THE STORY CHAPTER 29

Paul’s Mission

April 29-30, 2017

Appearing on the Big Screen…

…speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16**From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

*Ephesians 4:15-16*

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. **29**To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

*Colossians 1:28-29*

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— **12**remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. **13**But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

**14**For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.

*Ephesians 2:11-14*

**Agreement on Overall Vision and Direction for Oak Hills**

For the better part of 10 years, the Oak Hills Church has embraced a vision to reach the city for Christ. If Randy Frazee is confirmed as our Senior Minister this will be the strategy he (and we) will pursue. We recognize that Randy comes with a kingdom calling that is an answer to the prayer of OHC. (pg 3 of 7)

THE STORY CHAPTER 29

Paul’s Mission

Randy Frazee

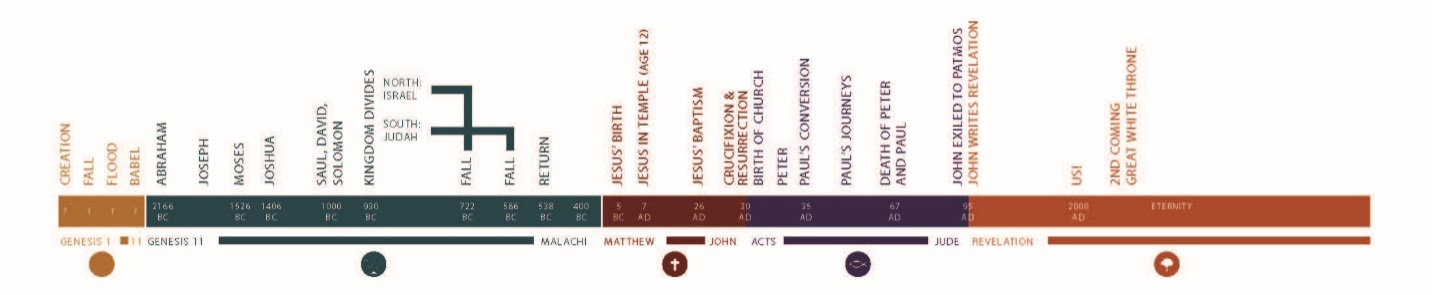
Oak Hills Church, San Antonio, TX

April 29-30, 2017

**To view The Story Chapter 29 sermon video,** [CLICK HERE](http://media.oakhillschurch.com/default.aspx?page=3679&item=582)**.**

**Introduction**

*Refer to Timeline poster*

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What a beautiful story this is. The story of how love wins. We were in deep, deep trouble with Adam and Eve’s first bite into the fruit, signalling to God they had rejected his vision. Death became a part of all our stories along with pain, illness, rejection, anger, fear, loneliness, doubt, depression. We were created to be in community with each other and with God, but that was the day it was broken.

But God wants us back. So, he launches a plan through the nation of Israel that brings us the person of Jesus. Jesus would come from the Upper Story. He would take on flesh through the Virgin Mary. He would grow up amongst us. For the last 3 years of his life he would walk amongst us, minister to us, teach us, heal the hurting, perform miracles. And then, on a Friday appointed from the foundation of the world, he did what he ultimately came here to do, to fulfill his mission, and that is to be crucified on a cross. In this moment, all our sins were transferred to Jesus Christ on that cross, and he died and paid the price of our sin. But then, 3 days later, he rose from the dead. When he rose from the dead he was signaling he was not just a nice guy with good intentions, or a lunatic pretending to be the Messiah, but when he rose from the dead, he proved to everyone he was not an ordinary man, but he was God himself. On this day, he backed Satan away and he conquered death for us.

Here is the good news – When a person, regardless of who they are or what they have done, places their faith wholly on the work and person of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, in that moment they become a child of God, and they receive the gift of eternal life in the presence of God. And because we have this hope we can live fearless lives today, because nothing can separate us from that promise. And when you live by the principles of God’s Word it brings success, joy and purpose into your life.

Here’s the question: How will people hear about this good news? That is where you and I enter into the story…finally!

**The Church**

After the resurrection of Christ and ascension back to the Father, the Holy Spirit was sent to empower a new community God was building called the Church. Here is what Paul said about the church in his book to the believers in Ephesus –

…speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16**From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

*Ephesians 4:15-16*

Just like our bodies, every part, internally and externally has a part to play (unless you are a tonsil, apparently we can do without you.) When everyone works their part in unison with the rest of the body, it is a beautiful thing. When the church is working, there is nothing quite like her.

This chapter is entitled **Paul’s Mission**. Paul had a part to play and he knew what it was. And he knew where the strength comes from to do his part –

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. **29**To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

*Colossians 1:28-29*

For us to be successful in fulfilling our mission on this earth, we too must rely on the energy of the Holy Spirit within in me. When we yield to God’s will, it stirs the Spirit of God within us. For the believer in Jesus, this is our power source: our power source to love our mate, to raise our children, to have the strength to get through a difficult situation with dignity, to come alongside a friend or a stranger and help them in their time of need.

