

# A ROGUE STORY

Questions about our story can only be answered as we approach them through the simplistic lens of Jesus, giving us the proper view of our personal stories. A Rogue Story is a book about hero's, villain's, a ghost, damsel's in distress and more! discover how each of these characters have played a roll in your story.



A Book by John Fairrington: Uncommoner, Sinner, Saved by Grace!

<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>4</b>
The Story Behind This Story .....	4
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>What Makes a Good Story? .....</b>	<b>8</b>
The Author, The Hero, and The Villain?.....	8
Relational Theology .....	10
Systematic Theology .....	12
So Who is Who? .....	14
Allow me to introduce myself! Author, “I Am.” .....	15
One person plays multiple parts!.....	16
The Super Hero .....	16
The Ghost Story.....	17
The Villain .....	20
I Like Action Adventure Stories.....	21
Simplifying the Plot of Your Story .....	21
<b>Against All Odd’s! .....</b>	<b>24</b>
The Long Shot and making the bad bet .....	24
Pick Me, pick Me!!! .....	25
<b>That Guy is a Real Character! .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Hero’s, Villain’s, or Both?.....	28
King Saul - Bad Apple, Nemesis, unknowingly fosters a Noble hero and a giant killer.....	28
Job - A Story about When you’ve been good but now you have it bad! .....	29
Abel - and His Brother and Murderer Cain. A Story of Sibling Rivalry .....	29
Samuel - A Story of What God does when we give everything to Him. ....	30
Esther - From Harem to Queen and saving a Nation. ....	30
Samson - Buff guy with a thing for bad girls. Ends up blind guy with bad haircut but finishes well!.....	31
Jonah - God can use a person even though there is something fishy about them!.....	32
Elijah - Prophet, Part Rain Man, Part Trash Talker and Disposer of False Prophets. Good with fire too! .....	33

Peter - A smart fisherman with a propensity to cause trouble! Freaks out around Little Girls! .....	33
John the Apostle - Can't you hear that Thunder? .....	34
Paul - Once a poacher of Christians, Goes to work for The Save the Christian's Foundation! .....	34
David - Shepherd, Giant Killer, Worship leader, Womanizer, Murderer, King, Huh? .....	35
Abraham - Father of many generations, Simple faith, accounted unto Righteousness! Gets ahead of things! .....	35
Jabez - The Lord hears you! .....	36
The Thief - On the Cross, Saved by the Bell!.....	36
Ehud - An uncouth lefty Gets used by God! .....	37
Jesus - Author, Savior, Super Hero, and oh let's not forget God! .....	38

## **Damsel In Distress .....39**

Anyone can play the Damsel! Are you tied to the tracks? .....	39
SO, What Is a Savior/Hero Complex? .....	41
Reverse Savior/Hero Complex.....	42
the Damsel's Tragic Story.....	44
The Villain Get's The Girl... What? .....	46

## **Somewhere Over the Rainbow .....47**

### *Noah on the New Covenant .....47*

Get in the boat! .....	47
Anchored in Rest .....	47
The Curse gets Reversed .....	51
What's That Smell? .....	52
Covenants vs Contracts .....	52
Here's Your Sign! Grace Revealed.....	53

## **The Character Assassination .....56**

Graveside! .....	56
Stuck In The Grave Yard? .....	57

## **The Long Arm of The Lawman .....58**

Headed For The Gallows, We We're So Busted! .....	58
The Prosecution is a Dirty Rat.....	59

What's Your Plea Hombre? .....	60
I Know a Good Lawyer! .....	60
In Good with the Judge.....	61
Umm... We Lost The Evidence Yer Honor! .....	61
<b>Discovering Your Heart.....</b>	<b>62</b>
A Rogue Heart serves for great purpose! .....	62
God Doesn't Call The Qualified, He Qualifies The Called .....	63
Eliminate the Disqualifications.....	64
A Heart After God.....	65
A Pointed Heart .....	66
Absolute Faith.....	66
He Loved the Word.....	67
Thankfulness.....	67
Rogue Love for The Rogue Heart.....	68
Rogue Heart/New heart Same thing!.....	70
<b>When Stories Collide .....</b>	<b>73</b>
Happy stories collide with sad stories for a reason.....	73
The Divine collision of scripture.....	75
The Name Game .....	76
Propitiation and the Mercy Seat.....	76
Jesus Put a Lid On It!.....	77
Whoa!... This is Melting My Brain! .....	78
<b>I Promise You a Good Ending! .....</b>	<b>80</b>
We're Being Spoiled By Our Comforter!.....	80
You've got the Green Light.....	80
Seeing Transformation in our story .....	82
The Best Stories Have Adversity .....	84
What the Author says about your Story .....	87
<b>Tell Me a Story! .....</b>	<b>89</b>
Discover, Live, Enjoy, and Do Tell!.....	89

