THE STORY

Prologue – Week 4

Telling God’s Story

August 27-28, 2016

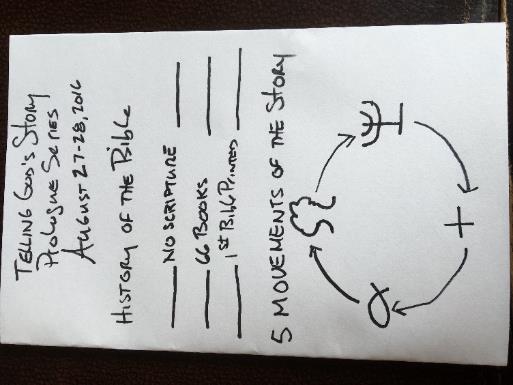
Appearing on the Big Screen…

**10,000 BC – 1406 BC** No Scriptures **8594 yrs.**

**1406 BC – AD 400** 66 Books Together **1806 yrs.**

**AD 400 – AD 1454** First Bible Printed **1054 yrs.**

**11,454 yrs.**



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Telling God’s Story

Randy Frazee

Oak Hills Church, San Antonio, TX

August 27-28, 2016

**To view The Story Prologue Week 4 sermon video, [CLICK HERE](http://media.oakhillschurch.com/default.aspx?page=3679&item=539).**

**Introduction**

Let me tell you a story.

Rozanne and I got married in December between my junior and my senior year in college, in 1981. I was studying for my undergraduate degree in theology at a small college in Missouri. In the spring, the college posted a racquetball tournament.

I told Rozanne I thought I would sign up for it. I never played racquetball before but I did play a fair amount of tennis. How much difference could there be given I have excellent hand-eye coordination?

There were three divisions – A, B, and C. A was for the best players, and C for the weakest players. I told Rozanne that while I thought I could definitely compete in the “A” division, I was going to sign up this year for the “C” division to guarantee a win. In my senior year, I would sign up for the “A” division, and go out the school champ. It is important to set realistic goals.

The first step was making sure I looked good. This intimidates your opponents and gets into their heads. So, we went shopping. I landed on a pair of navy blue shorts with the Spalding brand embroidered in white. I purchased a white, short sleeved, collared shirt with the Spalding brand embroidered in navy blue. I purchased two white wrist bands and one white head band in the event I broke out in a sweat. Not likely to happen…but I did look good with them on. Finally, we purchased a powder blue Spalding racquet. It wasn’t navy in color like my shorts but it still went well with the overall look I was going for and I didn’t want to get too matchy-matchy.

It was the day of the game for the first match. I got suited up and Rozanne came to cheer me on. My first match was with an opponent who was rather out of shape – a belly sticking out that would most definitely be an impediment on the court. He wore a lose pair of shorts, dirty tennis shoes and a shirt that was ripped at the bottom. I turned to Rozanne before I went into the court and said under my breath, “This shouldn’t take long.”

We walked onto the court…and I lost the first match – 21 to 3. Huh…didn’t see that coming. So I thought, don’t give up; step it up!

I got back in the court with the determination to whip him. This was going to be the greatest comeback in sports history. In no time at all I was down 19-4 but I persevered. He simply squatted in the middle of the court while I ran around the court like a chicken with my head cut off.

I lost the best two out of three, 21 to 5 and I was eliminated in the first round.

In utter shame I exited the court, leaned my back against the hallway wall and slid down it until I hit the floor and hyper-ventilated for the next ten minutes while my wife of four months helped heal my bruised ego.

Why did I tell you that story?

1. **Nothing replaces training and hard work**. I looked good on the court, but my out-of-shape opponent actually knew how to play the game. His strategy eats my strategy for lunch, every day of the week. The same is true with the Bible. Nothing replaces logging hours in it to read it and study it. Little by little you get better and better at understanding it and learning how to apply it in order to win more matches you face in life.

A number of years later I picked up my powder blue racquet once again and started playing. Over the next ten years, I ended up being the guy squatting in the middle of the court while the other guy ran around like a chicken with his head cut off.

