There was a way things were supposed to be.

Colossians 1:15-17 (ESV) 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

**Why did God create?** He created to give not to get. He created to share His joy and love with you and I.

**What was creation like?** One word sums up the picture of Genesis 1 & 2: **shalom** = perfect peace where everything works according to God's intention. When the earth was created it was full of God's shalom. The whole of the earth and all of its creation was in perfect peace so we could live in the joy and love of the presence of our Maker.

How do we engage others in the gospel story – at the point of "creation"?

In general, engage others with dialogue. *Dialogue > Monologue.* (Jesus used monologue to masses. Dialogue to few.) **One on One** - Stories engage you. Monologues talk at you. Jesus, holy God, talked to rebel humans with lots of engagement, concern, questions, and reasoning.

You aren't telling the creation account – rather, you are engaging people with this idea – **there was a way things were supposed to be.** Everyone agrees things are messed up. This is a natural common ground to find with people. However, at this point we must engage people with what it was suppose to look like.

1. What would things look like if things were perfect in your life? List a view things ...
2. What would things look like in this world if things were perfect? List a few things ...

\* Does that list include Jesus? Do you think those things are possible – without Jesus?

\* If you had a perfect life of peace and happiness with all the people you love and Jesus was not a part – would you want it?

**Fall** - There is brokenness in all of the earth and in us.

21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,



*I was working Thursday afternoon when I received this text just after 3 pm. This is not the way things are supposed to be. (repeat) It doesn't take a long look at this world to see there are things about this world – about people – about you and I – that are just not the way they should be.*

**Fall:** This is not how things were meant to be. *There is brokenness in all of the earth and in us and it is due to our rebellion to God. We broke things. The shalom – God's perfect peace has been wrecked by our rebellion and there are grave consequences because of our rebellion.*

Our sin, our rebellion had several effects that leave us hopeless in and of ourselves:

- Creation is broken and in need of reconciliation. 20 and through Him to reconcile to himself all things  
*Hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, tornados, floods – creation is broke. Is this is how things were supposed to be*
- We are separated from God forever and under His judgment.  
21 And, you who once were alienated 22 he has now reconciled
- We are hostile toward our need for a Savior. 21 And, you who once were alienated and hostile in mind
- We can't live as holy God designed us to and we can't stop rebelling against God.  
21 And, you who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds  
*In our brokenness – we can't stop doing evil – sin against holy God. We can't love, give, serve, obey, do relationships, do this life the way we want. Regrets and shame haunt us. We are broken – not just the world.*

How do we engage others in the gospel story – at the point of "fall"?

1. What do you consistently look at and say – "that is so broken"? Why do you think it is so broken?
2. Do you ever think that about your self? *In other words, there are things you just can't seem to do well no matter how hard you try like - you keep getting angry, you can't love him like you want to, etc.*

*What do you think is the key issue(s)? What makes our country and / or us – "so broken"?*

**Redemption** - *Jesus came to restore all things.*

The apex of the gospel story/ the grand redemption story of God is – the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.  
**(resurrection)** 18 ... He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preminent.  
**(sinless life)** 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, (By Jesus' work – **everything** will be reconciled. **Evil destroyed, creation restored, hopeless sinners reconciled**) **(death)** making peace by the blood of his cross. *Through judging His Son Jesus in our place, for our rebellion - God brought **peace (shalom)** back to all of His creation.*

Redemption is the apex of the Gospel Story and it involves:

- Christ's life *(He lived the life we should have lived. 19 in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell*
- Christ's death *(He died the death we should have died. 20 making peace by the blood of his cross*
- Christ's resurrection *(He did what we could never do – rose from the dead. 18 the firstborn from the dead*

How do we engage others in the gospel story – at the point of "redemption"?

1. We agree \_\_\_\_\_ is broken. What do you think would fix it once and for all?  
*Learn to listen to people at this point. You don't have to correct. Just listen to their "gospel", their good news that they "faith" will fix what is broken.*
2. That \_\_\_\_\_ is broken is a small picture of what is broken in a big sense in this world. What do you think would fix the problems of this world – suffering, poor, hatred, oppression, evil?  
*Again listen – before you offer up Jesus. Listen, listen, listen – and you will most of often hear hopelessness or resignation to the answer most think – there is nothing that can fix this broken world.*

*Would you be open to hearing a different take on Jesus and how He came to restore all that was hopelessly broken in this world?* At this point – You may get to share the redemption part of the Gospel Story.

