

WE ARE LIVING THE STORY

Join us on our 16-week journey as we look at the Story of God from Creation to Restoration. This is the powerful work of Jesus Christ redeeming us as His people, and calling us back into relationship with God again. Each week will build on top of the previous week as we walk through the Story of God in a linear way:

- 1 – In His Image
- 2 – One Flesh and One Fall
- 3 – Covenant Promise (The Flood)
- 4 – Call and Promise (Abraham to Israel)
- 5 – Redemption: The Exodus
- 6 – A Country
- 7 – A King That Wasn't God
- 8 – A Broken Dynasty
- 9 – God Made Flesh
- 10 – Light of the World
- 11 – The Gospel Welcomes Us All
- 12 – Dying For Us
- 13 – Resurrection
- 14 – New People, New Identity
- 15 – Mission as Witness
- 16 – Eternity

DIDN'T
SEE THAT
COMING
- WE ARE LIVING THE STORY -

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ELEMENT
christian church



DIDN'T
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JESUS
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INTRODUCTION:

The Gospel: The Good News of who Jesus is, what He has done, and what He is doing. The Gospel is what brings meaning for all of our lives. Right here. Right now. There is no sweeter reality.

We've designed this book to be your guide over the next 16 weeks and it includes:

- Weekly **Gospel Truths** to memorize and share
- Brief **Daily Devotionals**
- Weekly **Family Devotionals**
- Weekly **Community Questions** and Discussion Guides
- One True Story: **The Story of Creation to Restoration**

In this book, you'll find:

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that..."

Each week we will have a new Gospel Truth (statement) that will be the theme of the week. We will build each week on top of the last to get a fuller and deeper picture of God's work in our lives and in the world.

We hope you memorize it, and eventually are able to put it into your own words. Once you can put it into your own words, sharing the message with others (family members, friends, co-workers) becomes much more natural and real. The Gospel is truly good news for everyone!

Remember, the Gospel is everything, but not everything is the Gospel. The Gospel is the good news for all of life, and we want you to be able to articulate it in real and practical ways.

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

What do you picture existence like before creation?

Sample Daily Devotion. Yep, that's it! Short and sweet. One verse, one question is all you have. Take as much time with it as you'd like; memorize it if you are so inclined. We hope that by the end of the 16 weeks you have a hunger for the word and a desire to dive deeper (and do longer devotions) on your own!

There will be six simple verse and question devotions for each week, Monday through Saturday. We skip Sunday due to it being the beginning of the new week, with a new message, and you will hopefully be in services to grow deeper together with others.

Each week we will provide sermon notes, discussion questions and prayer points that go along with that Sunday's message. We encourage all of our Gospel Communities to work through these questions each week to help process and apply these Gospel Truths to our lives.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

At the end of each night, take some time to pray together as a community through the list of prayer bullet lists provided.

If you are not in a Gospel Community, that's ok! Get together with some of your friends or family and work through the questions with them. Our goal is to help grow every relationship you are in to be more gospel-centered.

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Each week, Aaron will provide the entire congregation with a Gospel Statement to help you define and apply the Gospel to your everyday lives. In these devotionals provided for your family, we've reworded the statement so that your entire family can be on the same page, and you can practice living those statements out together.

Included in this booklet are questions to answer as a family. These questions are designed to help your youngest members apply the Gospel to life lessons and also help your teens think more deeply. We want to help you to start spiritual conversations with your kids. **The questions in blue are children's questions, red indicates questions for teens, and questions in black are appropriate for your entire family to mull over.**

Our prayer is that you use the family devotions as a tool to start a habit that will last the rest of your lives as you speak Gospel-centered truth to one another.

FROM CREATION TO RESTORATION:



The Bible is not just a list of rules to obey, stories to be inspired by, or morals to live your life by. Sure, the Bible contains rules, stories, and morality, but it is so much more than just these things. It is the true story of the world. It is a divine drama. It is a dramatic six-act play.

In their book [The Drama of Scripture](#) Mike Goheen and Craig Bartholomew offer a clarifying warning:

Many of us have read the Bible as if it were merely a mosaic of little bits – theological bits, moral bits, historical-critical bits, sermon bits, devotional bits. But when we read the Bible in such a fragmented way, we ignore its divine author’s intention to shape our lives through it’s story. All human communities live out of some story that provides a context for understanding the meaning of history and gives shape and direction to their lives. If we allow the Bible to become fragmented, it is in danger of being absorbed into whatever other story is shaping our culture, and it will thus cease to shape our lives as it should.

Idolatry has twisted the dominant cultural story of the secular Western world. If as believers we allow this story (rather than the Bible) to become the foundation of our thought and action, then our lives will manifest not the truths of Scripture, but the lies of an idolatrous culture. Hence, the unity of Scripture is no minor matter: a fragmented Bible may actually produce theologically orthodox, morally upright, warmly pious idol worshippers!

The 6 symbols above help us to identify the 6 acts of the Divine Drama. This is a useful tool for making the overarching story stick. After the symbols you will find our short telling of the True Story. We’ve chosen a few threads in this telling that are helpful for people to get an overview of the Bible.

Follow along on pages: 6, 13, 26, 53, 54, 86 & 95.

**DIDN'T
SEE THAT
COMING**

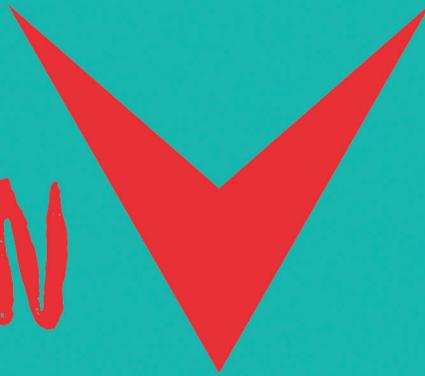
“True Story: From Creation to Restoration”
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*“We need to hear
the Gospel every day,
because we forget it
every day.”*

-Martin Luther

LET'S BEGIN...

ACT ONE: CREATION



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

God, the main character of this story, is the personal, all-powerful being who made everything that exists. He is the true ruler of the universe — lovingly providing for all that is under His care.

The kingdom, or sphere of authority, that God set up was not restricted to the heavens; but God powerfully, intentionally, and creatively spoke all of creation into existence:

- He precisely laid the foundations of the earth.
- He intentionally separated the waters from the land, filling that land with beautiful flowers and unique animals.
- He splashed His creative canvas with many colors and fragrances that all declared His worth.

In five days, God masterfully set up a physical kingdom that was separate from Him, yet uniquely and personally cared for by Him. At the end of each day, God reflected on His work saying, “It is good.”

On the sixth day, God created the first people. God said, “Let us make man in our image,” and He formed the dust of the ground together and breathed into it the breath of life. Thus, the first humans were created and placed in a perfect garden where they could enjoy the good reign of this God. The people were decidedly different than the rest of creation in that they were given the responsibility of caring for the creation. God spoke to this first man, Adam, and told

him to enjoy all that He had created: the animals, the flavors, the sights, and the work. Adam and all the humans were created with the ability to enjoy this wonderful environment God had fashioned. And they were created with the great task of reflecting the King’s goodness and greatness throughout all of creation.

