

The Story 2026

The King-Redemption

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

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In nearly every epic movie or story you read, there is a hero. The plot lines usually follow a similar trajectory. You start in the middle of the story. You're in the thick of the action where the hero is facing some crisis or some enemy that they have to defeat. The plot usually revolves around some dangerous physical or spiritual journey or quest that they are on. And eventually, as the story continues, you get filled in on the backstory.

Maybe it's through flashbacks of the main character or whatever else, but you find out what is going on. In almost all of these epic stories, there is usually some type of supernatural element. And the hero has to take on this enemy only to narrowly defeat it and bring rescue or freedom to the universe or the world or wherever they are. After the victory is won, the hero usually returns home and the journey is over, but the hero is different than when he left.

Let me just give you some examples from history because these types of stories have been shared in cultures for thousands of years. We have the story of Gilgamesh, the story of Achilles, the stories of King Arthur, of course, the Lord of the Rings, the stories of Frodo Baggins, and probably the most popular one if you're an '80s kid, is Star Wars, right? Luke Skywalker. All of these stories that take place, these epics of good versus evil or light versus dark, this idea of a hero and a villain.

I've always found it interesting as I look through history and as I look through these different stories, that as human beings, we have always been drawn to these types of stories. Now, I don't have any proof as to why we are drawn to these stories, but I personally believe it's because this idea of a hero and of this epic journey has been written on our hearts from the beginning of time. We recognize this type of story.

Whether we are religious or not, people instinctively look at the world around us in which we live, and they recognize there's something wrong. There's something wrong in the world. And if you don't think so, turn on the news for five minutes. You recognize there's something wrong in the world, and you and I are in need of a hero. We are in need of somebody to save us or to rescue us. Today, we are in week five of a seven-week series we have been going through called The Story.

I've asked you to lock in for these seven weeks so that I can share with you the greatest epic story of all time, which actually also is true, a true story. The first week in the story, we talked about creation and how God created everything. The second week, we talked about the fall and the rebellion of man, that God created this perfect world, and then man tainted it and brought sin into it.

Then the third week, we talked about God choosing a specific people, that He was going to reveal Himself to this broken world through this people group. And then last week, that not did God just choose this people, but He was going to give them a land and make them into a nation. And they were supposed to represent Him to the

world. And of course, we know that like all human beings, they didn't do a great job just as we don't always do a great job.

I encourage you, just as I have every time we've done this, if you've missed any of the first four weeks, I encourage you to go back online and catch up. They're all available to you. And my goal in taking you as a church through this series, at the very least, is to get you intrigued enough that you would open up your Bible at home and start reading and get the whole story. That's my, at the very least, goal, that I would get you excited enough about this epic grand story that you and I are a part of.

We play a role in this story that God has crafted, that you would get excited enough that seven weeks wouldn't be enough because we have to skip over so much in just seven weeks that you would go back and read from Genesis to Revelation and get the story, maybe even join a Bible study. But I will share with you openly and honestly my ultimate goal in going through this series is that you would get to know Jesus. That's the goal. The entire Old Testament points to Jesus.

We have the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that talk about the life of Jesus. And then we have the whole New Testament that points back to when Jesus is going to return. It is all pointing to Jesus. And so today, we get to reach the climax of the story, the very pinnacle of the story where we are going to be introduced to the hero, our hero. The hero is going to come onto the scene, the hero being Jesus, and He's going to fight against evil, and He is going to win the battle.

And the battle this time in our epic story of which we are a part is the battle against sin, death, and the grave. That's the battle that you and I all fight. And this story, like every epic story, is a story of redemption. And that's what we get to read about. So I'm going to pray, and then we're going to jump back into this as we get to the climax of our story, introduced to the hero, the Savior, who is to come. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we come before You, and we thank You that You allow us to be a part of the story, to play a role in that story. But of course, playing a role in the story means that we are a part of this broken and fallen world. And so we experience pain and suffering and loss and death.

But even as we are a part of this story, we do not lose hope because we also know the end of the story. We know that a Savior has come to redeem us, to save us. And so we thank You for that. And Lord, for those that are here, those that are watching online, maybe even just listening on the radio that have not experienced that joy that comes in being saved.

I pray that your Spirit would work in hearts and lives today. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen. Quick recap for those of you that were not here, all right? Week one, all about the beginning, all about the creation. God created a good and perfect world. And as we read through that story of creation, we see that mankind, Adam and Eve were the pinnacle of that creation.

Scripture says that they were created, and you and I were created Imago Dei in the image of God. All of creation was made so that you and I could enter into it and have a beautiful, perfect relationship with a loving Father. It all revolved around goodness. Everything initially reflected His goodness. But then in week two, we see that we, as the pinnacle of creation, brought sin into the world, and all of creation was affected by that sin.

