

# The Story of all Stories

*Luke 24:13-35*

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- I. Hearing The Story
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The original library in San Diego first opened its doors on July 15th, 1882 in downtown. Since then it's moved a couple times, undergoing three complete reconstructions, most recently with the newly designed iteration by Rob Quigley that opened just a few years ago now.

Have you all spent some time at the downtown central library? It's an incredible and beautiful building. The architecture and design is remarkable. I love going there. Sometimes I'll just go sit and read or study in this room. They have these nice comfy chairs you can just sit and look out these massive windows and see the downtown cityscape and bay.

Guess how many books the San Diego Central Library has? 2.3 million books. That's a lot of books. San Diego is the 8th largest city in the country with a population of 1.4 million. That means there are about two books for every one person.

I was curious so this week I looked up how many books to date have been written in the entire world. Google says 130 million. That's a lot of books.

Solomon in the Bible, who's said to be the wisest person who ever lived said this in Ecclesiastes 12:12 "Of making many books there is no end." I think he was right.

Now, here's why I'm bringing all of this up. Every single book that has ever been written, whether it be a work of fiction or non-fiction, every novel, every play, every biography, even encyclopedias, textbooks and math books...all books have either a story in them or a story behind them in why they were written. Every single book is driven by a story. It's a what makes a book a book.

Experts and teachers have long recognized that there are five essential elements of a story: characters, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution. The best stories do this well. There's a central character, who from humble origins, gets beat down by life, often to the point of death or even dying and then somehow is able to overcome it and live to tell the tale.

This is the plot of almost every great book ever written, like Ahab in Moby Dick, Dimitri in Brothers Karamazov, Marlow in Heart of Darkness...even Alice in Alice and Wonderland. Not to mention Gandalf in Lord of the Rings, Aslan in The Chronicles of Narnia, Harry Potter...and all the other movies that were first either books or written screenplays. Think of Obi-Wan Kenobi in Star Wars, Westley in the Princess

Bride, Jon Snow in Game of Thrones, Jack Sparrow in Pirates of the Caribbean. Oh and pretty much every single comic book character: Superman, Batman, Spiderman, Iron Man, Jean Gray, Wolverine, Professor X. They've all died or come close to death only to come back, fight again and be the hero who saves humanity!

Every single book tells a story and when it comes down to it there's really only one story to tell, the story of a hero who somehow, against all odds, through the tough things of life, is able to succeed. It's the story of all stories, which is what I've titled my sermon for today because today in our second to the last sermon from the book of Luke, we are going to listen to and watch Jesus take the Bible, the best book ever written and explain how it's all telling one big story, the story of His life, death, and resurrection.

It's one of my favorite scenes in all of the Bible and a crucially important one for how to read and understand the Bible correctly. So would you stand with me as I read it for us?

### **Luke 24:13-35**

*13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

*28 So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, 29 but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 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?" 33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and*

*how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

The Story of All Stories. I've got three points for us to work through this morning, "Hearing The Story", "Reading The Story" and "Experiencing The Story" and the one thing for today, the main theme is this, "Jesus is the story." Jesus is the story.

Let's jump in and begin to work through some of what we just read in this first point for today, "Hearing The Story."

## **I. Hearing The Story**

Our text in Luke begins with two guys taking the day to walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus and they're talking about Jesus and everything that went down in the previous days and week. Jesus shows up, catching up with them on the road and say, "Hey, whatcha guys talking about?"

Here's their response, verse 28, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?" To which Jesus basically responds by saying, "Tell me about it."

So they tell Jesus all about how this guy named Jesus, who they thought was the savior was killed and they're pretty bummed out by it. Verse 17 says they were sad. Then they tell Jesus there are these women who said He somehow came back to life but they don't believe them and are just sad and confused about the whole thing.

Throughout this exchange, there's this emphasis on what's been heard. The two guys, one named Cleopas and the other not named but who's most likely Luke himself...they can't believe this guy, who they don't know is Jesus, hasn't heard. Everyone is talking about it. Jesus wants to hear about it from them and then they tell Jesus what they've seen and heard. So there's an emphasis on what we've heard about Jesus.

Everyone on earth falls into one of two camps, those who have heard about Jesus and those who haven't. Hearing about Jesus is where it all begins. No one ever becomes a Christian without first hearing about Jesus from someone.

If you're here today and you're a Christian it's because someone somewhere along the way told you something about Him. If you're not yet a Christian and you're here, we're glad you are and I know for a fact, without even knowing you, you're here because you've heard something about Jesus from someone that has you somewhat interested, even if it's just a little bit.

