

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Glen Weber's Sermon on August 9, 2015
"The Epic Story #3 –
One Chapter Doesn't Tell Your Whole Story"**

[In today's sermon, part 3 of a 5 part series, Senior Pastor Glen Weber shows us why one chapter in our life story isn't the whole story about us.]

Notes:

Introduction:

- This is the third sermon on our series of "The Epic Story."
- The series is based on this year's SEP curriculum.

Theme Scripture for this series:

Ephesians 2:1-6 (The Message), It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us. Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us. He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. He did all this on his own, with no help from us! Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah.

7-10, Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.

Over the previous two sermons in this series, we have discussed the following:

1. God has designed humans to love a great story.
2. What is your story? How has God become a part of it?

Today's message:

- During one of the previous sermons, pastor Glen mentioned in passing that one chapter in our life isn't our whole life's story.
- Today he'll explore more of that thought.

Stories can be misinterpreted:

- It's easy to misinterpret a story when we only know a part of it.
- Let's take the example from the Bible about Peter denying Jesus.
- First, the initial conversation between Jesus and Peter.

Matt. 26:33-35 (The Message), Peter broke in, "Even if everyone else falls to pieces on account of you, I won't." "Don't be so sure," Jesus said. "This very night, before the rooster crows up the dawn, you will deny me three times." Peter protested, "Even if I had to die with you, I would never deny you."

- Then, what actually happened.

Matt. 26:69-75 (The Message), All this time, Peter was sitting out in the courtyard. One servant girl came up to him and said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean."

In front of everybody there, he denied it. "I don't know what you're talking about." As he moved over toward the gate, someone else said to the people there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene."

Again he denied it, salting his denial with an oath: "I swear, I never laid eyes on the man." Shortly after that, some bystanders approached Peter. "You've got to be one of them. Your accent gives you away."

Then he got really nervous and swore. "I don't know the man!" Just then a rooster crowed. Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." He went out and cried and cried and cried.

- Imagine if that's all the story you knew about Peter, you might think there's no hope for Peter.
- It was really a very bad chapter in his life.
- But we will see later, his mistakes in that chapter didn't ultimately define Peter.
- Sometimes, we have an "oh-no" chapter in our lives, as well.
- But that doesn't define us.

Defining your story:

- Just as one scene from a movie or one passage of scripture doesn't tell the whole story, one chapter in your life doesn't tell your whole story either.
- All the chapters you have lived so far make up a large part of your story, but even that isn't the whole story!
- Pastor Glen believes all of us have a story worth telling.
- Pastor Glen's wish is that he had the time to listen to each one of our stories!
- He would love to meet everyone one of us for ice cream or dessert – somewhere to hear our story!!
- Some would be short stories, like our teens, because they've only been alive for a few years.
- Other stories would be like novels because our senior citizens have lived for many decades and have influenced many people in their lives.
- Whether short or long, each story matters and each chapter in our story matters.

Defining chapters in our lives:

- Early childhood might be a chapter.
- Elementary school/high school
- Birth of a child/sibling to your family.
- Learning to drive.

- Playing a sport or joining a club might be a chapter.
- Marriage
- Death of a spouse or child
- Loss of a job
- Becoming disabled
- Retirement

Our story has many chapters:

- Chapters certainly make up the parts of our story, but they don't define our whole story – just as one scene in a movie doesn't define the whole movie.
- Some chapters in our lives are hard to make sense of – like the hurts we go through, the losses we face, or the questions that don't seem to have answers.
- The truth is your story – and all the chapters that it includes – sometimes only makes sense when you understand that your story is part of a bigger, Epic story.

What is the Epic story?

- The Epic story we keep referring to is a story about adventure, danger, sacrifice, good and evil, hope, heroes, struggles, death and love as we learned in our first sermon.
- It is a journey, a mystery, and a promise, as we learned in the second sermon. It's a meaningful story you are already a part of. You are already included in this story.
- What is this incredible story? It's the story of Jesus.

- It's the story of Jesus revealing the heart of love of his Papa – God the Father – toward all people, and helping you realize that His Father is your Papa too.
- It's the story of Father, Son and Spirit living in eternal relationship from before time began and choosing to be our Papa, our big Brother, and our Teacher.

- It's a story about the incredible energy of love that flowed from the union and fellowship of the Trinity that created you.
- That's where you come into the story: you were created to be part of the story.
- Jesus came to become one of us – He was divine but also human.
- He suffered hours on the cross so we can get through our difficult chapters of life.

Ephesians 1:3-6 gives us the overview of The Epic Story:

Eph. 1:3-6 (The Message), How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning

this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.

- God decided long, long ago that we would be the focus of His love and that He would adopt us into his family.
- And who would He do this through? Through Jesus! We are chosen and we are adopted into His family through Jesus.
- We belong! We are part of the Epic story!