God also made it clear to Adam that there were two trees in the center of the garden. One was the tree of life. The fruit from this tree was to be enjoyed and eaten just like the rest of the trees. The other tree, known as the knowledge of good and evil, was the only tree they were not to eat from. If Adam was to eat of this tree, he would surely die. This conversation between Adam and God continued as God described what it should look like for Adam to live in this garden. Adam had responsibilities to cultivate the garden and name the animals, operating under God’s authority to cultivate the world.

Adam went about the work God gave him to do. As he worked, God said that it was not good for man to be alone—he needed a helper. So God caused a deep sleep to come over Adam, and by taking a rib from his side, He created a woman named Eve for Adam to enjoy, love, protect, care for, and work alongside in relationship. When Adam woke up he broke into poetry and declared how amazed he was by what God had created. This first marriage was enjoyed without shame and guilt. They were naked in every sense and not the least bit afraid of rejection. God commissioned both the man and the woman with the task of cultivating the potential in His creation and to multiplying their family by having kids. After the sixth day and the creation of man in His own image, God reflected, “It is very good!”

Then on the seventh day God rested and reflected on the goodness of His creation. This was not the end of God’s relationship with His creation, but rather it was only the beginning. Each day God would come down in the cool of the day and talk with Adam and Eve, teaching them the best possible way to live life, and showing them how to live under His good reign. Adam and Eve were able to enjoy both the goodness and greatness of their Creator and His creation. They worked faithfully in the garden, cultivating it and developing its potential to bring glory to God. They lived in perfect harmony in their relationships with God, His world, and each other. This truly was a good Kingdom!

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that in Jesus, God came to restore and renew humanity to what He meant for it to be- image bearers who love and serve Him and others in humility."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
What do you picture existence like before creation?

Tuesday

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
What does it mean for human life that God is the creator and that all of creation is not by chance or luck?

Wednesday

Genesis 1:26b "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
How do you exercise stewardship and responsibility for the things under your care?

Thursday

Genesis 1:26a Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."
How have you understood being "made in the image of God?"

Friday

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
Why do you think God made us male and female?

Saturday

John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
How does being made in God's image lend itself to learning to love one another?

1: In His Image

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus (who is God) came to restore and renew every person into who He meant for them to be – His image bearers who serve and love others.

Family Questions

1. Does bearing God's image mean that to look like Jesus we need to change our appearance—like our faces, clothes, and hair? Or does it mean something else?
2. If to bear His image means to reflect Jesus' character to others around us, are we doing that as a family? What can we change today to be better bearers of Jesus' image?
3. How can you bear that image in school? **At work?**
4. As a family, make a list of people to whom you can serve and minister. Make a plan that includes everyone, as well as a deadline to begin.

Conversation Starter

Talk about how you struggle with bearing God's image. **In your family, how can you keep each other accountable to be better image bearers of God?**



“Did God really say that you couldn't eat of any of the fruit in this garden?”

...Asked a deceitful, lying serpent who one day approached Eve. Eve told him, “No, that's not what God said. We can eat from any tree in the garden. It's only the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that we are not allowed to eat from—or even touch—or we will definitely die.”

The serpent lied to Eve and said, “You won't die! God just knows that as soon as you eat from that tree your eyes will be opened, and you will become just like Him. You will be able to determine what is right and wrong for yourselves.”

“Hmm. I would be able to decide what is right and wrong?” Eve thought. She looked at the delicious fruit, contemplating the decision, and she believed the lies of the serpent over the words of the good God. She reached out her hand and ate some of the fruit. Then she gave some to her husband, Adam, who was there with her, and he ate it as well. In that moment their eyes were opened, and they were flooded with guilt and shame. They quickly tied fig leaves together to cover up their nakedness. They had rebelled and chosen to live outside the good reign of God and were immediately experiencing the devastating effects of that choice.

Later on that day, Adam and Eve heard God walking in the garden as He always did that time of day. When they heard Him,

their shame caused them to try to hide behind some of the nearby bushes.

God called out to them, “Adam, where are you?” Ashamed, Adam answered, “I heard you coming, and I was afraid because I was naked.” God asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to?” Adam replied to God, “It was that woman that you gave to me... she handed me the fruit.” Then God said to Eve, “How could you do this?” And Eve said, “The serpent tricked me into eating the fruit.”

So God spoke to the serpent, “You are cursed because you have done this. You will now be the enemy of the woman and her offspring. You will bite at his heels, but he will crush your head!”

Then God turned to Adam and Eve. He knew that His good creation would be drastically affected by their choice to live outside His good reign. He knew that they would be subjected to sickness, pain, suffering, and even death now as a result of their decisions. Because He is just and good and cannot allow injustice or rebellion to remain in His presence forever, He had to punish them for their rebellion.

He told them the consequences of their sin:

- Women will have great pain in bearing children.
- Men will struggle, toil, and sweat while trying to cultivate the land—only to get a little bit of food from it.
- They would both struggle for power in their relationship.
- They would die and return to the dust from which they were formed.

Even though He punished them with the consequences for their rebellion, God still loved and provided for them. He gave them clothes made from the skins of animals that they had previously named and cared for.

God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden and then sent mighty warrior angels to guard its entrance so that they would not be able to re-enter it. He also put a flaming sword in place to guard the Tree of Life so that people could no longer eat from it. God’s good creation was now a drastically different place, twisted and distorted from how He had made it.

Now, what you have to understand is that the story doesn’t end with the rebellion in the garden. Like any good story, there is hope. And the hope of this story lies in the promise that God is still on His mission.

HOPE

In the midst of the realization that all of creation was now under a curse, Adam and Eve held onto that promise that the good God would some day crush the serpent through one of their descendants—a Victor had been promised.

After the disaster in the garden, the rebellion continued to manifest itself. Adam and Eve had two sons. One murdered the other! It got so bad that at one point God looked at the people of the earth and saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil. He decided to send a great flood over the entire earth to wipe out this rebellion and wickedness. But God was still on mission.

You see, He didn’t wipe out every single human. Noah and his family were rescued from the flood. And after the water subsided, God put a rainbow in the sky and covenanted with Noah promising that He would never again destroy the earth.

You might think that Noah’s descendants figured it out and started loving and following God. But the rebellion ran deep. Pride dominated the world. The people came together to build a tower to heaven in order to make a name for themselves and to avoid doing their job of spreading out caring for all of God’s creation.

Rather than letting them have their prideful way, God was gracious to them and dispersed them across the earth by confusing their language. God was still on His mission.

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that Jesus Himself has come into the brokenness humanity created, He died for what separated us from God, others, and life; He has promised to renew all things, including us."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

Monday

Genesis 2:7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. How does it feel to know that you are a God-breathed creation?

Tuesday

Genesis 2:16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." What things have you "eaten" that have brought you death?

Wednesday

Genesis 3:6-7 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. How has a sin in your life opened your eyes to the truth of your own failing?

Thursday

Genesis 3:15 "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." What do you think today, now knowing that at this moment Jesus promised to come HIMSELF and fix our sin problem?

Friday

2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. What does it mean for you to have Jesus' righteousness placed upon you?

Saturday

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. What does a new life lived for Christ look like?

2: Flesh Fall

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus Himself has come into the brokenness humanity created; He died for what separated us from God, others, and life. He has promised to renew all things, including us.