Now, what happens in the text of our story today is there is a dialogue about what been heard, what people are talking about and what's actually true. You see, everyone has their ideas about God and about Jesus based upon what they've heard but there's often a big difference between what we hear and what's actually true and what actually happened. And that's the question, how do you know?

There's a lot of ideas out there about Jesus. There are all kinds of things you may have heard about

Jesus.

Some think Jesus was not a real person, that He's just a fictional character, dreamed up in an ancient book. Some people think He was a real person and of those who do some think He was just a man and then there are others that also believe He was God too, God in the flesh, a God-man. Some people think Jesus was just a good teacher, a wise sage, prophet or Buddha of some kind. Some people think He didn't just teach but did real supernatural miracles too. Some people think Jesus was a social revolutionary for the poor. Some people think Jesus was about more than just societal change. Some people think Jesus died on a cross and that was it and some think He died and actually rose, coming back to life three days later, ascended into heaven and lives today. Some people think Jesus is a good luck charm, a good piece of jewelry or a good swear word. Some people think Jesus is the savior and giver of new life.

What have you heard about Jesus? You see when it comes to talking about Jesus we've all heard things. We bring a pre-understanding to the table as it were. Right now as I'm talking what's going on inside your head is an inner dialogue where you are taking in what we've read and what I'm saying and comparing it to what you've heard and thought and trying to see how it may or may not fit within your own personal story.

You see, as we talked about last week, each one of us has a story, a life we've lived and are living. We see the world through the lens of our personal stories. What Luke presents to us today in this piece of the Bible is the question of whether or not each of our personal stories is part of one big story, the story of God and the one He sent named Jesus to redeem each of our stories and to redeem humanity itself?

What I believe is that each of our personal stories is actually meaningless unless they get connected to a bigger, grand story, the story of all stories. If there is no God, no purpose for human existence, if human history has not and is not going anywhere, if there's no answer for the problems of the world and the problem of death...then all of our stories are meaningless. Then there is no truth and everything is a farce.

What I think God is wanting to do in each one of us today is to connect us to His story and that's the story of Jesus. Jesus is the story. So let me ask you, what do you think God is doing in your life right now that He's wanting to use to connect you to Him. What's going on in your story? And how might that be a part of the grand story of God and His Son?

There's a big difference between hearing things about Jesus and believing things about Jesus that get connected to our lives. But how do we know how to separate truth from fiction? How do we know what the story of God is and whether or not it's really relevant to us?

For that, let's move to our next point for today, "Reading The Story."

## **II. Reading The Story**

When it comes to the Bible, 40 different human authors, 66 different books compiled together, written over a period of 1500 years...there are basically four different ways you can read it.

One, as a myth. You can take a Bible class at San Diego State called, “The Bible as Literature” and this is the way it will be treated there, as an ancient document of antiquity, telling about a religious group of people and what they believed about God and life.

Two, as a moral code. Many people think the Bible is basically a book of rules telling you how to live life. It has stories of good people and bad people which are meant to be examples for you to either follow or not follow, Jesus is the best example. So in this view, the Bible is basically meant to teach right from wrong to help us become good, well-adjusted people.

A few years back a couple “scholars” wrote an article for The Huffington Post newspaper. The opening paragraph said this,

*“The Bible’s value, above all, is as a guide to lives. And we mean to all of our lives, whether one is religious or not, whether one is Christian, Jewish, or from another religion...The Bible is a source of human experience and of wisdom, and wisdom is something we need.”*

Three, as a mystical book. For some, life is all about spiritual feelings, ecstatic experiences where you encounter God and feel like He’s talking to you. This was the view of a theologian named Karl Barth, from which many Pentecostal and charismatics either knowingly or unknowingly have adopted. Barth writes,

*“The Bible, then, becomes God’s Word in this event, and in the statement that the Bible is God’s Word the little word ‘is’ refers to its being in this becoming. It becomes revelation to us.”*

In contrast to these three approaches to the Bible, Jesus takes the two men on the road to Emmaus and presents them with a very different view. Here’s Jesus’ view of the Bible, verse 27,

*“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”*

Do you guys see that word, “interpreted”? That’s a very important word.

I hear this all the time from people about the Bible. I’ll say something like, “the Bible says and teaches so and so” and the person will respond, “That’s just your interpretation.” Or they will say things like, “There are so many different interpretations of the Bible. How do you know that yours is the one that is true? Isn’t it arrogant to believe that your interpretation is the only right one?”

The word “interpreted” Jesus uses is the word “hermeneuo” in the original Greek that our English is translated from. It’s where we get the English word, “hermeneutics” which is essentially what both lawyers, people who study the Bible and anyone who reads a book or an email or anything does. Hermeneutics means a method of reading, understanding or interpreting written material.