# FOREWORD

---

# PREFACE

---

## THE STORY BEHIND THIS STORY

I was stuck! Not in some place distant or as a result of one of my adventures on a motorcycle. I was stuck in a big pond of depravity! I don't know if you have ever gone for a swim in places that you can't see the bottom but there is one thing is for certain and it is this. I had not only been swimming in those kinds of waters but drinking them, and drowning in them for quite some time. On top of the surface things appeared to be pristine as is always the nature of a good swimming hole. However, underneath the surface lurked the sin of pride, self-righteousness, fear, and disappointment. I had set myself on an island in the middle of that pond, keeping those around me at arms length, believing the lie that I was ok, deceived in my perspective that I was right to be the way I was, and to be where I had landed. All of this led to a series of events culminating in failure and sin. I believed an assortment of lies one of which led me to believe that I was going to loose my wife to Breast Cancer. In my sin I began to believe that I was alone and things would never be the same in my marriage. Ultimately, I would succumb to the lies and invest my emotions, and care into someone else who in my pride, I thought that I could fix. It was never intentional but ultimately my affections would be misdirected towards another. My spiritual pride fed on the flattery, companionship, and the weakness of someone else ultimately leading me into an affair of emotions and inappropriate touching with someone from another pond. In the midst of my troubled mindset the pond was simultaneously being drained ultimately

exposing everything that had been lurking underneath. I didn't want to admit it when first being confronted. I was convinced that I was just the byproduct of the hurts that I had received over the years and so I looked for ways to candy coat my sin, but no amount of denying my own depravity was going to take me back to better times. Ultimately, I came to a point of desperation and on multiple occasions contemplated taking my own life.

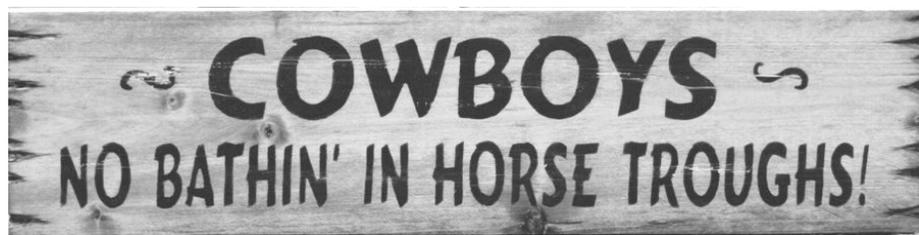
How did I arrive at that dark place where I actually wanted to kill myself?

What I know now and couldn't see then is that the ultimate draining of my pond had been slowly happening for a few years. The shift from locating my identity in the message of the Gospel to locating my identity in my success as a messenger of the Gospel was slow and subtle. It came on slow and over a period of time, like all of the moss and critters that make their way into the water, calling your swamp home! I painfully learned that the more you anchor your identity and sense of worth in something or someone smaller than God, the more pain you will experience when you lose it all.

My confidence was severely misplaced: Confidence in spiritual prowess, reputation, authority and position, the way I taught, the accolades I received, was all equated to success. In other words, confidence in things that were smaller than God and his grace—confidence in things that were unstable and fleeting and easily taken away. And, because I had existentially located my significance in things smaller than God, my loss did not simply usher in grief, pain, shame, and regret. It ushered in a severe identity crisis. I had come to depend on others to make me feel like I mattered, I no longer knew who I was. I felt dead and that I might as well be dead.