Take your time and tell the story. *Briefly touch on creation, fall – and then focus on the apex of the story – Jesus':*

- \* **life** – **He lived the life we should have lived**, *(lived the perfect life of love and joy we were made for)*
- \* **death** – **He died the death we should have died**, *(took our punishment for our rebellion)*
- \* **resurrection** – **He did what we could never do – rose from the dead** *(The King of All – crushed our*

rebellion - with servanthood - not power. He reconciled us to God - by serving us with His life.)

- 1) The actions of this broken world only make sense with God's redemptive story. We see suffering in this world - is not because there is no God or God that doesn't care - but it is a result of all our rebellion that broke this world and makes our actions hurt each other.
- 2) But we also see - God restored peace - shalom - to everything through sending Jesus.

*How are we reconciled to God? Made right with Him? - **Jesus did all the work.** We must turn from believing our story - there is no God or I don't need Jesus. **We turn from this story and trust our soul** - everything we are to the person and work of Jesus on our part. **Faith or trust Jesus** - means to rest everything on - like sit in a chair. Have you done this? Today you can and be baptized!*

**Restoration - One day, thru Jesus' work, all things will be restored to how they were supposed to be.**

**22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,**

The end of the story is the return of all things to the way they were supposed to be. (In our redemption - we are declared right before God by the work of Jesus. We are given Jesus' right standing before God by faith in HIS work and we are declared fully acceptable. But while we live on this earth - we are fully saint (right before God) and fully sinner (still trapped in a flesh that is corrupted by sin). **We live in an already - but not yet fully life in Christ.**

**By faith in Christ's work, we live in the "already but not yet" of God's grand redemption plan.**

**In August of 1945, VJ Day marked the formal end of the war in the Pacific as the Japanese government officially surrendered. The bloodiest war in history that involved almost the whole world ended with close to 5 million people dying in what is called the Pacific theater - where Japan is located. Even though the war was finished - 1000's of Japanese soldiers fought on as insurgents. Close to 100,000 fought on for 6 months. Over 1,000 fought on for up to two (2) years. But a few actually fought on close to 30 years. In 1974, the last soldier surrendered. Not only was there a physical battle still being fought after the war finished - there was the rebuilding of Japan and the surrounding countries devastated by war. Japan itself was occupied and was given direct financial support to rebuild its country and economy by the US for seven years after the war. The war was declared finished in 1945 but it was 1952 before rebuilding had really had an effect and it was 1974 before the last soldiers surrendered in the region.**

At the cross, Christ declared it is finished when he bowed His head under the weight of God's judgment.

When Jesus rose from the grave - He had done everything needed to reconcile all things - evil, creation, and people back to God. *While the war was over - the struggle continues until Christ's final return.* That is why it is often said, we live in the "already, but not yet" of God's grand redemption plan.

**23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.**

**By faith in Christ' work alone - we are reconciled to God.** It is by faith that we live in the power and transforming work of Christ. As those reconciled to God, every hopeless problem we have with this world and every seemingly impossible issue we have in our broken lives - is a faith issue in the **hope of the gospel.**

**ASIDE - That is why every week, we preach our need to repent from that which we are believing that is a lie that is keeping us from living as we were supposed to live and to turn to the truth of the freedom and healing we have been given in the cross of Jesus.**

**How do we engage others in the gospel story - at the point of "restoration"?**

1. Do you think it is important to help the poor and those in vulnerable situations - like orphans, the disabled, etc.? **Why?** Listen up to why they see the need or don't for social justice.

**Many in the church believe caring for the vulnerable is important. Do you wonder why we think it is so important?**

Caring for the vulnerable is our God's heart - and it is evidence and a picture that God will one day restore all things to how they were supposed to be. **Our efforts don't make us right with God. We serve and love, because God because of His goodness not ours, has made us right with Him bc of Jesus.**

What is the biggest thing you notice about these 9 vss and the story they are telling? *This story is about Jesus.*

The central focus of this story is about God - specifically the person and work of Jesus.

**Pic of EW on Time - I had become famous, was speaking all over and I was being hailed a hero -yet I couldn't**

*even love my wife well. I called Eric – He listened, he laughed, and he eventually said – this story isn't about you. When it becomes about you – it is nice – for a moment, then it gets ugly like a storm on the mountain. And, what you thought was pretty cool – can kill you. There is a bigger story here Eric. Keep searching for it in God and Christ.”* Your story – your sufferings, joys, crazy ideas, failures, hopes, job, and family – are a part of God's story. But, your story is not the gospel. The central focus of this story is God, specifically the person and work of Jesus.

**FIND YOUR STORY in JESUS.**

***AND TELL HIS STORY as you engage people with their story and yours!***

**BLESSING - JUDE 24-25**