So what is Jesus hermeneutic, His method of interpreting the Bible, the way He says to read it and understand it?

Well, first Jesus doesn't view the Bible as a myth but refers to the books of Moses, all the prophets, and all the Scriptures, a word meaning "holy writings of God." So Jesus sees the Bible as being written by men but also the Word of the living God.

Second, Jesus does not view the Bible as a moral code but instead as the record or account of events in history, which had a purpose and direction foretold by the Prophets. He says in verse, 25-26 "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" So according to Jesus, it's actually foolish to read the Bible as a moral guide.

And He said this before. In Matthew 5:20 Jesus said,

*"I tell you unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

The scribes and the Pharisees were some of the most moral people who ever lived and Jesus says that still wasn't enough.

And this is the universal view of the Bible. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 3:20,

*"By works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin."*

So no human can do enough good works to be justified or saved in God's sight. Instead, the purpose of the law, God's written Word is to show us that we can't do it because we're sinners and we need a savior.

The Bible is not a collection of stories about good people and bad people with varying examples for us to follow. There are no good people in the Bible, except for one. Every single person, every single story is someone who is messed up and has some issue, fails in some way, is in need and God has grace and love for them.

The only person who is Himself never in need never blows it, the only truly good person in the Bible is Jesus. So we're not to interpret the Bible as a moral code written to teach us how to save ourselves.

Well, what about the third option, that the Bible is a mystical book we're meant to have a religious experience with? The problem with that is that Jesus uses this word "interpret", that the Bible must be interpreted. He doesn't say to pray about it and whatever you feel God telling you is what it's saying. He appeals to the use of one's brain and the use of reason, using logic to properly understand it and come to a right interpretation.

On top of it, if what makes the Bible God's Word or true is whatever I feel it's saying to me, then I can never read the same passage twice because my experience might be different each time and no two people can then ever read the same book because your experience might be different than mine. So no, the Bible does not become God's Word, it simply is whether we believe it and understand it to be so or not.

Well, then how are we supposed to read the Bible?

First, historically. Because in verse 26 Jesus says there were certain things that were “necessary” that had to take place. Understanding the history, background, and culture of the Bible is extremely important.

Second, grammatically. Because in verse 26 Jesus says we need to understand and know what the word “Christ” means and we need to pay attention to where the word “suffer” and descriptions of that occur. The actual words and their tenses matters. Right doctrine is built upon grammar. Especially words like “necessary” and “for” and “into” and “his.”

Then third, and most important, Christotelically. Because in verse 27 Jesus took two men through the Bible during a seven-mile walk and pointed out again and again how “all the Scriptures”, all of the Bible is pointing to Him. Telos means “goal” or “appointed end.” So Christo-telic means interpreting the Bible by seeing how every passage is pointing to Jesus Christ. Which means you are not reading or understanding any of the Bible correctly if you are not seeing how it connects to Christ, the savior!

So when people ask me how I interpret the Bible or how can you interpret the Bible correctly, I say, “According to historical, grammatical, christotelic interpretation.” What’s our hermeneutic here at the church? Historical, grammatical, christotelic interpretation. And it’s my contention that if you don’t interpret the Bible that way then like holding a golf club wrong, you’ll swing the wrong way, shanking the Bible and ending up in screwy ideas.

One of the guys who have helped me understand this is a guy whose long been dead, Geerhardus Vos, says this,

*“All redeeming acts of God aim at the introduction of Christ. All Old Testament redemption is but the saving activity of God working toward the realization of this goal.”*

Maybe you’re sitting there and you’re like, “Okay, but what’s that look like?” You know, like what passages did Jesus go to, what did He say, how do we see all the Bible as about Jesus? I mean with the stuff that’s directly written about Him after He came, that’s easy, but what about all the other stuff that came before?

One of my favorite examples of this is a piece by Pastor and Theologian Tim Keller called, “The Bible’s Really Not About You - It’s About Him.” He writes,

*“Jesus is the true and better Adam who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is imputed to us.*

*Jesus is the true and better Abel who, though innocently slain, has blood now that cries out, not for our condemnation, but for acquittal.*

*Jesus is the true and better Abraham who answered the call of God to leave all the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void not knowing whether he went to create a new*

*people of God.*

*Jesus is the true and better Isaac who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us. And when God said to Abraham, “Now I know you love me because you did not withhold your son, your only son whom you love from me,” now we can look at God taking his son up the mountain and sacrificing him and say, “Now we know that you love us because you did not withhold your son, your only son, whom you love from us.”*

*Jesus is the true and better Jacob who wrestled and took the blow of justice we deserved, so we, like Jacob, only receive the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us.*

*Jesus is the true and better Joseph who, at the right hand of the king, forgives those who betrayed and sold him and uses his new power to save them.*

*Jesus is the true and better Moses who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant.*

*Jesus is the true and better Rock of Moses who, struck with the rod of God’s justice, now gives us water in the desert.*

*Jesus is the true and better Job, the truly innocent sufferer, who then intercedes for and saves his stupid friends.*

*Jesus is the true and better David whose victory becomes his people’s victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves.*

*Jesus is the true and better Esther who didn’t just risk leaving an earthly palace but lost the ultimate and heavenly one, who didn’t just risk his life but gave his life to save his people.*

*Jesus is the true and better Jonah who was cast out into the storm so that we could be brought in.*

*Jesus is the real Rock of Moses, the real Passover Lamb, innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so the angel of death will pass over us. He’s the true temple, the true prophet, the true priest, the true king, the true sacrifice, the true lamb, the true light, the true bread.*

*The Bible’s really not about you – it’s about him.*

It’s actually really freeing and a lot more fun to read the Bible the way Jesus says to. It kind of opens it up and makes it life-giving. I’m convinced that any other reading just brings death to the soul because it puts it all on you. If you look at it as rules then you just end up feeling guilty for failing, feeling shame like there’s something wrong with you because you don’t measure up and then feeling fear about the consequences.

When we look to the Bible as a story, the story of God’s plan and His hero, the story of Jesus then it all comes to life because in Him we see one who did it right, died for all our guilt, covering our shame and

rising again so we have nothing to fear. Jesus is the story and seeing the Bible as the story of Jesus frees us and connects our story to God's grand story.

And that's what I want to talk about more in our last point for today, "Experiencing The Story", how we encounter the risen Jesus today.

### **III. Experiencing The Story**

In Luke's account of this day journey, which ends up with dinner in Emmaus there are two bookends which have to do with eyes and hearts.

Verse 16 says the two dudes didn't know it was Jesus because "Their eyes were kept from recognizing him." Then when they do realize it's Jesus verse 31 says it's because "Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him." So that's the eyes bookend.

Here's the hearts one. In verse 25 Jesus says the reason they rejected the message from the women that Jesus had risen from the dead was because they were "slow of heart to believe" what the Bible said. Then once Jesus opens their eyes their hearts change and they say to one another in verse 32, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

What prompts this entire encounter is Jesus. Jesus walks up to these guys. Jesus asks them questions. Jesus is clearly in pursuit of them, which I find quite comforting.

The men are sad and confused. All their expectations were dashed. Their hope was seemingly gone. They are disappointed and disillusioned. You ever been there? Where life hasn't worked out the way you thought it would or the way you wanted it to? Failed hopes and dreams anyone?

That's where these men are physically and spiritually. They're lost, just walking away down some road to who knows where. And Jesus pursues them and meets them on the road. I want you to know today, if you're on that road, Jesus can meet you there. The essence of the story of Jesus is that God, who is high and above, comes down to us in Jesus. Christianity is a God who comes to us religion.

So here's the question. How do we encounter Jesus today? How can you know, really know Jesus? Is that possible? And if so how does it happen?

I think there's three answers to that question.

First, we have to have a change of heart and have our eyes opened. But we can't do that ourselves. In the story, it's God that does it. He's the one who kept their eyes closed and then opened them and He's the one who addressed their slow to believe hearts and then made them joyfully burn within. So God has to do it.

We can ask God to do it though. In the story, verse 29 says they "urged him strongly." There are a bunch of stories in the Bible where we see God doing this. He interjects Himself into people lives, inviting them to pray and seek Him and then He acts.

So today, if you're not sure about God or where you're at with Jesus I think you can pray a real simple prayer like, "God open my eyes and heart to see you and know you." It's as simple as asking God to show Himself to you. And I believe if you honestly ask, He will.

When He does, He will do it through two subsequent ways, which are the other two answers to the question of how we can encounter and know Jesus. Through the word and the sacrament. Let me briefly explain.

Verse 32 again, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" God has committed Himself to work through His Word. So if you want to know God, you got to read this book and even more than that you need to hear it preached week in and week out having someone open it up for you.

