

Small Group Guide: "The Greatest Story"

Series: Greatest | Week 1 | Luke 24:13-35

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Have you ever walked into a movie halfway through or missed an important episode of a show? How did that affect your understanding of what was happening?

Sermon Summary

This week we explored how the Bible is not a collection of disconnected stories, but one unified story that leads to Jesus. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we often live with incomplete pictures of God's story, leading to discouragement. Jesus showed them (and us) that understanding the whole story—from Moses through the Prophets and Writings—changes everything about how we see ourselves, our purpose, and our destiny.

Key Takeaways

1. **The Bible is ONE story** - From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture tells a unified narrative about God restoring relationship with humanity through Jesus, the promised seed of the woman.
2. **We all live in stories** - Whether flattering or discouraging, we tell ourselves stories to make sense of our lives. Many of these stories leave us discouraged because we don't understand the greater story we're actually in.
3. **Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's promises** - The seed of the woman (Gen 3:15), seed of Abraham, son of David, prophet like Moses and Elijah—all point to Jesus.
4. **We're living in Act 5** - The church age is about being witnesses who improvise faithfully based on knowing the script (Scripture) and the ending (new creation).

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Story (15-20 minutes)

1. **Before this sermon, how would you have described what the Bible is about?** Has your understanding changed?
2. **Review the Seven Acts of Biblical Drama:**
 - Act 1: Creation
 - Act 2: Rebellion
 - Act 3: Promise
 - Act 4: Jesus
 - Act 5: Mission of the Church
 - Act 6: Judgment
 - Act 7: New Creation

Which act is most surprising or new to you? Why?

3. **Read Luke 24:25-27.** Why do you think Jesus called the disciples "foolish" for not understanding how the Scriptures pointed to him? What does this tell us about the importance of knowing the whole Bible story?

Personal Reflection (20-25 minutes)

4. **The pastor shared several "discouraging stories" people tell themselves:**
 - "What's wrong with me that they left?"
 - "What makes me unlovable?"
 - "I'm not enough"
 - "I'm not worthy of their time"

What discouraging story have you been telling yourself? How might understanding God's greater story change that narrative?

5. **The pastor said, "The Bible gives you answers for about 20% of your life. The other 80% comes from meditating on the scriptures with your fellow actors."**

What current situation are you facing that doesn't have a specific Bible verse, but needs a biblical response? How can knowing the whole story help you navigate it?

6. **Three things the Bible story tells us:**
 - Why Scripture is important (it's our script)
 - What our purpose is (to be witnesses in Act 5)
 - What our destiny is (God with us in new creation)

Which of these three do you most need to be reminded of right now? Why?

Application & Action (15-20 minutes)

7. **The sermon emphasized meditating on Scripture "day and night" (Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:2).**

What does biblical meditation look like practically? What obstacles keep you from regularly engaging with Scripture?

8. **As "improvisational actors" in God's story, we need to know the script well to play our part faithfully.**

What is one practical step you can take this week to become more familiar with the Bible's story? (Examples: Read through Genesis, start a Bible reading plan, join a Bible study, etc.)

9. **The story ends with God dwelling with humanity (Revelation 21:3)—God comes down to us.**

How does knowing the ending change how you face difficulties today? How does it give you hope?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Scripture Meditation

- Choose one passage from the sermon (Genesis 3:15, Genesis 12:1-3, 2 Samuel 7:12-13, Isaiah 52-53, or Revelation 21:1-4)
- Read it slowly each day
- Ask: How does this connect to Jesus? How does it connect to my life today?

Option 2: Story Awareness

- Journal about the "story" you've been telling yourself about your identity, worth, or purpose
- Compare it to what God's story says about you
- Share with one trusted friend or group member

Option 3: Bible Story Overview

- Read Genesis 1-3, 12, and Revelation 21-22 this week
- Notice the connections between the beginning and end of the story
- Write down what stands out to you

Closing Prayer Focus

Pray for each other in these areas:

- **Wisdom** to see our lives as part of God's greater story
- **Courage** to reject discouraging false narratives
- **Hunger** for God's Word and understanding of Scripture
- **Faithfulness** to play our part well in Act 5 as witnesses to Jesus
- **Hope** in our destiny—God making all things new

Looking Ahead

Next week we'll continue the "Greatest" series. Come prepared to discuss how this week's meditation on God's story has impacted your perspective.

Additional Resources

- **Read:** Genesis 1-3, 12; Luke 24; Revelation 21-22
- **Memorize:** Luke 24:27 - "Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures."
- **Reflect:** How does knowing you're in Act 5 of God's story change how you approach tomorrow?