1. **There’s nothing like a good story**. I also told you this because “everybody likes a good story”, particularly ones that expose the immaturity level of your Senior Minister. Keep in mind that was 35 years ago – I’m a totally different person today.

Story is a universal language. A good story appeals to the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated. I think that is why God chose to put what he wanted to communicate to us in a story.

1. He could have revealed the mathematical formula that drives the universe – and 3 of you would be highly interested in that.
2. He could have exposed the science behind creation and miracles.
3. He could have made it more like an academic textbook filled with lists and axioms to live by…

…but he didn’t. God chose to reveal his love for us and his plan for us in a story so it would appeal and reach the broadest group of people so that they might know God and come into a personal relationship with him.

**The History of God’s Story**

I’d like to take a moment to give you a bit of history on the formation of God’s Story. I think you will find it interesting.

**10,000 BC – 1406 BC** No Scriptures **8594 yrs.**

10,000 BC would have been the latest date Adam showed up on earth, if you embrace a young earth theory, this would be the youngest date he would have arrived on the scene. So it took from at least 10000 BC until 1406 BC for Moses to write the first five books of the Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

So, for 8496 years, the people of God had no access to written Scripture. How did the people of God know the will of God? The people relied completely on the telling of stories, passing them down from generation to generation. They would sit around the fire at night and the grandparents and parents would tell the children the stories of creation – “This is what he did on Day 1. This is what he did on Day 2.” They would move to stories like “our grandfather Abraham and his wife Sarah. They were so old they couldn’t have children, but God visited Abraham and told him he would be the father of a great nation, and that’s who we are today.” That means during the lifetimes of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph there were no Scriptures.

**1406 BC – AD 400** 66 Books Together **1806 yrs.**

The Bible didn’t fall out of heaven in a leather cover. For 1806 years there were individual scrolls and letters but no grand agreement on which books met the standard to be included in what we now call the Bible. That is why when you read Paul’s writing in Ephesians and Colossians there is a bunch of overlap. He wanted to say some of the same things to both churches but he had to write two letters. The Church at Ephesus didn’t have the letter to Colossae and the Church at Colossae didn’t have the letter to Ephesus. There was no Amazon Prime to send your cousin a copy of the Letter of Ephesians. It wasn’t until AD 400 in the release of Jerome’s Latin Vulgate did all sixty-six books come together under one cover.

**AD 400 – AD 1454** First Bible Printed **1054 yrs.**

**11,454 yrs.**

It wasn’t until 1454 that the first Bible was printed. It was actually the first book to be printed. It was the Guttenberg Bible – a German translation of the Bible. The problem? You had to be super wealthy to own one and you had to be able to read. Many people were illiterate back then. The most literate folks were the religious class who had copies of the Bible in their possessions.

So, for at least the first 11,454 years of human history, God’s people did not have access to God’s written word for themselves. It has only been in the last 500 years that people have had access to God’s Word for themselves. They had to rely on the telling and the retelling of the stories that were passed down to them. It is how they got by and lived out the will of God.

Even today there are a great many people around the world who either don’t have God’s Word translated and printed in their own language, which is why we are huge supporters of Pioneer Bible Translators who are working feverishly to do just that. There is still two-thirds of the world’s population who can’t read but they can understand a story. That’s why projects like The Jesus Film have been so effective, because people who don’t have the Bible in their own language can see the story of Jesus, and they get the truth and they bow their knee to him.

**Five Movements of the Story**

I have a vision that everyone at Oak Hills will be able tell God’s story. So, I want to invite you to take the challenge between now and end of May of next year to learn how to tell it. If you were in a place where you didn’t have access to a Bible or if we ever lived again in a time or a place where Bibles were forbidden and burned, we should all be able to pass on the one, grand story of God.

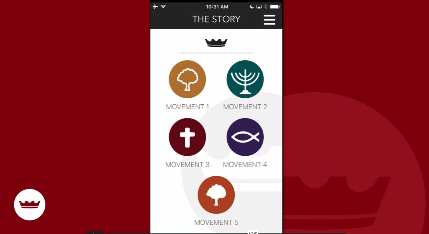
To help you out, we have created an App to assist you along the way.