Even the physical created world was affected by that sin. Our relationships with one another were affected by that sin. And so we broke God's perfect world. And Adam and Eve were deceived as many of us at one time were deceived to believe the lie about God's heart, that he cannot be trusted, that He has something out for us. And apart from God's good heart, this creation, all human beings become hopeless. But thankfully, God doesn't leave it that way.

In week three, God chooses this man, Abram, who later would be called Abraham and his wife, Sarai, who would later be called Sarah. And God says, "I am going to make a covenant with you. I'm going to make a promise with you. And through you, I want to reveal myself to the rest of the world." And so you have this responsibility to be

a nation of holy priests that you will help reveal me to a world that desperately needs me. But thankfully, God wouldn't leave it that way.

God's plan didn't rest solely on the Israelites because all humans, they would make mistakes just like Adam and Eve before them. This nation would repeatedly turn away from God and they would worship other false idols. And fortunate for us, God's plan never depended on the faithfulness of His people. Instead, His plan depended on Him being the faithful one. And so God would remain faithful. And this is where we arrive in the story today. God has created the world. We bring sin into the world. God chooses the people to reveal Himself.

Those people turn away. And so God says, "Okay, it is time for the hero to come." This hero is going to enter and step into the created order. At just the right moment in history, God Himself decides to put on flesh and come to earth, born of a Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. And Jesus' birth marks the beginning of the good news, the gospel around Jesus Christ. This is the climax of the story. The hero is about to enter into his creation.

John, chapter 1, verse 14, John tells us this. He says, "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us." And John testifies to the fact we have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testifies to the fact that Jesus is the Savior. He is the Messiah. He is entering the world not as a God that is coming down out of the clouds, but instead as a baby. And His birth marks the beginning of the good news.

As we follow the life of Jesus, this hero who has entered into the story, it's interesting as far as literature and what we have written about Jesus' early life as a child, as a teenager, we don't have a lot, just a random story of his parents leaving him at the temple, right, in Jerusalem. We don't know much about his early life, but at the age of 30, the gospels pick up Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and we see Jesus beginning His public ministry.

And what we do know about Jesus' ministry and about His life is that if Jesus is going to be the hero of this story, of our story, by sacrificing Himself in order to save us, that He needed to live a sinless and perfect life. He needed to be without defect, without fault, in order to fulfill the requirements of a holy and righteous and good God.

Hebrews 4:15 tells us that, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet did not sin." One of the things I love about this verse in Hebrews chapter 4 is it helps me know that God understands my struggles. He put on flesh, and we have this beautiful dichotomy in Scripture that Jesus was 100% man.

He understood what it felt like to live in flesh and to live in a fallen and broken world where there's sickness and disease and suffering and hurt and loss and pain. He understands all of that. He can relate with us, but he also is 100% God. He had the ability to take the sins, my sins, the sins of the world upon himself, and be that perfect sacrifice without defect, without fault. And so Scripture says that he would take sins upon himself in order to pay the price of sin, which is death.

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord." When Jesus came, He came to fulfill that price, to pay that price, to rescue us from sin and death and the grave. Jesus came and when He came and He began His ministry, He talked about something different than what was expected even from the religious leaders. When Jesus came, He came and talked about the kingdom of God.

This new kingdom that was going to advance, yes, upon the earth, but it went even beyond the earth. And in this new kingdom, he would teach about love and forgiveness. He would teach about repentance and obedience over this idea of simple religious legalism. He brought the issue back to the real issue because the heart of the issue is the issue of the heart. That's the real problem. That's the real issue. It's our inner heart. And when Jesus came, He came to change that heart.

He came to advance this new kingdom. And we're going to talk more about this new kingdom next week when we get into the church and we look into the book of Acts. And I'm telling you, it's super exciting. It's probably

one of my favorite things to talk about. Because what you and I need to understand is that the kingdom of God that Jesus came to establish is here and now. We don't have to wait for it. We are part of it now and it is different and this kingdom is breaking into the kingdom of the world and has been since this moment. The story continues.

You and I continue to be a part of that story. But the religious leaders at the time, of course, didn't appreciate Jesus' teaching about this new kingdom because it didn't gel well with their minds and what they believed to be true. Because as they read the Old Testament prophecies, they were looking for this Savior to come and establish this earthly kingdom. They wanted a military leader thinking back to David, one of their first kings, thinking back to King Saul.

They were looking for this Savior, this hero to come riding in and to restore the nation of Israel, a human kingdom, back to its prominent place in the world. They were looking for this hero, especially at this time, to come in and to conquer the hated Romans that were over them constantly. They were looking for the Savior, this hero that was going to come in and finally conquer the Promised Land, not just a little peace, but everything, the entire Promised Land, which even up to this point, Israel has not ever held.