Family Questions

1. Take a magnifying glass and any object (like fabric, skin, or hair) and look at it with your children - once with the magnifying glass, and once without. Explain that that is kind of what is happening in this week's section of Scripture. There is a macro and micro view of creation.
2. What are some things that are bad to have knowledge about or "know" from experience? What are some things or events that you really aren't better off with knowledge of?
3. Why is it frustrating to be told that we don't need to know something? How do you feel when there is something in Scripture that you really can't get a definitive answer about?
4. What is the biblical definition of death? What would it be like to be separated from God and each other for eternity?

Conversation Starter

Talk about some things in Scripture and life that you don't understand, that you may never understand this side of heaven. **Suggest strategies to each other on how to deal with those questions.**

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that though the inclination of our hearts is bent towards ourselves and our own glory, Jesus has come to us in grace and love to restore us to live for His glory and invites us into His mission which focuses us outward from our own lives to live in and help usher in the Kingdom of God."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Genesis 6:5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

How is our world a lot like Noah's world?

Tuesday

Genesis 6:8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

What do you think it means that Noah received favor (this is the Hebrew word for "grace"), before he was called "righteous"?

Wednesday

Genesis 8:20 Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

What would you do as your first act after getting off the Ark?

Thursday

Genesis 9:8-9 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ...

What does it mean that God initiates a covenant with us?

Friday

Ephesians 5:2 ...Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

What type of offering would you say your life is to God?

Saturday

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

How does God's covenant eventually result in Jesus coming for us?

3: Flood Covenant

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that even though we make everything about us, Jesus comes to us and changes us so that we can live for Him. He invites us to be part of His plan of serving others, even though we don't deserve it. That is what we call Jesus' grace

Family Questions

1. What is sin? What are God's feelings about sin? Are some sins worse than others?
2. Why do you suppose we tend to downplay our own sins? If you had been alive in Noah's time and were saved through God's mercy, do you think you would look at your sin differently?
3. What is the difference between God being fair and God being good? Do we want God to be fair?
4. What is grace?

Conversation Starter

Talk about a lesson you had to learn the hard way.
What changes did you make as a result of that lesson?

ACT THREE: PROMISE



“God is our Savior and will keep His covenant with us!”

God did not just leave the nations to be confused and without hope forever, but He called one man, Abraham, and made a covenant with him. The covenant stated that God would bless Abraham and multiply his offspring so that his offspring would be a blessing to all the nations. Abraham’s family would be the means by which God would cure the world.

After many years of waiting, Abraham had a child named Isaac. In one of the most dramatic scenes in the Bible, Abraham was instructed by God to sacrifice Isaac, the child of promise. But at the last moment, God provided a ram for the sacrifice instead. The ram was substituted for Isaac, and the promise continued.

Isaac multiplied into a great nation called Israel. As generations passed, Israel became enslaved to the Egyptians, the strongest nation in the world. They were beaten, abused, mistreated and hopeless. They cried out in misery to God, and God heard their cries for help.

He rescued them by His mighty hand, using a man named Moses. This exodus from Egypt was the great act of God that Israel would always look back on to remember, “God is our Savior and will keep His covenant with us!”

Soon after they were rescued from slavery, God spoke to Moses on a mountaintop and told him the commandments they were to live by. However, just like Adam and Eve, the people of Israel didn’t always obey these commandments. Because God always does what is good, right and perfect, He could not overlook their sins and the ultimate punishment for sin was death. A life must be given to pay

for each person’s disobedience. But God loved His people, so He provided a way for them to substitute the life of an innocent animal in place of their own. This pattern of an innocent life of a lamb being substituted for sin would continue long into the future.

You might think that after being rescued out of slavery, Israel would be the people who finally abandon their rebellion against God. But that wasn’t the case. As they journeyed to the land God had promised them, they began grumbling against God. They even wished they could go back to their slavery in Egypt. At one point, they took all their gold jewelry, melted it down and made a golden calf to be their god. But even their rebellion could not thwart God; He was still on His mission to restore and redeem His creation.

After forty years, God raised up a man named Joshua to finally lead Israel out of the wilderness and into the beautiful land God had promised to them. God had rescued them out of slavery and into the safety of their own land.

You might think now that Israel was safe in their land, they would break the legacy of rebellion against God. Rather than worshipping the true God, they quickly fell into a devastating cycle of rebellion against God. Over the next centuries, they would fall further and further away from the God who had rescued and delivered them. But God was still on His mission.

Even though God had shown Himself to be a good King, the people cried out for a human king. So God gave them kings. One such king was David. David ruled well and brought the nation together. As David was about to die, God made a covenant with David that one of his sons would reign over God’s people forever.

David’s sons did not follow after their father, and they certainly did not follow God. They turned to the many gods of the other nations and led the people away from God. Because of their rebellion, God brought other nations in to conquer and exile Israel from their land. All seemed lost. But God was still on mission.

In the midst of the exile, God spoke through prophets. He gave them a great promise that He would one day come and rescue His people. He would send a mighty, yet humble Servant to redeem them.

And so, God’s people were left, waiting, longing, and hoping for the day when God would rescue them.



GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that God has remembered us in our lost state and has come to redeem, rename, and restore us from our brokenness to be in renewed, life-giving relationship with Him and others."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Genesis 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
How did God intend for Abraham to bless others?

Tuesday

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."
Do you see God as your shield and reward? If so, how?

Wednesday

Genesis 15:17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.
How is it significant that only God passed through the pieces (from the sermon last Sunday)?

Thursday

Genesis 32:28 Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel..." How has God changed you in your life?

Friday

Romans 8:38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers...
What things in your life worry you right now?

Saturday

Romans 8:39 ...nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
How does the surety of the Gospel bring hope?

4: Call, Promise, Abraham

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that God sees us when we wander, and Jesus comes to call us His family, and brings us back so that we can live life with Him and with others in a godly way.

Family Questions

1. When the Bible says, "God remembered," does that mean God had forgotten something? Can God ever lose us, or do we wander away and get lost?
2. How are you as a family "remembering" God in your lives?
3. Why does God use us in His plans?
4. Can we trust God and His promises? **What does that look like in the context of our lives?**
5. If God were to rename each of you based on your relationship with Him, what would that name be?

Conversation Starter

Talk about the difference between doubt and unbelief. Discuss times when you have had doubts (maybe even now). What did you do or what would you have done differently during those times?

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the Good news that God has established His Kingdom that cannot be shaken and has restored for us citizenship in that Kingdom where we now live in a present and tangible way which helps bring that Kingdom to this earth."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

**WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?**

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Genesis 11:4 Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”
How do you seek your own security before you seek God's glory?

Tuesday

Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good... How has others' evil against you turned out for good when God got a hold of it?

Wednesday

Exodus 1:11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. Where in your life do you feel heavy with burdens?

Thursday

Exodus 3:7-8a Then the Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians...
Does it help knowing that God sees your burdens?

Friday

Exodus 3:9 “And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”
How has God sent rescue to you in your life?

Saturday

Luke 4:18-19 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Do you trust in the good news that Jesus has come to liberate you?

5: Redemption/ Exodus

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that God has a plan and changes us, so that we can be part of that plan by serving and loving Him in practical and visible ways to those around us.

Family Questions

1. How can we live amid a sinful world and yet still reflect God's image?
2. What happens when a baby cries out to its parents? How do you think that is similar to how God responds to us when we are sad?
3. How is your family contributing to the cries of this world through your everyday life, purchases, and decisions?

Conversation Starter

Talk about the difference between isolating yourself from the culture around you and living in culture with the intention of redeeming it.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

This week, we rocketed out of the book of Genesis and plunged into the Exodus story, where we learn of the Israelites' enslavement by the Egyptian people. During this horrible time of oppression, the Israelites cry out to God and God hears their cry and is moved to action. This is a remarkable picture of an empathetic God that is active in our redemption, and it is a powerful theme that is presented throughout Scripture.

In the first four weeks of this sermon series, we began to understand that sin does not just pertain to individuals. Sin is something that moves from the individual to a society at large, and that is how the stage is set for the Exodus. We see the atrocities of systemic evil at work, and a redeemer is desperately needed to rescue those harmed by sin.

The Gospel statement this week is: *"The Gospel is the good news that God has established His Kingdom that cannot be shaken, and we, as restored citizens, live in a present and tangible way that helps bring this Kingdom to earth."*

How have you seen glimpses of this Kingdom? How can you live to demonstrate what this Kingdom is about to those around you?

Read Exodus 3:7-8 and talk about those times where you have cried out to God. Describe what you felt and whether or not you felt heard by God.

This passage gives us a picture of an active God—one who cares, and promises to redeem us; we don't have a God who leaves us in our suffering, but one that promises He will save. ***As a group, talk about these aspects of God's character. As His image bearers, are we mirroring His character to the world around us? Where can our ears and hearts be opened to acknowledge and respond to suffering and oppression? How can we communicate the truth of a God that longs to rescue people from darkness?***

PRAYER:

- Praise and thank God for His nature and desire to end injustice and suffering
- Spend some time crying out to God and asking for redemption
- Ask God to open your eyes, ears, and hearts to the cries of the world
- Ask God to assist you in partnering with Him to further His Kingdom

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that through Jesus' rescue and redemption of mankind, we are sent to be His message of redemption to the world."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Genesis 2:7 Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

Do you see your life as being connected to God today? How?

Tuesday

Ex 19:3 while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel:

Have you ever felt God calling you to something? What? How did He do it?

Wednesday

Exodus 19:4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

How have you seen God come to rescue you?

Thursday

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

This promise of being treasured is also given to believers in the New Testament. What does it mean to be treasured by God?

Friday

Exodus 19:6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...

What would an entire nation of priests look like (based on last Sunday's lesson)?

Saturday

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV) But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

What does it mean for you, personally, to be God's priest in this world?

6: Country

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that as Jesus saves and changes us, we are meant to share that message with everyone around us.

Family Questions

1. What is a priest? Do you have to work in a church to be a priest?
2. How seriously are you taking your mandate to be a priest to those around you?
3. Name a couple of ways you were God to someone this week

Conversation Starter

This week, during dinner each day, the drive to school, or whenever you are all in the same space, ask each other how you were like God to someone that day.

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the Good news that God is ruling and reigning and He has restored us to relationship and life with Him, so we would be His image-bearers of who He is to the world by words and actions."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

7: King That Wasn't God

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that God is King! He has changed us so that we can show everyone around us how great a King He is.

Family Questions

1. Draw a picture of a king interacting with His subjects. Is that how God acts as our King? What meaning can we glean from this in regards to our lives?
2. Who are the kings at your school? The peasants? How could the entire dynamic of the school change if you treated all the students the same.
3. How often do you change how you look or act in order to "fit in"?

Conversation Starter

Talk about when you were in school. Who were the kings and peasants then? What would you do differently today? Be authentic and tell your kids about your mistakes and your successes with people.

Monday

1 Timothy 1:17 To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

How does God gain glory from your lifestyle?

Tuesday

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..."

In what ways would you say you are made in God's image?

Wednesday

1 Samuel 8:19-20 But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, ..."

How have you wanted to be like other people and not necessarily how God made you?

Thursday

Deuteronomy 17:17 And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.

What do you think is the driving motivation for people in powerful positions?

Friday

Deuteronomy 17:18 And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests.

Why was it important for the king to keep a copy of the Scriptures close by? Why is it important for us?

Saturday

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

How do we get to be part of God's glory covering the world?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

This week, we explored Israel's transition from a theocracy to a nation ruled by a human king. While the entirety of Scripture highlights God's plan for redemption through His people, it's important to remember that Israel exists among many different cultures. These surrounding cultures influenced Israel, resulting in Israel wanting a human king to demonstrate power and influence to the surrounding nations.

This is just one example of how we can often yearn for something outside of what God intends for us. **How has our culture influenced your desires? What do you yearn for? Is it in line with what God desires for His people?**

Despite Israel wanting to be like the surrounding cultures, they were set apart as the people of God. Unlike other nations, Israel knew God had created all people in His image, meaning they have dignity and worth. **How is or isn't this lived out today? Are there certain people you place over or under others? What would it look like to treat all people equally?**

It is important to remember that this dignity isn't granted to us because we have earned it; it is because God has made us to be a reflection of who He is. **Discuss the significance of our worth being found in God alone....not our actions, talents, successes, etc.**

Are we living as if this is true, or are we striving to prove our worth?

Read Deuteronomy 17:18-20. While we may not be "kings," each of us has influence over others in some capacity. **Where/how do you have influence, and how does this passage speak to that role?**

Is your heart "lifted up above" your brothers/sisters? How can we lead and serve humbly where God has placed us?

PRAYER:

- Thank God for being a good and gracious King that will never fail us
- Ask God to show you what desires should be surrendered to Him
- Ask God to show you how your GC can affirm the dignity of ALL people
- Ask God to help you remember our worth is found in Him alone, and thank Him that nothing can threaten that
- Thank God for the areas of influence you do have, and ask Him to show you how to be a leader that reflects who He is

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the Good news that even though we have destroyed our lives with our own selfishness, Jesus has come not just to redeem, but restore us to be those who live in His kingdom where He rules and reigns forever."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Habakkuk 1:5 Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told.

What astonishes you about what God has done throughout history?

Tuesday

1 Kings 10:96 ...Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.

How should a king rule (in your humble opinion)?

Wednesday

1 Kings 11:6 So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done.

Why do you think Solomon lost his way?

Thursday

Galatians 5:13-14 For you were called to freedom

How have you used the freedom God has given you?

Friday

Galatians 5:13-14 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Does understanding freedom, in terms of the Gospel, help you love your neighbor more (or better)? How?

Saturday

Revelation 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold the dwelling of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." What tears from misused freedom will God have to wipe away from your eyes?

8: Broken Dynasty

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that even though we are selfish and mess everything up, Jesus still wants to save us and change us to be part of His family, where He will forever be the leader.

Family Questions

1. **Draw a picture of New Jerusalem.** Parents, explain this concept to your kids.
2. **Define freedom. Does this definition change if we define it according to God's plan?**
3. **What is a covenant? What is so spectacular about our God and how He covenants with us?**

Conversation Starter

Think about the world we will live in when Jesus restores it to how it was originally meant to be. **What will that look like? Have each family member describe it, as well as what you see as your role in this new world.**

FROM CREATION TO RESTORATION:

INTERLUDE

First the Babylonians, then the Persians, then the Greeks, and finally the Romans— for centuries these empires had, deported, exiled, minimized, and enslaved God's people, the Israelites', and God didn't seem to do anything to stop them!

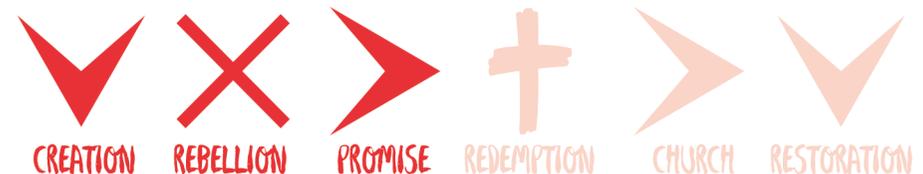
Would God answer? Would He rescue? After all...

- He promised Adam that He would send one to make things right.
- He promised Noah He would never destroy the earth.
- He promised Abraham that his descendants, the people of Israel, would be blessed.
- He rescued their ancestors out of slavery in Egypt.
- He blessed them and gave them the land through Joshua.
- He promised David a son who would rule forever.
- He promised to rescue His people out of exile.

For over 400 years they were waiting... longing... hoping... for God to rescue.

God's people began looking for the Messiah, a man sent by God, to be their King. Over and over, their hopes would rise with a great political figure or some powerful revolutionary. But over and over, the self-proclaimed would-be-Messiahs failed. Over and over, their hopes were dashed.

This was beginning to seem like a story in search of an **ending**.





ACT FOUR: REDEMPTION

***There is good news! No more waiting,
no more longing, no more hoping in false
Messiahs! Jesus is Here!***

But God was still on His mission. On a quiet night in Bethlehem, the same city King David had grown up in a millennium before, a little child was born. The child's name was Jesus, a translation of Joshua into the local language. On the night this child was born, a myriad of angels came to herald, or to welcome, this child into the world. These weren't pudgy little baby angels with harps. They were mighty warrior angels who had come to announce the arrival of the one and true King to the world. All they could say in utter worship was, "Glory to God in the highest!"

That baby grew into a man. Around the time He was 30 years old, He began to tell people that He was the King they had been waiting for. He told people, "There is good news! No more waiting, no more longing, no more hoping in false Messiahs! Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand now."

Jesus began teaching people what life was going to be like under the rule of this true King in His forever Kingdom. He not only taught people how to live in this Kingdom, but He gave them a foretaste of what the Kingdom is like:

- In His Kingdom, there is no blindness. He gave sight to the blind.
- In His Kingdom, there is no sickness. He healed the sick.
- In His Kingdom, there is no sin. He forgave sin.
- In His Kingdom, there are no marginalized people. He befriended sinners.

- In His Kingdom, there are no evil powers. He cast out demons.
- In His Kingdom, nature is at peace. He calmed the storm.
- In His Kingdom, there is no death. He raised the dead.

Many people followed Jesus. They wanted to be a part of this kind of Kingdom. They were starting to believe that He was finally God's answer to their longings. Of the many people who followed Him, He selected twelve disciples He would train to carry out His mission after He left. These men dropped everything to follow Jesus on His way to the throne. They believed Jesus was going to overturn the Romans, set God's people free, and bring in the golden age of peace. They wanted to be near. So they followed Jesus. They loved Jesus. They learned from Jesus. They served Jesus.

But not everyone loved Jesus. To the Jewish leaders, He was a rebel, flipping their religious system upside down after they had worked so hard to build it up. To the Romans, He was a rebel, an insurrectionist. To make matters worse, He claimed He was God. So, needless to say, not everyone loved Jesus.

After three years of proclaiming the Kingdom and setting Himself up as the promised King, the true Messiah, Jesus came into Jerusalem (the City of David) to celebrate the Passover. The Passover was the holiday when the people of Israel remembered God's great saving act of rescuing them out of Egyptian slavery centuries before. Many people welcomed Jesus into the city, believing He was the King who would do the next great saving act of rescuing them out of Roman slavery.

Some of the religious leaders made a plan to murder Jesus. They conspired with Judas, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, exactly how it would go down. They turned Him over to the Romans calling Him an insurrectionist. They demanded He, the one and true King of the earth, be beaten and killed. Not just killed, but crucified. Crucifixion is one of the most torturous, humiliating, and excruciating deaths ever devised.

So on a little hill outside Jerusalem they crucified Jesus. The one and true King of the world was being murdered. Hanging on a cross was the One many had been hoping, waiting, longing for. John looked on in horror. The King willingly hung on a cross and died... according to plan.



GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that our God has called us out of the slavery we have placed ourselves in and given us a calling, an identity, and a new hope centered in the person of Jesus Christ."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

What does Christmas mean to you?

Tuesday

Amos 8:4-6 (NIV) Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land

How have you trampled the needy in your life?

Wednesday

2 Chronicles 36:15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place.

How has God called you in the midst of you trampling the needy?

Thursday

Psalms 137:1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.

When is the last time you sat and felt remorse in your life?

Friday

Malachi 4:5 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

How has God promised to redeem our failures?

Saturday

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

How has Jesus redeemed your failures?

9: God in Flesh

FAMILY
DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that our God has saved us and given us a new purpose, a new name, and a new hope, because Jesus has shown us mercy.

Family Questions

1. What happens when you disobey your parents? How do you feel when you are punished for something you did wrong?
2. What is your response when you are rebuked? Do you have people in your life that you have given permission to rebuke you in a godly way?
3. Why do so many of us dislike discipline? Why do you suppose a good God would discipline us?

Conversation Starter

Talk about a time you were either disciplined, or natural consequences were allowed to occur. Did you make that same mistake again? Talk about boundaries and how loving parents set boundaries to keep their children safe.

GOSPEL TRUTH:

“The Gospel is the good news that though we have lived and walked in darkness, our God has restored us to Himself because of the work of Jesus; He now sends us out to be His light in the world.”

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Deuteronomy 18:18a I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers

How do you think most religious people missed Jesus being the promised messiah?

Tuesday

John 1:43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

How have you missed Jesus until He called you?

Wednesday

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

What is the "Kingdom of heaven?"

Thursday

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

How do we usually hide Jesus' light in us?

Friday

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

How should we let Him shine through us?

Saturday

John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

How has Jesus set you free? How can you let that be known?

10: Light of the World

FAMILY DEVOLUTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that although we have lived our lives in ways that don't show Jesus, through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we are changed and now can live in ways that show Jesus to others.

Family Questions

1. What does repent mean?
2. Would you describe your family as a city on a hill, or as an underground bunker?
3. What changes need to be made to become a city on a hill in your family?

Conversation Starter

Review the timeline of LIVE/SIN/DIE that we have covered so far in this series.

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that even though we have segregated ourselves from God and others, God has not left us in that state; Jesus has come and liberated us through His death and resurrection to restore our broken relationship with God and others."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

1 Peter 2:16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

How have we (or you specifically) used your freedom for evil?

Tuesday

Matt 11:4-5 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.

How is Jesus' freedom good news even when it is abused?

Wednesday

Psalms 33:20 Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.

How has God shown Himself to be a helper to you?

Thursday

Gen 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

How are those of the opposite sex made in the image of God, just like you?

Friday

Luke 8:1-3 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.

This proclamation was to ALL people. Who do you have a hard time telling about the Gospel?

Saturday

Joel 2:28-29 "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. Who is the least likely person in your life to follow Jesus?

Pray for them (right now).

11: Welcoming All

FAMILY
DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that even though sin separates us from God and others, God didn't leave us that way. He sent His son Jesus, whose death on a cross and resurrection now allow us to be in restored relationship with God and those around us.

Family Questions

1. What does it mean to say something is true?
2. Is there any such thing as absolute truth? How can we measure whether something is true or not, based on God's plan?
3. Who in your life/school/work is seen as lesser of a person than you? Are you contributing to that perception through your own behaviors? How can you change that today?

Conversation Starter

Talk about truth and how society is altering truth to mean whatever we want it to mean. **What does that do to us as a people? How can you as a family rail against that trend?**

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that Jesus has come in fulfillment of all of God's promises in the Old Testament to provide a way for us to come into the Kingdom of God by removing our sin through dying on a cross and rising from the grave; He has restored and redeemed us to be His people in the world by His sacrifice."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Galatians 3:14 (NIV) He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus.

How have you seen God's undeserved blessings given to you?

Tuesday

1 Peter 3:18 (NIV) For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

How is Jesus' death good news for us?

Wednesday

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...

How has God brought you back to true life?

Thursday

Matthew 13:44-46 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up, Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and pays for the field."

How much have you given up for the Kingdom of God? Is it worth everything to you?

Friday

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

What are the top 3 priorities (in order) in your life right now?

Saturday

John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

How can our lives be properly reordered so that Jesus is first?

12: Dying for Us

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus has come to keep all of God's promises that we read about in the Old Testament through sending his son, Jesus, to die on the cross and rise from the dead. Jesus paid for the sins we have in our lives. Through Jesus, we are changed so that we can be His people and show the world what He has done for us.

Family Questions

1. When you think of God, what is He like?
2. What is something that you would give everything you own for?
What is something you would die for?

Conversation Starter

Talk to your kids about what kind of a sacrifice it would be to have one of your children pay the price of death for someone else. **Compare that to what God must have felt through the sending of His son, Jesus.**

GOSPEL TRUTH:

“The Gospel is the powerful news that by conquering death and resurrecting from the grave, Jesus is redeeming both individual lives and the whole earth back to the way of life God intended it to be; He has given us authority and power to partner with Him to renew all things by His Spirit.”

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.
How does Jesus bring all the Scriptures together?

Tuesday

Luke 24:5-6a And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.”
What does the resurrection mean in your life?

Wednesday

Luke 24:39 “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”
Why is it important that Jesus rose in a body?

Thursday

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.
Why is it important that the resurrection was witnessed and written about?

Friday

1 Peter 1:3b ...According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
How does the resurrection give us hope?

Saturday

Romans 6:5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.
How is the resurrection good news?

13: Resurrection

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the powerful news that by conquering death and rising from the dead, Jesus is saving not only people's lives, but the whole earth. He is going to change all things back to the original plan, and we can be a part of that plan through Jesus!

Family Questions

1. What does it mean for us that the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom?
2. Pretend you are a reporter. What does a reporter gather? What facts can you gather about Jesus' resurrection?
3. How do all the facts we know about the resurrection point to the truth of the Gospel?

Conversation Starter

Talk about the resurrection. What fact discussed this week stands out the most to each member in your family?

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that Jesus died and rose from death for our redemption and He promises a future hope in Him where there is nothing we will miss in this life that does not find its fulfillment in Him, because we will have all eternity to experience Him."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Luke 24:25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"

Where have you been slow to believe the Scriptures?

Tuesday

Luke 24:26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

Why did Jesus have to suffer?

Wednesday

Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

What are the things in the Bible you would like explained?

Thursday

Luke 24:30-31 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

Are you willing to trust Jesus in your life before you see the fulfillment of His promises?

Friday

Luke 24:32 They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

How has Jesus burned in your heart?

Saturday

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

How can you proclaim the Gospel even at times when you don't understand everything?

14: New People

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus died and rose from death to save us, and He promises a future hope in Him that will be all that we could want and need forever with God!

Family Questions

1. What is a slave? **How can we be a slave even though no other person owns us?** To what do you see yourself as a slave?
2. What does it mean to redeem? How does Jesus redeem us?

Conversation Starter

Talk about what you think Heaven will be like with Jesus. Use descriptions, think about people you would like to see, questions you would like to ask. Do you see yourself in that picture? Does it seem like your future? Talk about this with your family.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

This week, we talked about how the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus was not the end, but the continuation of the Gospel. The Gospel is ongoing in how God works in the world. We are not a people who are missing out, or have missed out, on anything...we are a people who have all the riches of God in our hands, and we get to distribute freely and generously in terms of money, time, joy, hope, and reconciliation.

We are a people who get to live in a new identity given to us by God; this new identity rewrites our own story in terms of God's story for us. **How do you define your identity and how did you come to that definition? How does that identity determine how you live out your life? Could a new/different identity make you live or see the world differently?**

We are told that we will run and not be weary. We are told that we will walk and not faint. We are meant to understand that we won't look back on anything and say, "Oh, I wish I were younger or I wish I were more beautiful." Timothy Keller says, "You were nothing compared to what you're going to be like. Compared to what you're going to be in the future, you were a vegetable." We are told we will have no regrets, no fears, and no problem with service and sacrifice, because

our future is a physical future fulfilled in Jesus. Our future has been promised by a God who promised Jesus, salvation, and redemption for millennia and brought it to pass. This same God promises to bring about our eternity as well.

When you think of eternity with God, what do you think of? How do you think "heaven" will play out for you personally? What are your hopes and fears about your eternal future?

Too many people look for everything they want in this life and think that if they get it, they have found redemption, but that is not true. The scriptures teach that our freedom and power are directly proportional to how much we are willing to admit we were (or are) slaves and sinners. Our joy and future hope are directly proportional to how willing we are to see our need for redemption.

Here is your Gospel statement for the coming week: "The Gospel is the good news that Jesus died and rose for our redemption and the promise of a future hope where we will lack nothing, experience complete fulfillment, and enjoy Him forever."

How willing are you to admit to your own sin in your life? How willing are you to see your need for redemption? What does that mean to you?

PRAYER:

- Thank God for His promised future
- Ask Jesus to reveal to you your daily need to live in His hope for new life
- Ask God to show you your own sin as well as your need for redemption
- Ask God to give you a deeper understanding of the Gospel message
- Thank God that He brings all things to fruition



ACT FIVE: CHURCH

“They too, were going to be sent out to herald the good news of the true King’s life, death, and resurrection.”

After His death and resurrection Jesus gathered His followers back together. He began to show them from their history and their sacred writings that what had happened to Him was all according to plan. God was still on a redemptive mission, and He was sending them out to announce His reign to the world.

Over the next 40 days Jesus showed them that His death and resurrection were needed to:

- Take the penalty for their sin on Himself.
- Defeat Satan.
- Redeem them from their slavery to sin.
- Secure the renewal of His creation.

Jesus’ friends couldn’t have been more excited. They were sitting there in Jerusalem with Jesus, the one and true resurrected King. He was teaching them. He was about to take His throne and usher in the end of history. Finally, what they had been waiting, hoping, and longing for was finally here!

Not so fast. Jesus told Peter, John and the others that it was not yet time, the story wasn’t finished yet. There were more people who still needed to hear this good news about the victorious king and His good Kingdom. It was not yet time for His Kingdom to come in full. Jesus’ disciples learned that they and their friends were going to be sent out into the world as ambassadors.

Just as those angels had heralded the good news of the Jesus’ birth so many years before... Just as Jesus had heralded the news of His Kingdom and showed people what life is like in His Kingdom....

They too, were going to be sent out to herald the good news of the true King’s life, death, and resurrection. Together their lives and their voices would be a foretaste of an invitation into the Kingdom life.

Before He ascended, Jesus told His disciples, “I am leaving you now, but I will come again one day. But for now, while you are here, I will send the Spirit of God to live in and among you. He will empower you for your mission to bring the good news of Me and My Kingdom, making new disciples of Me in every nation.” And then He left, ascending to the right hand of the Father.

Jesus’ followers (about 120 of them) sat in Jerusalem waiting for the promised Spirit to empower them to live out the mission to which Jesus had called them into. They waited and prayed as days went by. Finally, on the tenth day, the Spirit arrived with a great rush of wind, and tongues of fire were seen leaping above their heads. They were united, empowered, and directed to live out the mission Jesus had given them. In order to tell all these different people, they were empowered to speak in languages that they had never spoken before in their lives—so that people could hear the good news.

At this time, there were many people coming into town because it was the time of Pentecost, a Jewish feast that drew people to Jerusalem from all over to celebrate the end of the spring harvest and God’s grace in providing for them. When those people heard the great sound of the wind, they came rushing to see what was going on. Peter and his friends, empowered by the Spirit, started to connect the dots for people, showing how their longings for a Deliverer, a true and perfect King, were fulfilled in Jesus, the One whom they had killed. He was truly the Messiah, the Deliverer—and they had to repent and believe this good news. Thousands of people believed the true story that day.

As time went on, Jesus' disciples were sent out from Jerusalem. They spread all over the known world. They told as many people as they could about the one and true King and what He had done. They set up communities of people who believed and lived according to this true story wherever they went. These were called churches, and those who followed this King were called Christians. Jesus' followers began to orient all of their lives around this true story devoting their lives to serving each other, being a family that was not defined by cultural norms or racial boundaries but by their crucified and risen Savior, learning from the Scriptures and each other, and living as missionaries to the world.

Many of those who followed Jesus were exiled, tortured, and even murdered for living their lives according to the true story. But still the good news of a risen Savior spread, bringing freedom and forgiveness to people across the world. As the good news spread through the cities and out into rural communities people of all walks of life began to see the truth of the story. One such man, Saul, was a religious leader whose life mission was to kill these followers of Jesus. Saul encountered the risen Christ, and his life was transformed by the power of the gospel to the point that he became one of the main missionaries we learn from even today. (You might know him by his new name, Paul.)

As these communities spread across the world, some of Jesus' followers who had witnessed the risen Christ were directed by the Holy Spirit to write letters to these communities, teaching them how to live faithfully on mission. They answered their questions, corrected their errors, and redirected them back to Jesus and His mission which was now theirs to carry out by the power of the Spirit.

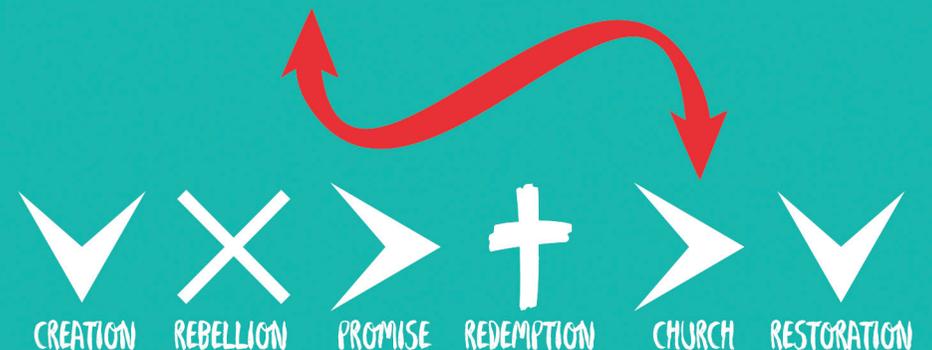
Through the church, we see that God is still on His redemptive mission. It is as the church lives out the mission to declare and demonstrate the gospel that people are able to see what it is to live under the good reign of God and come to worship King Jesus.

This is the act of the story in which we find ourselves today.

- WE ARE LIVING THE STORY -

WHERE DO WE FALL INTO GOD'S OVERARCHING STORY?

RIGHT HERE... THAT'S US!



With that view of where we are in the story, how do we, as the church, give the world a "foretaste of the kingdom?"

**DIDN'T
SEE THAT
COMING**

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news that Jesus came as God in the flesh to proclaim the final word of grace and truth to all the world, that salvation is found in Him and Him alone."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

Heb 1:1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,
What do you remember the Old Testament prophets saying about Jesus?

Tuesday

Heb 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
How is Jesus the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies?

Wednesday

Heb 1:3a He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.
How does God reveal Himself in Jesus?

Thursday

Heb 1:3b After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
How did God take care of our sin problem Himself?

Friday

Heb 2:1 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.
What things do you need to pay closer attention to in your life?

Saturday

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
How does trusting in Jesus result in freedom?

15: Mission as Witness

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news that Jesus came as God in the flesh to tell the good news of His grace, that only through Jesus can we be saved.

Family Questions

1. If you had to write a fictional story about the resurrection, what would it look like?
2. What does it say about the truth of the resurrection that those fantastical details and exciting twists and reactions aren't present in the Gospel accounts?
3. How can you use this information to help spread the Gospel?
4. Who is Jesus to you?

Conversation Starter

Tell your kids the story of your salvation. **Include details such as who you were before you were saved, how you came to Jesus, and how Jesus has changed you.** Encourage your kids to tell you their salvation stories, or if they don't have one yet, talk to them about why they should turn their lives over to Jesus.

ACT SIX: RESTORATION

"The story isn't over."

But the story isn't over. One of Jesus' followers, a man named John, was imprisoned on a small island. He sat in his prison cell and prayed to God. He wondered if and when God would rescue His people.

God spoke to him through a dream, a revelation. In a sequence of stories with rich imagery, God made John aware of the reality that God was still sovereignly accomplishing His mission on the earth through the Church. Even though God's people were suffering and it seemed like the enemy was winning, all was not lost. God revealed to John that He was actively accomplishing His purposes and that they would ultimately culminate in a full and final victory.

One day Jesus will return — not just as the sacrificial lamb that was slain, but as the conquering Lion. John paints this descriptive picture for us with rich imagery: Jesus will return on a great white warhorse like a mighty general returning from battle. He has a great sword of righteousness coming out of His mouth. He has a tattoo on His thigh that says "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." He is wearing a crown of many jewels. And He is wearing a brilliant white robe. And the hem of His robe has been drenched in blood.

Jesus will return for one final battle where He will finally and fully defeat Satan and the powers of darkness, sending them into a lake of fire where they will remain forever.

GOSPEL TRUTH:

"The Gospel is the good news of the present and future love of God that teaches us to live eternity now by worshipping Jesus in all ways, including loving others by living in redemptive relationship with them no matter the race or culture."

RE-WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

**WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS TRUTH
FROM YOU THIS WEEK?**

Then Jesus will judge every person. Those who decided to choose death, who rebelled against God's rule and never repented, will be cast away, forever missing out on God's renewed creation that is to come. Those who were a part of the redeemed community, who had been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, will spend forever with Him in what is to come...

And John saw it! He saw a picture of creation restored! He saw everything bad come undone:

- He saw all the effects of the curse, reversed.
- All the twisting of God's original intention, untwisted.
- All the tears, wiped away.
- Death, no more.
- No mourning, no crying, no pain.
- All the false idols, false gods, false saviors, given up to forever worship the true Savior.

He saw a picture of eternity. There were no clouds, no harps, no vague otherworldliness.

- There was a King.
- There was a renewed creation.
- There were people from every tribe, tongue, and nation bowing down and living their lives in worship to King Jesus.

Not only did he see it, but he heard it. He heard a mighty voice declare from the throne, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. Behold I am making all things new!" (Revelation 21:3, 5)

Seeing and hearing all these things, John was again convinced that God is still on His mission. He knew that Jesus was using His Church to accomplish His purposes in His world. And nothing could thwart that.

John wrote down what he had seen and heard so that the rest of the Church could have the same hope, security, and urgency that he now had. He ended his writing with this, final words: "Amen. Come Lord Jesus!"

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Monday

1 Corinthians 8:9 But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

What is something that you do not struggle with, but others do?

Tuesday

Romans 14:3 Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

Have you passed judgment on others who don't have the same convictions as you?

Wednesday

Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

How can your faith be an encouragement to others for hope in the Gospel?

Thursday

Romans 15:5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,
How can your faith bring people together rather than drive them apart?

Friday

Romans 15:6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How can we as God's people be about unity?

Saturday

Romans 15:7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

How do we live on mission glorifying God and inviting others in?

16: An Eternity

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Gospel Statement

The Gospel is the good news of the present and future love of God; this love teaches us to live our lives here on earth by worshipping Jesus through everything we do, everywhere we go, and everyone we see, no matter if they are the same as, or different from us.

Family Questions

1. How do you, as a family, integrate the cultures you live in to bring others to Jesus?
2. What adjustments could you make to your behaviors that would allow for people who are *not* part of a church culture feel comfortable in having Gospel interactions?
3. How can you include every member of the family in everyday worship of sharing the good news?

Conversation Starter

Discuss as a family if your lives have a variety of cultures within your social circle. **Do you spend time with people that don't believe as you do? How can you either include more diversity in your social circle, or minister to your social circle in a more effective way?**

Appendix A: Salvation

It is our desire for everyone to live a life that is fully surrendered to the all-empowering Lordship of Jesus Christ. We hope that going through the past sixteen weeks have helped you better grasp your own need for a Savior. Our hope was and is to show in a real way that without the work of Jesus and the Cross, our sin completely separates us from our Creator – the Good and Gracious God of all, but it is His plan, from the beginning, to bring Healing and Redemption to this broken relationship.

If you have come to an understanding of your need for Jesus to save you, you might be asking, “What does this mean?” or, “What do I do now?” We wanted to end this book by helping you walk through surrendering to Jesus for the first time.

A big word in Christian understanding is “surrender.” In America we don’t like the word much because it sounds like giving up, like we have lost, but in terms of the Good News of Jesus it means we are giving up living for ourselves and instead trusting in Jesus for everything that matters in our lives. Jesus surrendered Himself to death on a cross when He died, which means the cross should change our self-image. Without the cross, we have nothing except sin in our lives, but because of the reality of the cross, Jesus is our righteousness, redeemer, and our peace. We have a firm foundation to live and to base our lives upon, His death paying for our sins and His resurrection giving life back to us.

The good news of Jesus is that He has made us new, so really, what does that mean? *James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only...or James 2:18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.* James is not advocating a works-based salvation, he is steering us to the understanding that when we comprehend what Jesus did to save us, our entire lives become one of loving Him by living in ways that honor Him. Paul echoes these words in *Romans 12:1 “I appeal to you*

therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” When we understand God’s great mercy given to us, we begin to live differently. Do you see how it all fits together?

The Bible is full of stories of people who knew God and yet did some pretty horrible things. We could actually find some comfort there. Many of us have found ourselves in a place far from God after having come to know Him. Jesus tells the story that we call “The Prodigal Son” in Luke 15:11-32 (you should go read it now). What you will notice in this story is that the prodigal decides to come home in the story when he remembers the kindness of his father. The same is true for us. We need to remember the goodness of our heavenly Father if we ever hope to live lives that honor God. It’s true that people who seek to trust and follow Jesus can fall/walk into sin (either suddenly or as the result of a series of steps in the wrong direction), and without a doubt, all of us struggle with sin (even the writers of Scripture did so). When we forget God’s goodness, we start to live, all the time, in the land of disobedience and then stay there defending it as being no big deal, but according to the Bible, it IS a big deal because our obedience will come out of our understanding of who He is!

We are called, even today, to be those who believe in Jesus, to live as He gives us strength to live, and to honor Him and glorify Him in all things...why? Because for those of whose lives are surrendered to Christ and His truth, the cross and salvation are returned to their rightful place at the center of the gospel. We have hope because we understand God’s love and hope for us... which also means that evangelism, how we treat others, and obedience once again, becomes the defining mark of what it means to love God.

The growth of the disciples looked something like this: First they had faith in Jesus; then they began to have the faith of Jesus, then they began to think more like Jesus. Elton Trueblood in his book [A Place To Stand](#) wrote some profoundly true words, he said:

“Part of the weakness of the Christian movement in our generation has been the relative lack of emphasis on belief. There are three areas that must be cultivated if any faith is to be a living faith: the inner life of devotion, the intellectual life of rational thought, and the outer life of human service. There is no doubt as to which of these has been most neglected in our time; it is the emphasis upon rational belief.” He then later says, “The deepest conviction of the Christian is that Christ was not wrong.”

Faith involves certain beliefs. Faith involves an attitude of hope and confidence. But at its core, faith is trusting a person. We certainly do want you to trust Jesus for eternity, but we also want you to trust Him in your daily life, moment by moment. This is why we have spent 16 weeks talking about God’s over-arching story, and finding our place in that Story. In every moment and area of life, we are living the story of God! It is hard to live as Jesus would live if we do not share at the core level His convictions about the way things really are. The way things are is that there is God who is committed to us in love, that has done much work throughout history to bring us to Himself, and that you are one of those called to belong to Him.

If you have more questions or would like to discuss further with someone, here are three next steps:

- Continue to read the Scriptures! Start with Matthew and read the four gospels back to back. Ask the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal Jesus to you and the truth of how things really are.
- Continue to join us at Element on Sundays and talk to one of our leaders who would be happy to answer any questions you have to the best of his/her ability.
- Get connected with a Gospel Community. A group of people who share their lives together centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Following Jesus is an all-of-life process, and the best way to grow is by being involved in other people’s lives, and by having them in your life, walking and growing together.

For questions or for more information, email info@ourelement.org.

“Faith is being satisfied with all that God is for us in Christ”

-John Piper

“God does not find us worthy, but makes us worthy. If we never come to Christ to be healed till we are worthy, we must never come.”

-Thomas Watson

CREATION FALL
IMAGE COVENANT
PROMISE REDEMPTION
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