THE STORY CHAPTER 5

New Commands & A New Covenant

October 8-9, 2016

Appearing on the Big Screen…

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

*John 1:1-3*

If I come down…

… I’ll need a **place** to stay.

“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.”

*Pg. 63, Exodus 25:8-9 NIV*

…sin must be **atoned** for.

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

*Hebrews 10:1-4 NIV*

…there has to be **guidelines** on how we treat each other.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

*Mark 12:30-31*

The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

*Pg. 67, Exodus 33:14-16 NIV*

THE STORY CHAPTER 5

New Commands & A New Covenant

Randy Frazee

Oak Hills Church, San Antonio, TX

October 8-9, 2016

**To view The Story Chapter 5 sermon video,** [**CLICK HERE**](http://media.oakhillschurch.com/default.aspx?page=3679&item=545)**.**

**Introduction**

A burglar broke into a home and was looking around. He heard a soft voice say, "Jesus is watching you". Thinking it was just his imagination, he continued his search. Again the voice said "Jesus is watching you". He turned his flashlight around and saw a parrot in a cage. He asked the parrot if he was the one talking and the parrot said, "yes." He asked the parrot what his name was and the parrot said, "Moses." The burglar asked, "what kind of people would name a parrot Moses?" The parrot said, "the same kind of people who would name their pit bull Jesus".

In this fictitious story, Moses and Jesus are partners. In the real Story, the real Moses and the real Jesus are also on the same team. Some of you know both of their stories well and some of you don’t, and that is okay, that is one of the reasons you are here. I am reminded every time I teach that the audience is made up of people all over the biblical literacy continuum.

Several years back when we were living in Chicago we made an intentional effort to get to know all of the neighbors right around us. A younger, really cool family moved in a few doors up from us and we got together as families quite often but he kept putting me off to go golfing. I’m a really good golfer and sometimes that intimidates people, but I was told he was also a good golfer – so that couldn’t be it.

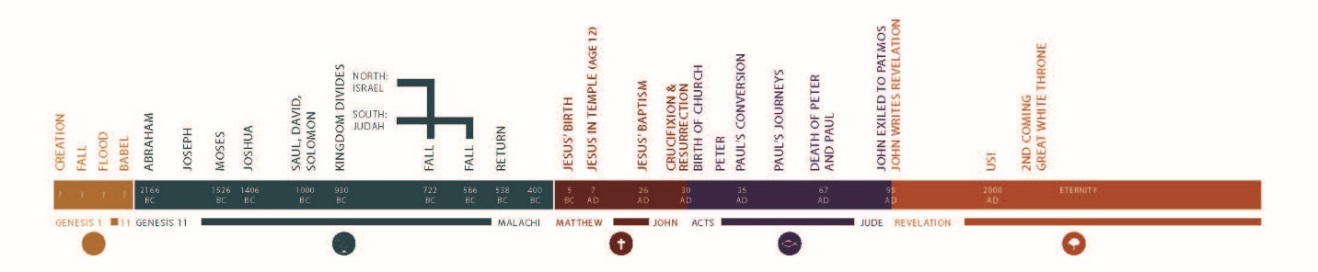
Finally, he decided to go golfing with me. On the ride together to the golf course he said, “I just need to get this out right now before we even get to the golf course. The reason I have been putting you off is because I am intimidated, not by your golf game, but by your Bible knowledge. I have a college degree and see myself as a fairly intelligent guy but I am so embarrassed by how little I know and I didn’t want to spend four hours in a golf cart with you proving the degree of my ignorance. So there I said it. Do you still want to golf?” I said, “Of course, so glad you got that off your chest.”

Feeling relieved he blurted out, “I’ll tell you how bad it is. I know that Jesus and Moses are characters in the Bible but I really don’t have any idea which one came first or if they lived at the same time.” I whispered under my breath, “Man, this guy really wasn’t kidding; he’s got nothing.”

So, little Bible quiz for you to answer the question. In the story, who comes first “Moses or Jesus”?

The answer is…Jesus!

*Refer to timeline poster*

**

Yes, it’s true that Jesus came down to earth and took on human flesh around 1400 years after Moses walked the earth, BUT he first shows up in Genesis 1:1 in the story of Creation. Jesus is not just a man, but he is God, who has existed forever and he created the heavens and the earth along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

In fact, the first chapter of John gives us some deeper insight.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

*John 1:1-3*

**“Come Down” vs. “Up There” God**

God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had a vision at creation. It is very important that you understand the passion of God. It was for them to create all of this and then to *come down* and be with Adam and Eve in the beautiful garden. This is God’s grand vision, to be with us. This is what God wants but Adam and Eve rejected. So, Adam and Eve are escorted from the garden and God returns *up there*, which is where many people think God has stayed – *up there.*

But there is a fascinating observation about the story you may miss if you don’t step back and look at the big picture. We are going to see that God is not an *up there* distant kind of God, but his passion is to be a *down here* kind of God. There are actually five times in The Story where God comes down to be with us.