5-Day Devotional: Living in the Greatest Story

Day 1: Knowing Your Place in God's Story

Reading: Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-3

Devotional: In the beginning, God created a world where heaven and earth overlapped—where His presence dwelt with humanity. You were made in God's image to live with Him, enjoy Him, and co-rule this world as His representative. Before sin entered, before rebellion fractured everything, God's original design was intimate relationship. Today, reflect on this truth: you weren't created for isolation or purposelessness. You were made for communion with the living God. The story didn't begin with your struggles or failures—it began with

God's intentional, loving creation of you. As you face this day, remember that your deepest identity isn't found in your achievements, relationships, or circumstances, but in being God's image-bearer, created for relationship with Him and designed for His glory.

Day 2: The Promise That Changes Everything

Reading: Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:6-16

Devotional: When humanity rebelled and everything broke, God didn't abandon His creation. Instead, He made a promise—a seed would come who would crush evil and bless all nations. Through Abraham's family, through David's line, God was writing a rescue story that would span centuries. This wasn't a backup plan; it was His eternal purpose unfolding. The "seed" God promised wasn't just an idea—it was Jesus, the Messiah who would fulfill every expectation. Today, consider how God keeps His promises, even when centuries pass. Your waiting, your unanswered prayers, your delayed hopes—they exist within a story where God is faithful. He who promised Abraham and delivered Jesus will complete His work in you. Trust that God's timing is perfect, and His promises are absolutely certain.

Day 3: Jesus—The Fulfillment of All Expectations

Reading: Luke 24:13-35; Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Devotional: The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had a picture from a movie but didn't understand the whole story. They saw Jesus' death as the end, not recognizing it was the climax of God's redemptive plan. Jesus had to show them how Moses, the prophets, and the writings all pointed to Him—the seed of the woman, son of Abraham, son of David, the suffering servant who would die and rise to bless all nations. Perhaps you're living in a discouraging story today, unable to see how your circumstances fit into God's larger narrative. Like those disciples, you need Jesus to open the scriptures and reveal how your life connects to His story. The cross wasn't failure—it was victory. Your suffering isn't meaningless—it's part of a story leading to redemption and restoration.

Day 4: Your Role in Act Five

Reading: Acts 1:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Devotional: You are living in Act Five of God's story—the mission of the church between Jesus' ascension and His return. You're not a spectator; you're an actor with a crucial role. Like an improvisational actor who knows the story cold, you must immerse yourself in Scripture to know how to live out your scenes faithfully. Your purpose isn't random—it's to witness to Jesus through both proclamation and demonstration. The struggles you face—difficult relationships, workplace challenges, family dysfunction—these aren't interruptions to your purpose; they're the stage where you perform your role. There may not be a specific Bible verse for your exact situation, but there is a biblical response when you know the story.

Meditate on God's word daily, and you'll intuitively know how to connect the beginning of the story with its glorious end.

Day 5: Living Toward New Creation

Reading: Revelation 21:1-7; Romans 8:18-25

Devotional: The story doesn't end with judgment but with new creation—God making all things new. The same God who said "Let there be light" will say "Behold, I am making all things new." Heaven isn't your escape from earth; rather, God is bringing heaven to earth, dwelling with His people forever. This is your destiny: God will repair everything good that was broken and remove everything that breaks what is good. This hope changes how you live today. Your present suffering is not the final chapter. Your struggles with sin, sickness, disappointment, and death are real, but they're temporary. God's judgment is restorative, not merely punitive—He's fixing what's broken, including you. Live today with resurrection hope, knowing that God who began this story in Genesis will complete it in glory. Your life matters because it's part of the greatest story ever told.

What story have you been telling yourself about your life, and how might it be just 'a picture from a movie' rather than the complete biblical narrative?

How does understanding that the entire Old Testament points to Jesus change the way you read familiar Bible stories or passages?

In what ways have you been living as though heaven is an escape from earth, rather than God's plan to renew and restore creation?

The sermon describes several discouraging stories people tell themselves—which one resonates most with you, and how does the biblical story challenge or correct it?

What does it mean practically for you to 'meditate on God's word day and night' in your current season of life?

How does knowing your role as an 'improvisational actor' in Act 5 of God's story free you to respond biblically to situations the Bible doesn't explicitly address?

If God's judgment is restorative rather than punitive, how does that change your understanding of His character and your relationship with Him?

What specific expectations about the Messiah from the Old Testament (seed of woman, son of Abraham, son of David, prophet like Moses) most deepen your appreciation for who Jesus is?

How would your daily decisions and priorities change if you truly believed your destiny is God being with you and you being with God in a renewed creation?

In what area of your life do you most need to shift from trying to 'apply the Bible to your life' to 'applying your life to the Bible's story'?