A book I've been reading and enjoying lately is called, "Liturgy of the Ordinary" by Tish Warren. In it, she writes,

*"Unkind and condemning thoughts tell me that God's love is distant, cold or irrelevant, that I must prove myself to God and other people, that I am orphaned and unlovable, that God is tapping his toe, impatient with me, ready to walk out on me. These thoughts are loud enough that I need a human voice telling me, week in and week out, that they're lies. I need to hear from someone who knows me that there is grace enough for me, that Christ's work is on my behalf, even as I'm on my knees confessing that I've blown it again this week. We may confess quietly, even silently. But we are reminded of our forgiveness out loud, with standing and shouting. We need to be sure to hear it.*

*Forgiveness is from God, and yet I still need to be told I need to hear in a loud voice that I am forgiven and loved, a voice that is truer, louder, and more tangible than the accusing voices within and without telling me I'm not."*

God is committed to working through His Word, which is why the Bible commands pastors to "Preach the Word (2 Tim 4:2)." So now if you want to know and encounter the risen Jesus it's going to be through the Word. Reading it on your own for sure and especially having a pastor read it to you and open up the glories of Christ in it for you.

Here's the other way God makes Himself known to us, through the sacrament. Sacrament is simply a fancy word for sacred sign. In verse 30, when Jesus sits down for dinner with the two dudes it says, "he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them." Right after that is when they're eyes are opened and they realize it's Jesus. Verse 35 confirms it saying, "he was known to them in the breaking of the bread."

The reason is that this is exactly what Jesus did the night before He was crucified. We read it and talked about it together a few weeks here.

*"He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." - Luke 22:19*

So the moment Jesus took the bread and blessed and broke it, it was immediately clear that it was Jesus. The Church of Jesus Christ for thousands of years and done exactly what Jesus said to do when we gather, to take some broken bread and a little wine and remember what He did for us in His death and resurrection. We call it The Sacrament, The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion and there is something uniquely powerful about it.

Here at our church, we do it every week and we believe that in a way that is beyond our understanding, that the living, risen Jesus Christ ministers to us in it, imparting His love and grace to us. Philip Ryken says, *"The Lord's Supper present to our physical senses what God declares to us in His Word."*

Tish Warren writes about it in her book too. She says,

*"Of all the things he could've chosen to be done "in remembrance" of him, Jesus chose a meal. He could have asked his followers to do something impressive or mystical--climb a mountain, fast for forty days, or have a trippy sweat lodge ceremony--but instead, he picks the most ordinary of acts, eating, through which to be present to his people. He says that the bread is his body and the wine is his blood. He chooses the unremarkable and plain, average and abundant, bread and wine."*

*Both Word and sacrament are gifts given by Jesus, who calls himself the bread of life. The Word of God and the meal of God's people are intended to point to and make manifest the presence of Christ, who is worth the Word and the bread. In John 6, Jesus reminds his listeners that they received manna, their daily bread, as a gift from the Father, but that it was not enough to nourish them spiritually. They still died. But Jesus promises that those who eat 'bread from heaven' will be eternally nourished and will not die."*

I tell you what. This is the truth of my heart. The highlight of my week is Sunday, the first day of the week, the day we worship Christ together and hear His Word and the highlight of every service for me is the sacrament. The moment when I taste the wine dipped bread on my lips and I am reminded that I have a living Savior who gave His life for me. Get the bread and wine to my lips. Tangible grace.

It's one of the reasons why you need to be in church every week and to not make plans to do anything else during this hour and a half. One because you need to hear God's Word and two because you need the bread and the wine. You cannot get it anywhere else. You can listen to a sermon online but you can't get the body and blood of the risen Lord.

I find what the two dudes said curious, "Did not our hearts burn within." Could it be, that when we're burning out in life it's because God's Word is not burning within? That we're not hearing it and we're not eating it at the table of grace?

Word and sacrament. You want to know Jesus Christ and encounter Him? It's right here. Ask Him and then see Him in His Word and in the breaking of the bread. Jesus is the story and the way our story gets connected to His is through His Word and through the bread.

May God help us to continue to see Him and to seek Him.

## **Conclusion**

Well, I pray God's Word has ministered to you today. This is one of my favorite stories in the Bible. It's been good to walk through "Hearing The Story", "Reading The Story" and "Experiencing The Story."

I started out the sermon talking about the downtown library, books and what makes a book a good book. I said the best stories tell the greatest story of all, the story of a hero, one like us but better than us who dies and rises and then saves all of us.

I think I would add one thing. Anselm of Canterbury is a favorite theologian of mine from the 11th century. He said we can imagine all kinds of things. People have imagined all kinds of stuff they've written stories about. But he said isn't it greater for something to actually exist in reality than just in our imagination?

I think so. So the best story of all is one that isn't just a story but is a story that's actually true. And that's what the Jesus story claims to be, the story of all stories about a real God-man, who came to earth and did someone on a cross to save us all and then rose again and lives today and will one day return to gather all the people who have put their faith in Him.