Paul was given a specific mission to take the good news to the Gentiles. Jesus came from the Jews and they were the first to hear it and many received it. This was Peter’s primary mission. But now, God fulfills his promise to Abraham that the one coming from his family would be a blessing to all people, to all nations. If you are not Jewish, then you are a Gentile. Paul’s mission was to get the word to us and it worked. Anybody happy about that shout a hearty “Amen!”

But there was a wall that needed to be torn down between the Jew and the Gentile. Like racial tension today, they didn’t like each other very much or trust each other. But it was God’s vision for them to be one. It was the passionate prayer of Jesus to his father that “they would be one,” and he assigned Paul the mission of tearing down this wall. Listen to Paul cast this vision.

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— **12**remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. **13**But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

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Today, there is an estimated 2.2 billion Christians scattered all over the world from every race. It all started with Jesus, and extended to the 12 apostles and disciples, and moved to Paul, who was responsible to bring the Gospel to us. We wake up today with 2.2 billion followers alive today. But the work is not done. The Bible says God is not willing that any should perish. And that is where you and I come in. God has given us a part to play in the unfolding of his Upper Story Plan.

I remember like was yesterday when I join as a protagonist in God’s story. I was 14 years old – I had not grown up in church. A year later at the age of 15, at a summer camp in New York, I sensed my call to be a pastor. This was the same year I met Rozanne. At 16 my first assignment was choir director of the church I attended. Rozanne sang alto and has a beautiful voice. At 18 I headed off to Bible College. At 22 I headed off to seminary, now married to Rozanne to get my graduate degree in biblical studies.

At the age of 28 it finally happened. I became the pastor of a church. And this is what I have done for the last 28 years.

I love the church. She has kicked me in the teeth a few times and I have made many mistakes back, but this is the bride of Christ. The church is the hope of the world. Not politics, not education, not wealth…the church, because the church has the power of Christ in them.

The elders brought me here nine years ago with a very distinct mission in mind, not just to be a pastor, but to fulfill a very distinct mission that had been developing in my heart. Here is how it actually read from a Memorandum of Understanding dated February 7, 2008 –

Agreement on Overall Vision and Direction for Oak Hills

For the better part of 10 years, the Oak Hills Church has embraced a vision to reach the city for Christ. If Randy Frazee is confirmed as our Senior Minister this will be the strategy he (and we) will pursue. We recognize that Randy comes with a kingdom calling that is an answer to the prayer of OHC. (pg 3 of 7)

* We have grown from 4500 in attendance to over 10,000 in weekend attendance.
* We had our largest attendance in the history of the church this last Easter with over 20,000 – 17,000 present, 3,000 watching online.
* We have grown from 3 campuses to 7
* Our budget has grown from 10 to 17 million.
* We have the presence of Christ honeycombed through hundreds of neighborhoods in San Antonio and up into the Hill Country
* Most importantly, over 5,000 people have been baptized.

The mission I have been given to do is complete. The next phase is to now partner with other churches. Oak Hills can’t reach this city by ourselves. We had 17,000 on Easter but there are over 1.4 million in San Antonio. If we planned to reach them by ourselves, we sure didn’t build a big enough building.

So, we must partner with the churches in our city. Do you know how many churches there are in San Antonio and the Hill Country? 200, 300, 500, 1,000… The answer is just **ONE**. From the Lower Story the answer is 1200. But from the Upper Story, from Jesus’ point of view perched high above us next to the Father, from Jesus’ perspective, there is just one church. Time to start acting like it.

But there are walls that need to be broken down that keep the church in our city from being all that it needs to be.

1. There are walls between churches that need to come down. Walls based on denominations, walls based on race, walls based on geography. But the biggest wall is the wall of territorialism. We are afraid if we intermingle in small groups the way we have been doing lately, you’re going to like that other church better than ours and you’ll move your tithes and offerings over there. We are in preservation mode, and we are never going to accomplish our mission until we give that up and trust God. Oak Hills has led the way in encouraging you to join up with your neighbors regardless of if they go to church or where they go to church. If you decide to go to church in another building, you haven’t switched churches – it’s impossible! You can switch buildings, but you can’t switch churches.

Our enemy knows that if these walls come down and the church unites, she will be unstoppable. Walls have started to crumble but there is still a lot of work to do.

1. If we are united together we can break down the wall between the church and the people on the outside. The enemy has got us in the position where we often come across as horrible people filled with hate. But that is not Jesus’ message. When we talk what we say is twisted. So, often we go mute, and say nothing, and the enemy has got us right where he wants us. It is time for the church to unite and take back the microphone again, and pick up the megaphone, and shout out the message of Jesus. The message of Jesus is not hate. The message of Jesus is not horrific. The message of Jesus is love and grace and hope and transformation embedded in undeniable truth. Pick up the microphone. Pick up the megaphone. Shout it from the mountaintops. We are one church with an amazing message that will change your life.