The journey God has taken me on over the last five years has been one of complete deconstruction...not just externally but internally. As I explore the Story of God, and His story for me, as I discover His intent and plot of who I am, what is real, and what really matters, my story has been re-written. As

painful as it has been, however, it has also been very liberating. “The purpose behind coming to grips with my own depravity, the confession of my sin and the changes in my life over that time period have produced a story of freedom from the false definitions of who I am and it has given me a very clear understanding of who I am in Christ. A Villain had to die in my story, but the Author and Finisher of my faith resurrected a Hero and my story is now one of deliverance for those who are stuck on an island in the middle of a swamp. Death before resurrection has always been and will always be Gods mode of operation. Dark desperation always precedes deep deliverance. It is my hope that everyone who reads this, discovers God’s plot and plan for their lives!



# INTRODUCTION

---

The content of this book is for the purpose of identifying the overall story of God. He has a plan for you, He knows you, hears you, and loves you no matter where you are at in your story!

You may not even think that your story is worth telling but He does! In A Rogue Story we will take a look at people in scripture and the different roles they have played in their stories.

What makes a good story? That's a great question! We will take a look at Author's, Publisher's, Villain's, Hero's Ghost's and even Damsel's in Distress. We want you to be able to laugh, share your story and discover for yourself just how important your personal story is! Most importantly, just how excited God is about you. A Rogue Story is about adventure, discovery, figuring out who He is, who we are, simplifying our walk with him, discovering our heart, determining who the real enemy is, looking at the type of characters that God likes to use, and much, much more!

It is this authors hope that as you discover Gods plot and plan for your life and compare it with the story of Jesus, as you look at the stories of others in scripture, and even consider some of the things that I have discovered on my journey, that you will see God's glorious plan for your story and develop a walk of intimacy with Him.

John Fairrington

## CHAPTER 1

# WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY?

---

### THE AUTHOR, THE HERO, AND THE VILLAIN?

All good stories begin with someone who who plays the ultimate character or hero. In developing an understanding of our own story we must first go directly to the author. Now I know this may sound odd because most of us (If you are anything like me) feel like we have been the authors of our own confusion, loss, and failures. Our stories read like a book pre-judged by it's cover, or one tossed away for some other more practical use like starting a fire in the wood stove. This is the result of a mis-understanding of who the real author really is and what His purpose is for you. You wouldn't toss aside a novel by Hemingway or Tolkien. You see, we like to think that we are the hero in our own story, but if we take the time to search the roots or ancestry of our stories, we can better understand why things unfold the way they have and ultimately free ourselves from having to be the Author, the Hero, or the Villain! How is this possible you may ask? It is because our Author has experienced every role there is to play and He in fact knew me before I was formed in the Womb..

## **Jeremiah 1:5 (KJV)**

**Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.**

## **Hebrews 12:2**

**2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

It takes very little understanding about our Author to come to the conclusion that He not only knows our story but is orchestrating each roll that plays out in our lives with perfect execution. Every scene is played out perfectly with all of His nature, personalities, and attributes being directed by and in the fulness of the Godhead. When we come to grips with the understanding that the author really knows what He is doing then we must change our perspectives about His plan and purpose for us while accepting that our story has been written by Him. This is the point that can transform our understanding of our story because it is here that we become free to see ourselves through the creative lens of Jesus.

So, how do we view our lives, our story? Is it possible that my story has been hijacked throughout my lifetime? How do we view others around us, our family, our friends, most importantly those who have gone through difficulty whether it is adversity or the consequences of sin. How do we view others who have different life experiences and persuasions? Is it our part to distance ourselves from those who have a different theological perspective? Should we allow ourselves to see others through the lens of past failures or mistrust?

Should the view of myself be substantiated by the report of others who have not walked with me, but who know about my past? Or, does Jesus model a whole different perspective for us to follow where none of these questions come into play? These are all important questions to ask as we approach them through the simplistic lens of Jesus, giving us the right view of our story.

## RELATIONAL THEOLOGY

Through the lens of Jesus and because I have spent time getting to know the Author, something wonderful has happened in my own story. I have fallen in love with the author of my story and I am certain that on my behalf, Jesus comes to me and He is only motivated by His love for me. It is this passionate attraction for me that is packaged in such a way that it demonstrates itself by being relational with me, speaking with me, and lavishing me with the full provisions of His mercy and grace. He never puts me in a time out; He does not withdraw Himself from me, analyze my actions, and prequalify whether or not I am worthy of love. The Good News is that He is your Author too!