*Refer to timeline.*

1. At Creation in the Garden
2. He comes down again to Moses and Israel, which we are covering today in Chapter 5 of *The Story*
3. The *incarnation* when Jesus, the Son *comes down* and takes on flesh and “dwells among us”, Immanuel, God with us.
4. The birth of the church, when God takes up residence, not in a temple built with stone, but in a new temple – He comes into us and dwells.
5. The final time is at the end of *The Story* when his vision is restored and God creates a New Heaven and a New Earth and recreates a new garden (this time a garden city) and *comes down* to dwell with those who have embraced the vision of God through faith in Christ forever and ever.

Here is the point: God is not *up there* and distant, but he wants to be *down here*, near you. This is his desire.

**The Presence of God with Israel**

As we open the pages to chapter 5 of the Story we find that it is time for Israel to inherit the land God promised Abraham 645 years earlier (see the Timeline in *The Story*, pg. *xi*) Moses just led them out of slavery in Egypt by the mighty hand of God’s power. They are now in the Sinai Peninsula, a desert heading north east to Canaan, the Promised Land.

Three months into the desert experience, God visits Moses and says, “I am going to come down again and be with you and Israel, for the first time since Creation. I will be right in the center of your camp, right in the center of your lives.” When God’s presence is with us, we experience blessing and protection, guidance and power. We have the favor of God on our side. But in order for God to come down, there are three things that are going to have to be in place.

If I come down…

… I’ll need a **place** to stay.

“Then have them a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.”

*Pg. 63, Exodus 25:8-9*

God gives Moses very specific instructions for the building of a tent called a “tabernacle” (which in Hebrew literally means *dwelling*) where every piece of furniture and every fabric chosen is a picture of what is going to happen in Christ 1400 years later. God’s presence will actually come down and dwell in this tent erected right in the middle of Israel’s camp.

In the back of the tent God has Moses section off a room with a super tall and heavy curtain. The room was called “The Holy of Holies.” This is where God would dwell. No one was to enter this room except the high priest, and he would only enter once a year, bearing the blood sacrifice of a perfect lamb to offer forgiveness of sin for the people. It is important to note that the people do not have direct access to God. Why? Because their sin had not been dealt with or atoned for, paid for, made right with God. What keeps people from community with God is our sin offense.

That is why the second requirement for God’s arrival down on earth is this:

…sin must be **atoned** for.

This is the section of Scripture where we find the book of Leviticus, which contains some things that are very odd to us. The primary goal of this book is to lay out the exact requirements for the animal and other types of sacrifices offered to God for payment for the sins of the people. Every nuance and intricacy about the manner in which these sacrifices must be made point to the perfection that is to come 1400 years later with Jesus.

In order for us to be in community with God, the sin nature passed down from Adam and Eve must be paid for and made right, so the sacrificial system is instituted at this point. There were instances of sacrifices prior to this, but now, with God coming down to permanently dwell with the people, sins needed to be constantly atoned for. So, the sacrificial system is instituted.

**Question**: If sins were atoned for by the shedding of the blood of these animals, then why was God quarantining himself in that back room called The Holy of Holies? The people of Israel had God’s presence dwelling with them, but they could not have direct access to God. Why was that? The answer is found in the New Testament book of Hebrews –

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

*Hebrews 10:1-4 NIV*

God was instituting something symbolic that gave the people opportunity express their faith and repentance for their sin. But in reality, even the perfect blood of an unblemished lamb or bull could not remove our sins. These sacrifices were a picture of what was to come in Christ. That’s why, during the time of Moses and Israel, God was *with* them, but they could not have direct access *to* them.

One more. God says, In order for me to come down…

…there has to be **guidelines** on how we treat each other.

In God’s community everyone is treated with dignity, honor and respect all the time. But because of the presence of sin running through our veins we just can’t help ourselves. One day we will do something good for the people around us and the next day we will trash them.

It’s like the two guys who were meeting for lunch. The one guy asked the other, “How is it going with your wife?” He responded, “Last night she came crawling to me on her hands and knees.” “Oh? What did she say?” “Come out from underneath that bed and fight like a man!”

Some of you know that my brother, who is five years older than me, suffered a severe stroke, and they are in a situation where they have no income, no money. Rozanne and I have agreed that any decisions we make about our money need to be made together, so I went to her yesterday and said, “I want to give my brother this sum of money.” She said, “I was thinking five times that amount.” So we sent them a wire transfer of the amount she named, and gratefully said to my wife, “Thank you for joining me in loving my brother.”

Last night, on the very same day as this happened, we were cleaning up from dinner and I threw away her drink. A little while later she said, “Where’s my drink?” and I said, “Um, I threw it away.” And she said, “You know I love my drink after dinner!” And I said, “I know, but I like to clean things.” I know that sounds like a small thing, but despite my heart of gratitude just a while earlier, now all I can think of is my desire to have things neat and clean and in order, and I ignore what I have known about her for 35 years. I put my needs before hers. Out of one side of our heart comes good, and out of the other side comes evil.

