

EFC

November 12, 2023

Big Story. Bigger God. – “What’s the Point?”

Good morning, English Fellowship Church. My name is Jeremy, and I’m one of the Pastors here. For the past couple of years, we have been looking at the chronological story of God in the Bible so we can know God, see what He is doing in this world, and understand how to live with Him well in our day. We have just finished an overview of the New Testament epistles from Romans through 3 John, as we’ve sought to hear God’s teaching and message for the church. This morning I’m going to help us review the story so far, before we spend the next couple of weeks looking at Revelation, which tells us how the story will conclude and continue on from there.

Pray.

INTRO – What’s the point?

As we review the contours of this big story, keep that question in mind: “What’s the point of it all?”

Review the Story – handout

- a. Foundational Matters
 - i. In the beginning, **God**. From the opening words of the Bible, we know that this whole story is about Him.
 - ii. God’s Word, the Bible, is His **revelation** of Himself and the truth. It is the **foundation** upon which we build our faith and lives.

These foundational matters are of utmost importance!

- b. Act 1 – Glorious Creation
 - i. God **created** the heavens and the earth and all that exists outside of Himself. He spoke, and creation leapt into existence. And it was good.
 - ii. The pinnacle of God’s creation was **humankind**. God created humanity, male and female, in His own image. He created us for His **glory**. And it was very good.
- c. Act 2 – The Fall, Consequences, and the Promise
 - i. But Adam and Eve **sinned** against God. They mistrusted God’s goodness, doubted His wisdom, and rejected His authority, so they disobediently went their own way. They became guilty of sin, cut off from life-giving relationship with God, corrupt in their hearts, and died. Now, **all people** are born sinners, guilty, separated from God, in conflict with others, and condemned to hell.
 - ii. God confronted Adam and Eve with their sin and its consequences. But in that moment, He also graciously **promised** that one of Eve’s descendants would destroy the devil, rescue us from sin, and restore us to God.
- d. Act 3 – Consequences of the Fall, but also God’s Rescue Plan Unfolding
 - i. Over time, humanity became exceedingly **wicked**, but Noah found **grace** in God’s eyes, and God graciously rescued him and his family.
 - ii. God made a **covenant** with Abraham, promising his descendants would multiply and be His special people, Israel. God would give them the land of Canaan and bless the world through them.
 - iii. God miraculously **gave** old Abraham a son, Isaac. Isaac became the father of Jacob, and the family grew.

- iv. The Egyptians **enslaved** the Israelites, but God used Moses to set them **free** through ten plagues sent to humiliate their false gods.
 - v. God parted the Red Sea and brought Israel through on **dry ground**.
 - vi. God gave Israel the **Law** to govern their lives as His people and the **tabernacle** as the place of His presence with them.
 - vii. The Israelites did not **trust** God to enter the Promised Land. So, He punished that generation for 40 years in the wilderness.
 - viii. Joshua led the people into the land and they began to **conquer**. But they never finished driving out the peoples.
 - ix. Israel **repeatedly** fell away from God and into sin and oppression. When they repented and cried to God for mercy, He graciously sent judges to rescue them.
 - x. Israel began to be ruled by kings. King David was a man after God's own heart. God renewed His covenant with Israel and promised that the **Rescuer** would be one of David's descendants. The kingdom became divided into Israel and Judah, and most of the kings did not fear God.
 - xi. God sent **prophets** to confront the people with their sin against God, calling them to repent and worship God, and reminding everyone of God's promise to send a Rescuer.
 - xii. Eventually, because the people **refused** to repent and honor God, He sent both kingdoms into exile. Israel would never be formed again. But after many years, God reestablished the people of Judah in their homeland.
 - xiii. At this point the Old Testament concludes. There are 400 years of **waiting**. Humanity still needed a Savior, and no one along the way had fulfilled that promise. Will God remember and keep His word?
- e. Act 4 – Redemption in God's Promised Messiah
- i. God sent His own **Son**, Jesus, to be our Savior. He was conceived in the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. When Jesus was **30** years old, He was baptized by John, tempted in the desert, and began His ministry.
 - iii. Jesus **taught** what life with God is like, and called everyone to repent and follow Him.
 - iv. Jesus revealed His great power through many **miracles**.
 - v. Jesus focused His attention on 12 **disciples**, as He prepared them to carry on His mission of spreading the good news of salvation and new life in Jesus.
 - vi. And then, in the greatest act of love the world has ever known, Jesus fulfilled God's long-awaited promise and crushed the devil. Jesus willingly allowed His enemies to **crucify** and kill Him on the cross. As He suffered and died, He did so in our place. Though He Himself was sinless, He took all our sins upon **Himself** and paid the debt and penalty we owed God. And in so doing, He saved us and healed our sin-wrecked hearts. 1 Peter 2:24 says, "[He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.](#)"
 - vii. But praise God, Jesus didn't stay **dead**. After three days He rose again, in victory over sin and death. We have a **living** Savior who watches over us from heaven today.
 - viii. As Jesus prepared to return to heaven, He told us what our calling and purpose is here and now: we are His **witnesses** in the world. We have come

