

Sunday 12/31
Cody Mixon, Middle School Pastor

We all love stories...

- Books
- Movies
- Songs
- Family Gatherings
- Nothing like listening to stories

We love to relate to characters.

Or find perspective by not relating to them at all

We love when the good guy wins and the bad guy loses.

We love to see Justice being served.

And we especially love the "Happily Ever Afters"....

(Just ask Ronnie about his Hallmark Movies)

Have any of you thought...

If I were a character in a story like this, how would I feel about my character?

Now about those "Happily Ever Afters"....

The movie doesn't end after the hero saves the day... There's always closing scenes.

In school you learn this as the elements of a plot...

PLOT CHART

- Exposition
- Rising Action
- Climax
- Falling Action
- Resolution

And when you think about the elements of a story, they never start or end with the big event, there's always opening and closing scenes...

For example:

- The movie Cars didn't open with "Turn right to go Left"
- The Avengers did not end with a snap

There's always a resolution that closes up the story with a nice bow on top, even after the hero saves the day in the climax.

Now what if I told you that... you actually are a character in one of these stories?

We've been walking through and talking about the Advent season

- **Advent is defined as the anticipated arrival of something or someone special.**

Specifically for us it's Jesus.

We celebrate the arrival of the Messiah in flesh, by the person of Jesus.

But today I want to refresh your perspective of the story of Jesus with these two truths.

The Story of Jesus did not start with His birth.

Genesis 3

John 1

It did not end with his resurrection...

The Storyline of the bible is even still currently... ongoing.

Elements of a story (THE BIBLE).

Exposition - Creation and Establishing Israel

Rising Action - History and Prophecies

Climax - Jesus

Falling Action - The Church

Resolution - 2000 years of awaiting Jesus' Return.

The story of Jesus did not start in a manger & did not end with an empty tomb.

It started with the words let there be light and will end with all of creation bowing in reverence and singing HOLY HOLY HOLY forever and always.

And we are currently living as a part in the Resolution, or the closing scenes of the story of the bible.

So with this in mind I want to give you **a warning and a challenge** and then send you on your way for the New Year.

WARNING:

Don't just watch, Be Ready

I warn you to

- Be watchful...

Matthew 25:1-13 The Parable of 10 Virgins

1 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

7 “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

9 “No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

10 “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

11 “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

12 “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

13 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Disciples caught watching

Acts 1:9-11 Jesus Ascends

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

1 Timothy 4 | 1 Peter 4:7-11 | 2 Peter 3

CHALLENGE:

Remain Faithful to knowing and doing what God has called you to.

I challenge you to

- Remain Faithful to knowing the word, and using your gifts.
- 1. Watch for and avoid evil (1 Timothy 4:1-5; 1 Peter 4:1-7)
- 2. Train yourself for godliness (1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Peter 3:14)
- 3. Do not neglect your gifts (1 Timothy 11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

2 Peter 3 The Day of the Lord

1 Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. 2 I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

3 Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." 5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. 15 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

17 Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.