God says, “In family we can’t treat each other like that anymore. You can’t get away with that sort of dysfunction.” So, God gives us some guidelines for how to treat him and how to treat each other, and we call this the Ten Commandments. Jesus said the whole law that God gave Moses can be summed up in just two commands –

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12:30-31 NIV

Jesus is saying, “The Ten Commandments and the other 600 commandments that are underneath them will either give you instruction on how to relate to me or how to relate to each other.”

Of the ten commandments, the first four deal vertically with our relationship with God, and commands 5 through 10 instruct us on how we are to treat each other horizontally.

**The Presence of God with Us**

Moses really values the presence of God. He knows when God is down in the middle of our lives, we will receive blessing. He wanted that for himself, and he wanted that for the people he leads. Moms and dads, you want that for yourself, but you also want that for the children you lead. The presence of God does something for you you could never do for yourself.

As Moses was up on the mountain getting these three things in place, it was taking a long time. The children of Israel were down below, thinking Moses wasn’t coming back. They may have been afraid, they may have just been idiots, but they started throwing their jewelry into the furnace, and Aaron said it this way, “Out popped a golden calf!” They started worshipping this golden calf.

God taps Moses on the shoulder and says, “Look at what the people are doing down there! Before you even go down off the mountain, the people have already broken the first two of the four commandments about their relationship with me…no other gods before me, and no graven images of me. You can go into the Promised Land I promised to Abraham generations ago, but I’m not going with you.”

Moses engages in this dangerous dialog with God. Moses challenges God. “Wait a minute, God! You can’t do that! You made a promise to Abraham 645 years ago, so you have to go with us. It says in the text, “God relented.” God actually backed down and changed his mind, not because God adopted the will of Moses, but because Moses brought up the will of God.

You want God to answer your prayers? Recite back to him his unconditional promises he has made. He said to Moses,

The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

*Pg. 67, Exodus 33:14-16 NIV*

We need to have the attitude of Moses. Why? If you’re like me, it’s because you want blessing, protection, guidance. It’s because you want the power of the mighty God on your side.

So today, God is saying to you what he said to Moses. He says, “I want to come down, but if I’m going to come down, we’ve got to get three things in order:

1. I’m going to need a place to stay. This time, the place I have chosen is not in a temple built with stone, but rather it is a temple with sandals and sneakers on. I want my presence to dwell with you.
2. In order for that to happen, your sin must be atoned for. It’s no longer the sacrifice of animals or grain, but it is the sacrifice of my son Jesus. Because his blood is powerful enough to actually forgive your sins, I don’t have to quarantine myself in a private room where you have no access. The curtain to the room has been torn from top to bottom, I have been let out of the room, and now I can dwell right inside of you whose sins have been atoned for.”

This means 24/7, in the middle of the night, when you’re most afraid, you can cry out to him personally. You don’t have to call me up and go through me, because I’m crying out to him for myself. For some of you, you desire God’s favor and presence in your life, but you have never taken the step of making sure your sins were atoned for; you’ve never applied the blood of Jesus to your life. If you have not done that for yourself, then you are not a Christian, and you do not have the presence of God within you. But if you invite Christ to forgive you of your sins through his blood, not only will you be forgiven, but his presence will take up residence within you.

1. And he said, “The third thing that needs to happen is that I need to give you some guidelines on how to treat me and treat each other. You don’t have to fulfill these guidelines to have a relationship with me – that was never the deal. You get into my Word and learn my will so you can walk on the path of success I am laying out for you.”

That’s the decision you’re faced with today. Will you value the presence of God in your life? Will you say to him…

Dear God, I don’t want to go anywhere without you.

Dear God, I can’t face this cancer without you. Be with me.

Dear God, I can’t face the loss of my spouse without you right by my side.

Dear God, I cannot overcome this addiction with your power and presence in my life.

Dear God, go with me to work tomorrow, I need your favor.

Dear God, I am lost and don’t know where to go; show me my next step to take with a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night.

I offer you the words of Moses, the Parrot – “Jesus is watching you.” Not to bite you in the behind for being bad or catching you making a mistake. He is watching over you because he loves you, he is blessing you, and he wants to protect you.

I also offer you the prayer of Moses, the Prophet, who at the end of this conversation, has the audacity to pray, “Dear God, show me your glory, send down your presence, I want to see your face.” God says, “You can’t handle that. But I tell you what I’ll do because I’m so pleased with you. I’m going to brush by you as you wait in the alcove of the cave. As I go by, I’ll put my hand over the cleft of the rock so you can’t actually see my face, but as I pass I’ll remove my hand so you will see the back of me.” Moses nestled back into the cleft of the rock, and the presence of God passed by him.

This needs to be our prayer. “Show me your glory. Send down your presence. I want to see your face.”

*PRAY*