*Display the instructions. This app is available to anyone to download and use.*

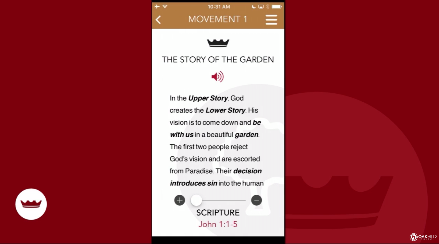
* Download “Share the Story” App (search for “sharethestory”)



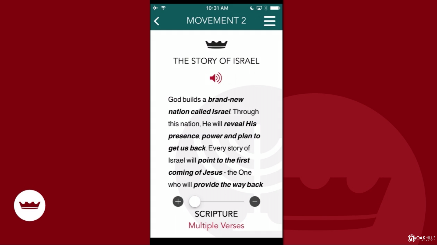
* The Story is divided into 5 Movements.



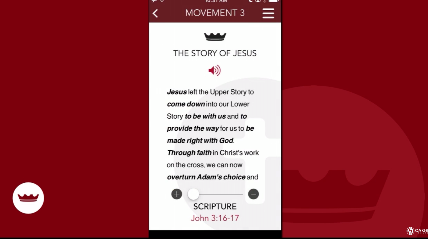
* Movement 1 is The Story of the Garden



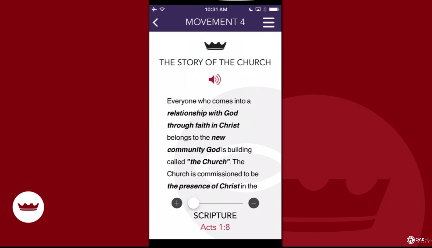
* Movement 2 is The Story of Israel



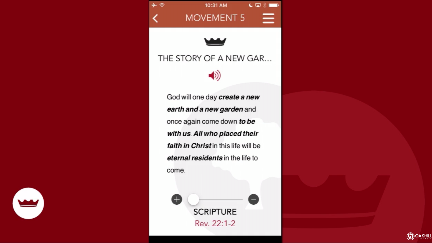
* Movement 3 is The Story of Jesus



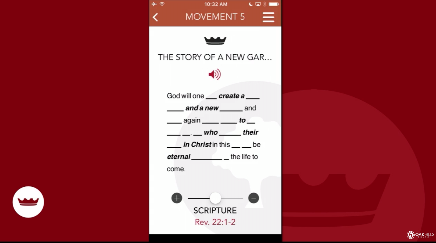
* Movement 4 is The Story of the Church



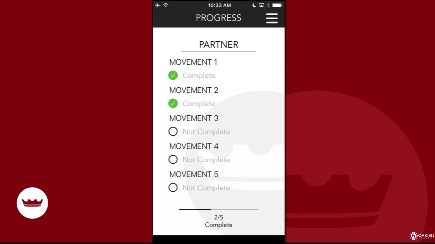
* Movement 5 is The Story of a New Garden



* On this screen, as on the other four, you’ll notice a few features:
  + Speaker icon – Listen to Max and Randy reading the Scriptures for that Movement
  + Memorize the statement, using the sliding scale memory tool at the bottom that gradually replaces more and more words with blanks to aid you in memorizing the entire statement.



* When you first download the app, you are prompted to pick an accountability partner
* Recite your statements to your partner – they are the only one who can mark your work complete, and your progress shows up on your app



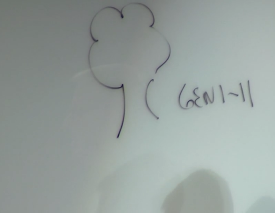
*Randy also showed The Story for Kids Movement Book, a collection of laminated cards on a carabiner with the movement statements slightly adjusted for children. Artwork for the Movement book is posted on the Children’s Ministry page in The Story Resource Library.*

**Telling God’s Story**

I would like to demonstrate for you the telling of the story. It will only take a few moments, and I am going to walk you through the entire story of the Bible.