And so they were waiting for this military leader, and then all of a sudden, Jesus comes and he begins talking about a new kingdom, the kingdom of God, and is concerned about all the religious and political stuff that's taking place. He doesn't care because he knows that the kingdom of God is so much greater. So the religious leaders decide to call him a heretic, a liar. They believe that this new ruler, this guy is coming in, and he was distracting the people from what really mattered and what they really wanted to have happen.

They were looking for a zealot, and he was teaching a different message, offering different goals. And so the religious leaders made the decision to kill him with the intent to stop his movement and to regain their power and their authority over the people. But what they didn't know was that this was exactly what He came to do. Unknowingly, they did the very thing that He came to do. This hero, this Savior had come into the world to offer His life as the perfect sacrifice.

His death was not defeat. It was actually the fulfillment of God's rescue plan. So much so that as he was dying and he was on the cross, what were his final words? He says, "It is finished." It is finished. I have done what I came to do. The debt of sin was paid in full. We still have the issue of death. And so the story doesn't end there. Three days later, Scripture says he conquers death. He comes back to life. And the resurrection of Jesus is not simply a historical event.

It is the cornerstone of our hope and faith as believers in Jesus. Everything rests on the resurrection so much so that the apostle Paul speaking to the Corinthian church says, "Listen, if Christ has not been raised from the dead, then your faith is futile and you are still in your sins." If he can't conquer death, then what hope do we have? But he says he has conquered death. He has been raised back to life. He has defeated sin, death, and the grave.

And now redemption is available to you and to me and to all who would believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord. And the proof of who Jesus is can be found. In the New Testament, it points back to all of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah, who was to come, books that were written, letters that were written, hundreds of years earlier, made prophecies about the Messiah, and Jesus fulfills every single one. Not humanly possible.

You have the signs and the miracles of Jesus that are recorded in Matthew's account, and in Mark's account, and in Luke's account, and in John's account, four eyewitness accounts that each took time to write the truth about who Jesus was. And then we have the resurrection, and we'll talk more about this next week, but the idea that there were believers going around in Jerusalem at that time, merely days later, and proclaiming that Jesus had been raised from the dead, if there was a Roman authority, if there was a religious leader, if there was anybody that could have found the bones of Jesus to shut these guys up, they would have done it.

But they couldn't. There is proof of the resurrection. And what I think is possibly the greatest truth of the resurrection is the testimonies of those who knew him best. His apostles, his brothers, his friends, his family members, those that even during his life were kind of like, ah, I'm not really sure. I don't know what's going on. The apostles, after Jesus is crucified, Scripture says in the book of Acts that on the day of Pentecost, they're all hiding in an upper room. Why do you think they're hiding in Jerusalem? Because they know that they could be next. And something happens in that upper room that they go from hiding to busting the doors open.

And we know it's because they have the Holy Spirit. I don't want to get into that because that's next week. But they have the Holy Spirit and they begin proclaiming the truth of who Jesus is in Jerusalem 50 days after the crucifixion, the very place where they killed Jesus. And these guys go out there and said, "I'm sorry, I just have to say the truth." And it's the beginning of the church. It's a beautiful story for next week. This is the story of Scripture that you and I get to read, that Jesus lived a life that we couldn't live, that He died a death that we didn't deserve, and He rose again so that you and I could have hope in a resurrection, that you and I could be restored and have a personal relationship with God, going back to the days like it was in the Garden of Eden.

And so Jesus' life and His resurrection established this new covenant with us, a new promise to us, not just to Israel, not just to the Jews, not just to people in North America or South America, but anybody that would ever exist, a new covenant that salvation and restoration is available to all who would believe. You see, Jesus did what Israel never could obey perfectly. They could never do that. You and I could never do that. Only Jesus could accomplish that.

As the hero, Jesus did something that the sacrifices of animals never could pay for sin. He came as that perfect sacrifice taking our place on the cross, and Jesus did what a broken people never could do. Make a way back to the Father. In some days, Scripture promises us that He will return again and He will put an end to every evil thing and He will restore the unbroken goodness of God to all creation. And that's the hope that you and I have in this epic story.

With Jesus comes the promise to restore that which is broken, a broken world, broken people, broken emotions and relationships and bodies and thoughts and hopes. He came to set us free, free from sin and death, from the grave, from chaos. And the amazing thing about our story that we read, this epic story of Scripture is that he didn't leave out the end. We know the end of the story. We know that good wins. We know that light wins. Isn't it amazing that every epic story that's ever been written?

The stories we read, the movies we watch, we know who's going to win, don't we? From the very beginning. And don't you watch that movie and think to yourself or read that book and the people that choose the side of evil or darkness or whatever else? And don't you think to yourself, how silly are those people? We know who's going to win. Why are you choosing the bad side? You know the good side is going to win. And you know the same is true for us. Every single one of us as a part in the story is left to make that choice. Will we join the winning side or not?

The apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 and 9, "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith." And this is not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast. Paul was very clear. We are saved by faith. We are saved by a belief, by a confession of faith in God, that Jesus is the hero of the story. And then Paul says in Romans chapter 10, verses 9 and 10 that if you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Why? For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Fortunately for you and I, we don't have to worry about standing before a holy and good and righteous God and see this huge scale that is up there. And all of our good deeds and good acts get put on one side of the scale, and all of our bad deeds and bad acts get put on the other side of the scale. And we just stand there crossing our fingers hoping we did at least one more good thing than bad thing while we are here. That's not the way that it works.

It's not the way that a just God could make the decision. And so instead, God sends the hero to make this covenant with all of mankind saying, "Listen, if you simply will believe, if you will put your faith in me, if you will proclaim me as Lord and Savior, then the scale is going to be in your favor. You can spend an eternity with me. Your sins can be forgiven. You simply need to repent and turn back to Him. I want to be honest with you for a little bit. I'm always honest with you. I don't know why I say that.

For the last couple elder meetings, some of the elders had mentioned, "Hey, pastor, I noticed that you don't often use the sinner's prayer at the end of any message. I just would encourage you to do that. Don't know where you stand on that whole thing. And I love our elders because they open my eyes to things like that. I don't know that I intentionally have not used the sinner's prayer to encourage people to join the winning team, to confess Christ as Lord.

But again, if I'm just being honest with you, I think maybe internally, after all of my years of being a youth pastor and going to many events where speakers would offer the sinner's prayer, I often would see teenagers and adults almost use it like a Get Out of Hell Free card. They would say, "Well, I prayed the prayer. I would talk to teenagers. I would talk to adults." And I would say, "Hey, you know, do you have a faith in Jesus? Do you have a relationship with Him?" And they would say, "Yeah, I prayed the prayer." That's not what I asked.

And so I cautiously decided not to do that because I don't want somebody to think like, "Oh, well, I just do it once," and then I go on and I live my life. And I know that was never the intention of the sinner's prayer. I'm going to share it. So if you've never heard of it, I'll share it with you. The whole point of the prayer, if you hear the words, is that you are proclaiming a belief in Jesus and you are calling Him your Lord. When you call somebody your Lord, that means something. It means that you are submitting to them.

Not just today, not just in a moment of repeating a prayer, but every day of my life, I say, "You are my Lord." And so I'm going to submit to you. Again, it doesn't mean we do everything right from here on forward. It's a journey. It's a process for all of us. I understand that. But to join the winning team means to believe that Jesus is the hero. He came to redeem us. It's what the apostle Paul says. Yes, it's confessing with your mouth, Jesus is Lord. It's believing in your heart that God raised him from the dead.

And if that's true, man, my life's going to look different if I believe that. So I'm going to close today's service. I am going to say a version of the sinner's prayer, but please know it can be as simple as, "Lord, I need you." All right? There's no special formula in the prayer. Please know that. I'm going to close. I'm going to begin with the sinner's prayer of today. The Spirit is working on your heart, and you're saying, "Man, I've come to church. I've read my Bible. I've done all this, but I'm not sure if I've ever really told Jesus He's my Lord." I'm not sure if I've ever apologized for my sins and for my mistakes.

Yeah, I believe in the resurrection. Maybe today is just a day that you can make that proclamation, and every day going forward, you would make that proclamation. Let's pray. Father, I begin with the Lord's prayer for those that maybe want to repeat it in their hearts, to have a moment where they can look back on their life and say, "Yeah, that was the moment. That was the moment I made the decision to follow you. Dear God, I know I have sinned and that my sin separates me from you.

I'm sorry and I repent of my sin. I believe Jesus died on the cross for me so that my sin could be forgiven. I do believe that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive today. And so God, please forgive me. I ask you to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior.

I will obey you, I will follow you, and I will honor you to the best of my ability. Lord, if there's anybody who prayed that prayer, again, for the first time proclaiming you as Lord, repenting of their sin, the Scripture says that the angels in heaven celebrate, and so we want to celebrate as well.

Lord, if there are any who have made that commitment, I pray that they would talk with someone they can trust, a pastor, a friend, a family member, and just share that. Lord, as they begin this beautiful journey of life

with you, Lord, we thank You for the covenant that You have made with us and for the availability for every single person that has ever lived for all of time, no matter where, no matter when, that if they would proclaim you as Lord, they can join the winning team.

Thank you for your grace and your mercy in our lives. There is not a single person here that could earn that. It is a gift. And so we thank you. May you receive the praise. It's in the powerful name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.