Jesus said “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” This story and lens of Jesus corrects our theology and understanding of the story of God, It makes it relational and not religious! I like how the Story of Christ and seeing things through the lens of Christ drastically impacted the lives of guys like Peter and Paul in the most profound but simplistic ways.

Peter gives me the hope that those who are religious in their theological perspectives can, not only be used by the Lord but, that they can change their perspectives radically. You remember the story when Peter had to go with a bunch of Gentiles to the house of Cornelius. He must have been totally freaked out! Good religious Jews especially Apostles didn't roll with Gentiles. They

were considered to be fodder for the fires of hell. (I have been on both ends of this perspective. I have felt that way about others because of my own religious pride and I have also been on the receiving end of those who are non relational and religious in their theology). Needless to say, Peter is placed in a position where if he is going to develop into the simplistic model of how Jesus showed us to live, then there is going to have to be a change in how he views others and it can only happen through the loving lens of Jesus. Read the story in Acts 10 to see how the Lord lovingly does this as Peter moves along through what could be considered as a very uncomfortable journey into the world of the Gentiles. In the story, Peter becomes what we call a relational theologian, not an academic theologian. I believe that God wants all of us to be relational theologians because they are the best kind of theologians. Why? A relational theologian tracks everything in scripture through the nature and Heart of God. The goal of God is to make all of us into His image. That is why Jesus was so relational In fact that is why we can so easily identify that His attraction was for the sinner and not the religious who thought that they were without sin. One of the first things that God reveals to peter is...

### **Acts 10:15**

**where Is this instruction. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.**

I used to think that I was a commoner! Now I believe that I am not so common. God has captivated my heart, cleansed me from my sin and pride and filled me with His Holy Spirit. It was a process and a part of my story! Some will be skeptical of my story, others will hear it and relate, and my heart is that they be restored in their relationship with Christ and those around them. The great news is that all of this happens in people prone to fail in their own

stories, people who do horrible things like lopping of ears, freaking out over little girls who call them out around burn barrels, those who deny over and over again that they ever knew Him or that He even exists. That is the Storyline that Jesus, The Author and Finisher of our faith likes to use. Those are the folks that He makes relational but, not so common!

All that being said, our theology must be relational and in line with His primary purpose if we are truly to become living epistles. Note however that if you are like Peter, this position may get you a reputation of being unlearned but, it might also help the religious folk and sinners alike, identify that you have actually been with Jesus as was the case of Peter. Peter spoke from a level of relationship that the religious leaders never had.

## SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

One of the reasons I don't get systematic theology is because there is no pathway through the heart and nature of God and it mostly ends up as rules somewhere.

When we study the Bible, we are studying the one who wrote it. If all you are doing is studying the principles of scripture then you are missing the heart of love that Jesus had for us while we were yet sinners. The Bible is a love story that causes us to fall in love with the author. When we believe on Him and embrace the simple faithfulness of Jesus towards us, He puts His Spirit in us and hides us in Him. Then begins the glorious process of sanctification where we go from glory to greater glory in His presence!

Paul on the other hand was an academic theologian. He had no understanding of the presence, He had totally missed the visitation of Jesus, and was convinced that he was serving the purposes of God in persecuting the

church while breathing death threats to the disciples in the name of Jesus. This is what he said about himself..

### **Philippians 3**

**I was educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the laws of our fathers. I'm a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee, Circumcised on the eighth day, of Isreal, of the tribe of Benjamin, as to Law a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to legalism, blameless. I lived according to the strictest sect of our religion.**

Here is the cool thing about the model of Jesus and seeing things through the lens of God. Christ will reveal Himself and love even the most religious!

### **Act 9:3**

**3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord?**

There is Hope for the religious who say "Who are you Lord"? It's sad to have all that pedigree, all of that learning, to have followed all of the principles and procedures with out having an encounter with Jesus in the development of your theology.

The Good news is that Jesus loves the religious and the sinner alike! He sacrificed Himself for all of us. The sinner, the hypocrite, the religious, and the broken hearted alike. Paul exhibited all of these attributes and Jesus identifies Himself to him and shows His love and forgiveness to him, radically opening Pauls' eyes to what relational theology has the ability to do.