**Movement 1: The Story of the Garden (Genesis 1-11)**

*On a whiteboard, draw a tree at the top, and write Genesis 1-11 next to it.*

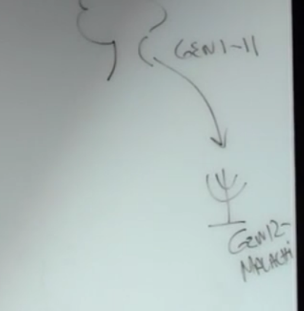


In the Upper Story God creates the Lower Story. His vision is to come down and do life with us in a beautiful garden. But the first two people reject God’s vision and are escorted from Paradise. Their decision introduces sin into the human race and keeps us from community with God.

At this moment God gives a promise and launches a plan to get us back. The rest of the Bible is God’s story of how he kept that promise and made it possible for us to enter a loving relationship with him.

**Movement 2: The Story of Israel (Genesis 12-Malachi)**

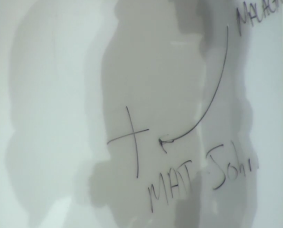
*On the whiteboard, draw a curved arrow clockwise from the tree down to the right, draw a minora, write Genesis 12 – Malachi next to it.*



God builds a brand-new nation called Israel. Through this nation, he will reveal his presence, power and plan to get us back. Every story of Israel will point to the first coming of Jesus – the One who will provide the way back to God.

**Movement 3: The Story of Jesus (Matthew – John)**

*Draw a curved arrow clockwise to the bottom of the circle, draw a cross, write Matthew – John next to it.*

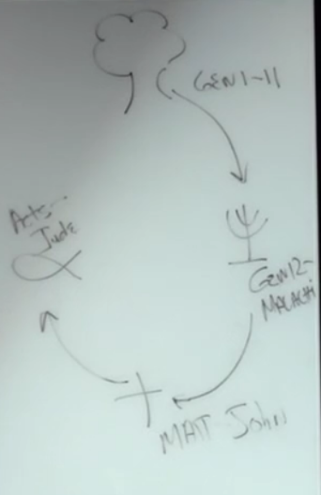


Jesus left the Upper Story to come down into our Lower Story to be with us and to provide the way for us to be made right with God.

Through faith in Christ’s work on the cross, we can now overturn Adam’s choice and have a personal relationship with God.

**Movement 4: The Story of the Church – (Acts – Jude)**

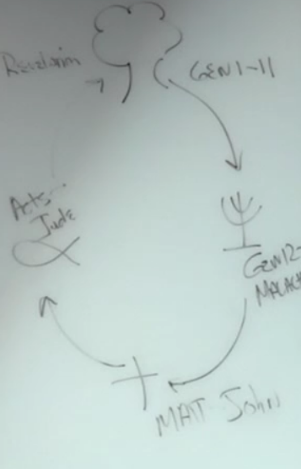
*Draw a curved arrow clockwise up from the cross, draw a fish, write Acts – Jude next to it.*



Everyone who comes into a relationship with God through faith in Christ belongs to the new community God is building called “the Church”. The Church is commissioned to be the presence of Christ in the Lower Story – telling his story by the way we live and the words we speak. Every story of the Church points people to the second coming of Christ when he will return to restore God’s original vision.

**Movement 5: The Story of the Garden (Revelation)**

*Draw a curved arrow clockwise from the fish back to the tree, write Revelation next to the tree.*



God will one day create a new earth and new garden and once again come down to be with us. All who placed their faith in Christ in this life will be eternal residents in the life to come.

**Conclusion**

The story ends where the story begins, and love wins. Church, that is a good story. It’s the greatest story ever told. As we begin our journey and go 31 weeks through the story of God, I am going to challenge you and invite you to put your gear on.

*Randy puts on a white headband and white wrist bands.*

Put your gear on, pick up your Bible, and do the hard work of logging hour after hour of digging into it, learning what it is saying, discovering how to apply it to your life. If you are faithful to do that, I will promise you, you will one day be squatting in the middle of the court, and your enemy the evil one, will be running around like a chicken with his head cut off, and you will win the match.

*PRAY*