to know the love of God and new life with Him and eternal hope, ours freely in our crucified and risen Jesus. Now we share that good news with everyone around.

- ix. Then, Jesus ascended into heaven, and He will **return** someday to bring His people to live with Him forever.
- f. Act 5 – The Spread of the Gospel Through the Church, and Life in the In-Between
 - i. After Jesus’ ascension, He sent His **Holy Spirit** to live in the believers at Pentecost. Everyone who puts their faith in Christ as Savior is filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. Jesus’ Disciples (Apostles) established the early **church** by testifying of the crucified and risen Jesus who is the only Savior, and by teaching what Jesus had taught them.
 - iii. The believers helped spread this good news of **salvation by grace through faith in Jesus** as they went throughout the world, setting up churches as they went.
 - iv. Jesus’ Apostles also wrote many **letters**, explaining the gospel of Jesus, and laying out rules to govern the life of Jesus’ church, and calling us to live on mission. These letters make up the rest of the New Testament.
- g. Act 6 – The Final Conclusion of All Things
 - i. The book of **Revelation** brings everything in the story to a conclusion, which is really a new beginning with everything made right. We’ll spend some time working through this important book.

So, back to my question: “What’s the point of it all” What’s the point of this big story, all of creation, and human history, and your own life, and the future we are headed to? What’s the point?

In this big story, which is the real story, and the only story that matters, it is obvious that God, and God alone, is the point of it all.

Just like health is the point of a hospital, and light is the point of a flashlight, God is the point of it all.

And not just in some parts of the story, and not just as a minor character in the drama: God is the central figure, in every little and big part of it. And it is good that He is, for He is marvelous and great!

Isaiah 45:5-6 “I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.”

Romans 11:36 “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

Revelation 4:11 “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

God is the point of it all. Is He the point of all of your life?

Do you delight in God? Are you captivated by Him? Does your love for God permeate everything about you?

Illustration: soaked towels – what are you saturated with?

A “me saturated vision of all things”: I think about me and my delight, my happiness or sorrow, my gain or loss, my judgement in everything I see; a me captivated vision considers everything with me as the reference point and as the most important.

A “God saturated vision of all things” is utterly different: All things reference God instead of me. He is the one I think about, the one I delight in, His gain or loss, it is His judgment in everything I see that matters. His glory and reputation are what matter most, and joy in Him is what I seek in everything. What He thinks of me and the situation I’m in is all that matters and settles it. He is the most important. If He is pleased, I am content; if He is not pleased, I am dissatisfied and dismayed.

That’s what God deserves! He is rightly the point of it all, and deserves to be the point of it all in our hearts and lives, too. And that’s what God is doing in this world.

Sin came in, and drew us all away from Him. Adam and Eve mistrusted God’s goodness, doubted His wisdom, and rejected His authority; they rejected Him as the point of it all, and we were born with those same, sinful hearts.

Romans 1:18-23 “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images....”

If we are honest, we know this is what we were born into. If we’re honest, we know we are still prone to wander away from God, to love lesser things, to doubt His goodness and wisdom and love, to reject His rightful authority over us.

But praise God, when we look at this big story, we see that God did not leave us to our own demise!

God saw that we were hopelessly lost, and could not save ourselves. So He stepped in.

Isaiah 59:16 He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him.

Jesus came to save us from sin and death, and He didn’t come to save us for small, self-centered, godless lives. And He didn’t save us to give us pointless lives; He came to return us to what we were created for: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; to live with God as the point and delight of every aspect of our lives. The point of our marriages, parenting, work, free time, ambitions and goals, private life, time and resources, sufferings and losses, difficulties and obstacles, successes and growth. Jesus came so that God would be the point of our entire existence.

Where do you need God’s transforming, rescuing, life-giving work to put God at the center of all that you are and all that you love?

Confess. 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Pray, pray, pray. Luke 11:11-13 "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Slow down. Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God."