What if we were to get hundreds of churches in San Antonio, who, as a simple start, over a period of 3-5 weeks, would all join together and give the same message in their churches, and put up billboards, and shout out – ‘this is the message Jesus has for you, draw close to him.’

1. If we unite we can mobilize a united army to break down the walls of:
   1. Generational Poverty. It’s not enough to simply throw entitlement packages over the wall. That’s not helping these people. We need to sit with them and help them relationally in Jesus, and that and that alone will bring them out of the ditch they are in.
   2. The wall between law enforcement and the citizens. The citizens need to rebuild trust in police officers, and police officers, who used to hold their heads up high, can no longer be sure how the next person is going to feel about them. So the vision is that all the churches would join together in a program called Hope4Blue, where every believer has an opportunity to sponsor one police officer who works your beat for $2/month. That $2/month gets them an additional death benefit and a whole host of other things, but more important than that, they get a relationship with you, where they know you will be praying for them, and you have their back. This is what will ultimately bring about healing and transformation.
   3. If we were united we could come alongside the thousands of children without a family at risk in our city. Did you know that the number one predictor of graduation and the number one predictor of incarceration is the very same thing? The number one predictor of graduation and incarceration is whether or not a child can read by third grade. You learn to read from kindergarten to third grade, then you read to learn from fourth grade to graduation. If a kid cannot read by third grade, they cannot learn, and it predicts more than anything that they will not graduate from high school and they will end up in our prison system. The church could come alongside every elementary school and make sure every third grader can read, but much more than that, that they might know they are loved by God, and have the hope that is only found in Christ.
   4. If we were united we could wipe out the foster care system in our city within a year. There are only 1200 kids in the foster care system in San Antonio, and the church represents hundreds of thousands of believers…surely among us we can partner together to wipe out the need for foster care.

In these recent days, the song of my heart has been,

Walls are coming down

Walls are coming down

Oh, oh, oh, oh

Oh, oh, oh, oh

I knew with God’s help we would come to this place. It was in the plan all along. And it is time. What I didn’t see coming was his call for me to leave my post as your pastor and step out in faith to lead it. But he has and I have to say “yes” out of devotion for what he has done for me. So, as of today, after 28 years, I am shifting from being a pastor of a church, to a pastor for the city.

I am extremely excited about this phase. The elders have offered their full blessing and an investment into this work. Oak Hills will be one of the founding churches along with other churches like Community Bible, Grace Point, Abundant Life (largest Hispanic church in our city) and Christ Episcopal (people who wear funny collars, wear robes and burn candles). I have also been in some great conversations with our African American congregations on the East side – like Antioch Baptist with Bishop Ken Kemp.

Walls are coming down

Walls are coming down

Oh, oh, oh, oh

Oh, oh, oh, oh

For the past 9 years I have had the benefit of developing a good friendship and a great partnership with Max Lucado. 9 years ago, in my very first message here, I said, “There’s no way I could fill the big shoes of Max Lucado. He’s a big man. And I’m vertically challenged.” But we agreed that day that Max would wear his shoes and continue to be Max Lucado, and I would wear my shoes, and continue to be who I am, Randy Frazee, and in unity we would partner together to see what God would do. And he has done some amazing things. Max remains my really good friend. I will not be leaving that friendship, I will just be sitting in a different seat.

The staff of this church has been amazing. I am going to miss working with that on the interior of this church, but we are not losing our partnership in the gospel. I am simply going to be sitting in a different seat.

I am excited, but God gave me permission this weekend to grieve. You have loved me and my family well. We will remain at Oak Hills, sitting next to you, singing at the top of my lungs. And I will join you when the benediction is given to leave this building, and to do what we committed to do when we came here 9 years ago (say it with me one more time), “We are the body of Christ called to be Jesus in every neighborhood in our city and beyond.

I wanted to leave you with a blessing but my wife has asked to give it to you today.

*Rozanne speaks:*

And now, may our great God, who created you, and called you before the foundations of the earth were laid, strengthen you, protect you, and uphold you with his mighty right hand. May Jesus, whose love for you is beyond compare, shine that light through you, to the community who so desperately needs to receive him. And may the Holy Spirit continue to guide you, comfort you, and bring your heart peace, until the day you run into your Heavenly Father’s arms and hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Amen.

*Max Lucado speaks:*

Max thanks Randy and Rozanne

*Elders come to stage, Jim Barker prays a prayer of blessing for Randy & Rozanne, prays for Max & Denalyn as Max re-assumes the senior minister role, and for the church.*