The liar:

- Unfortunately, there is a liar – the enemy – who constantly tries to convince us that we are not a part of the Epic Story.
- He loves to whisper negative things to us making us think our life is random, an accident, has no meaning, and doesn't matter.
- So the enemy will put thoughts in your mind that go something like this:
 - “You really screwed up. It's all over.”
 - “You'll never amount to anything, why try?”
 - “Your life is boring and meaningless. Nobody cares.”
 - “You'll never be perfect, so what's the point?”
 - “Nobody cares about you. You're unlovable.”
- Have you ever had these thoughts or some like them? Most of us have.
- Even thoughts like these – which are lies – are part of the story but they do not define our story.
- Jesus wants us to know we are important; we are worthy of His love.
- And yes, we will mess up, but He is there with a message of forgiveness that is as vast as the ocean and love that is greater than the universe.
- Jesus' message is called the Gospel, which simply means Good News!

Here's a Biblical example that shows the power of the Gospel – the Good News!

- There is a story about a woman, caught in the act of adultery, who desperately needed some good news – and she needed it quickly because she was about to die.
- This woman was caught cheating on her spouse. We all agree that cheating is wrong.
- Cheating on your spouse can destroy a relationship or a family, and in the days of Jesus it was punishable by death.
- We don't have all the details or the backstory of this woman, but what we do know is Jesus was teaching at the temple when the religious leaders and teachers brought a woman to him, and in front of everyone said,

John 8:4-5 (The Message), Teacher, this woman was caught red-handed in the act of adultery. Moses, in the Law, gives orders to stone such persons. What do you say?

- The scripture goes on to say they were trying to trap him, but as Jesus always did, he flipped things upside down.

- And in a show of His own divinity He told them they were welcome to start stoning her as soon as they felt like they were without sin and did not deserve a stoning of their own.
- One by one, they dropped their rocks and walked away.
- That is pretty dramatic. They must have known they were guilty of sin worthy of death or else they would have stuck around, don't you think?
- Then Jesus asked the woman if there was anyone left to accuse her of her sin, she answered "No."

8:11 (the Message), And Jesus responded, "Neither do I. Go on your way. From now on, don't sin."

- Keep in mind Jesus knew she would still sin, we all do.
- In essence he was saying: "Your sin almost got you killed.
- I love you too much to see you hurt yourself this way.
- Stop what you are doing and make better choices."
- The message Jesus is giving us here is that this woman's mistake – her chapter of sinful adultery – did not define her life or make up the whole of her story.
- He did not condone the sin, but he knew everything about her and knew the sin was merely one chapter in a long life.
- Jesus gave this woman the gospel – remember it means Good News – and helped her begin a fresh chapter in the story of her life.
- Jesus has good news and He is good news
- Jesus is the good news that each and every one of us needs – whether we've got small sins in our lives or big ones.
- Whether we've made some bad choices or whether we've been victims to other people's bad choices,
- Jesus is the good news that covers and heals it all.

Let's read our theme passage again:

It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us. Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us. He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. He did all this on his own, with no help from us! Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah (Eph. 2:1-6; The Message).

- Jesus gave His life for you and me so we could be made alive in Him.
- He defines our story. He defines our story on the good days when you're doing everything right.
- And He defines our story on the bad days, the hard days, the dark days when we just don't think we can go on.

Another chapter in Peter's story:

- We already read the story of Peter betraying his relationship with Jesus during Jesus torture by the Romans.
- But notice what happens at the moment Jesus is resurrected.
- In Mark 16:7, An angel of Jesus tells the women to go tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus would meet them in Galilee!
- Notice Peter is specifically mentioned – because Peter is likely hearing the lies of the enemy that he has disqualified himself before Jesus – which he hadn't.

Scene from "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers":

- After an incredibly long and grueling journey, Frodo simply wants to give up.
- But Sam encourages him.

Frodo: I can't do this, Sam.

Sam: I know. It's all wrong. By rights we shouldn't even be here. But we are. It's like in the great stories, Mr. Frodo. The ones that really mattered. Full of darkness and danger, they were. And sometimes you didn't want to know the end. Because how could the end be happy? How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad had happened? But in the end, it's only a passing thing, this shadow. Even darkness must pass.

A new day will come. And when the sun shines it will shine out the clearer. Those were the stories that stayed with you. That meant something, even if you were too small to understand why. But I think, Mr. Frodo, I do understand. I know now. Folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back, only they didn't. They kept going. Because they were holding onto something.

Frodo: What are we holding onto, Sam?

Sam: That there's some good in this world, Mr. Frodo... and it's worth fighting for.

Conclusion:

- That good news in this world is Jesus!
- What He is up to in this world – the work He is doing – is definitely worth fighting for.
- Not only what He is doing on the grand scale, but what He is doing in OUR story!

Handouts:

- Pastor Glen referred to the two handouts that were in today's bulletin.
- The first one was titled: "My Story: Table of Contents – Rough Draft."
- The second one was titled: "My Story: Table of Contents."
- Both had blank spaces for 16 chapters to be filled in.
- Pastor Glen gave us a few minutes to think about it and jot down some notes on the rough draft paper.
- He then asked us to complete the second handout at home.

Closing Prayer: