

# The Story of God / God's Plan and Purpose in Redemption

**Discuss: If you could imagine the world the way it should be, what would it be like?**

- *Tim Chester and Steve Timmis in **Total Church*** "The Bible is the story of God creating a new humanity, a new people who will be his people. 'I will be your God, and you will be my people' is a central refrain running through the Bible"

## Two Gospel Perspectives

You can read the Bible across the grain (Thematically) and you can read it with the grain (Storyline). Each one is necessary and each one leads to a different way of seeing the gospel.

### Thematically

- **The MEANS of Salvation** – The Gospel Power
  - In this case, the Good News is that God, in and through the work of Jesus Christ and the power of His Spirit, accepts us, empowers us and is changing us.
- We have been saved from the penalty of sin, are being saved from the power of sin and will be saved from the presence of sin because of God's power and work, not our own. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 1:27-29; 2:6-7; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:3-5)
  - Luther said that the first commandment is the gospel – "You shall have no other gods before me" is the same as, "You shall have no other justification for your life, your righteousness, your significance, your security etc... other than me."
  - How is your life reflecting that you believe Jesus did enough to save you at the cross?
  - How or in what area(s) of your life are you demonstrating that God is the power and authority for ongoing life change?
  - How is Gospel power not being demonstrated?

### As a Story

- **Here we come to know the REASON for salvation** – The Gospel Purpose
- In this case, the Good News is that God sent his Son to redeem the world and create a new humanity.
  - Eventually the whole world will be renewed. Death, decay, injustice, and suffering will all be removed. God is saving a people and sending them out for His Mission so that Christ will be glorified in all things.
  - The Church has been saved BY God's work FOR God's work (Ephesians 1, 2:10,14-22; 2 Corinthians 5:15-21; Colossians 1:15-20; Revelation 21; Revelation 22:17).
  - The Gospel is not just about my individual happiness or God's plan for my life. It is about God's Glory and His plan for the world.
- There is a movement afoot. God is doing something and we have been called to His purposes.
  - The people of God are participating within God's redemptive plan by being a display people offering a foretaste of what the future will be like under God's rule. (Jeremiah 29; Matthew 5:3-16; Luke 6:20-36; 1 Peter 2:9-12).
  - We are like a trailer to a movie... giving a foretaste of the kingdom fully consummated by Jesus that makes people long for the future redemption of all things under Jesus as King...the difference is that unlike a movie trailer we are a poor reflection of a far better future.
  - How is your church or ministry living out the purposes of God in salvation? How is the leadership modeling this? And how is your local church regularly sending

believers out for the mission of the Gospel?

### **Who's Story Is It Anyways?**

- Everyone is part of the story and is walking out this story in their lives. The real question is whose story is it?
- We either see the story primarily as God's Story or primarily as Our Story. Our point of view is directly connected to our belief in the gospel.
- Who's story is it and how does that relate to how we live out our lives... our story?
  - **GOD'S STORY**
  - If we believe it is primarily God's story...
    - Creation – He is the Creator and Originator of all things – I exist because of Him
    - Fall – We rebelled against Him and His word stands – we really die
    - Redemption – He saves us by His work and we put our faith in Him to save by grace
    - Restoration – He has work for us to do which He prepared and enables us for
  - **OUR STORY**
  - If we believe it is primarily Our Story...
    - Creation – I become what I actualize or determine to be – I believe I am god
    - Fall – I am good and others are evil OR I am not good, but it is not my fault: it is because of some outside influence – not my rebellion and sin – in this case I am deceived/dishonest
    - Redemption – It is through my work that I am saved, healed, made acceptable – I must perform – in this case I or someone else I determine is my savior
    - Restoration – I can fix me and this place if I will just work harder and more effectively – in this case I am all wise and almighty

### **We Need Both Gospel Perspectives**

- We must know the Gospel Means (God/Sin/Christ/Faith)... ..and the Gospel Story (Creation/Fall/Redemption/Restoration)... ..and see them both as God's story together – Synchronically (taken and examined at a point in time) and Diachronically (studied in light of historical development)
- If we only focus on the Gospel Power, but do not know the Gospel Purpose (The Storyline of the Gospel – where it is going and what Jesus is doing through the Church), we will tend toward a Gospel that is only about saving individuals and miss the mission of the Gospel. In this case, the Gospel is ALL ABOUT us.
- If we only focus on the Gospel Purpose, but miss the Gospel Power (The work of God in Jesus Christ to save), we will tend toward doing good works and acts of service without the power of God. We believe it is up to us to change the world AND we become more acceptable and significant to God by doing more. In this case, the mission of the Gospel is now DEPENDENT UPON us.

**We must know God's story, in order to know and understand who we are in Christ and where we are in our own story**