If he can do it in train wrecks like Peter, persecutors like Paul, and guys like me who have been on both ends of the spectrum, then He is able to show himself, and lavish us with His love no matter who you are.

Just ask Him, Who are You?

## SO WHO IS WHO?

One central character with the ability to assume multiple roles in any story is at the very nature of who God is. We were created for His pleasure and nothing gives him more pleasure than a story that glorifies Him. In order to break our stories down to a very simplistic understanding of the plot behind them, we must also have a simple understanding of what comprises the very make up of who God is. In order to do that, let's look briefly at the Trinity or the sum total of who God is.

I like to wrap my brain around this Idea by viewing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as... Me, Myself, and I. These are the three distinct person's of the Trinity where Jesus is depicted as eternally, The One True God.

### **John 1:1**

**1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.**

Whenever the beginning was, wherever it was, whatever it might have been, Jesus—the Word—was already there. He had no beginning and He has no

end. He is eternally God. Jesus is also equally God. ...and the Word was with God... Jesus, the Word, was with God—equal to the Father and the Spirit.

Now I know what you might be thinking... “I thought there was only one God?” There is. “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,” Deuteronomy 6:4 says. But the word used for “one” is the word echad, which refers to a compound unity, like one people, or one cluster of grapes. And so, God is a synthesis, a “tri-unity.” One plus one plus one does not equal one. But one times one, times one, equals one! And that is the mystery of the Trinity.

## **ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF! AUTHOR, “I AM.”**

“My name is I AM,” answered the Lord (Exodus 3:14).

In this particular story, Moses must have scratching his head in confusion and thought, You are... what You see, not realizing that what God really is would only be fully and completely revealed when Jesus Christ came on the scene.

At the end of His ministry, Jesus could say, “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou hast given Me. (John 17:6). Because of this, He filled in the blank completely and perfectly.

Jesus in His great “Ego-Eimi” statements showed us how that He was fully God and the Author of our Story. He doesn’t tell us the way. He is the Way. “Whom seek ye?” He asked of the soldiers who had come to arrest Him. “Jesus of Nazareth,” they answered. “Ego Eimi,” said Jesus. “I AM.” And the soldiers—most likely several hundred in number—fell over backward (John 18:4–6), knocked down not by anything Jesus did, but by the sheer power of who He is. So, too, once you grab this, once you see it’s not something Jesus gives to you, but who He is for you, you’ll be knocked out. You’ll say, “Lord, I’ve been asking

for clarity in my story and looking for the answers to my plot. But in reality it's all wrapped up in You personally. And if I rest in Your arms, My story will have the right ending. If I stay close to You, I'll be protected. If I cling to You, I'll feel whole. If I allow You into my life, I'll feel satisfied at last?" "That's right," Jesus answers. "I am the Way. I am the Door. I am the Vine. I am the Bread." The Story starts with Him and ends with Him!

But there is even more to this Jesus, fully God in the flesh, who has come to be the central figure of our story!

## ONE PERSON PLAYS MULTIPLE PARTS!

### Colossians 1

**15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.**

**16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.**

## THE SUPER HERO

Colossians 1 reads like the identification of the Super Hero, Jesus Christ: Creator of the speeding bullet, His Spirit more powerful than dynamite, not just a leaper over problems but a fixer of any problem. Born a carpenter's son, Jesus learned his father's trade and, more than likely, he was good at it. His expertise in the art of carpentry isn't what makes him memorable; it's his

unique knowledge of intimate details related to God. Jesus demonstrated that he was God by performing miracles, resisting great temptations, and teaching life-changing lessons despite his age or lack of education. His business practices are legendary, using ordinary people to do extraordinary things. So attractive is the story of Jesus that the multitudes were drawn to Him and if you introduce Jesus as the real hero of your story, He becomes one who is simple for everyone to believe in and look up to. That's because Jesus is God. Because of who he is, he has the ultimate power.

Not only is He the One True God, and our Hero, He is the Ghost!

## THE GHOST STORY

As a child, while on camping excursions, we would take turns conjuring up ghost stories to pass the time late into the twilight hours, around campfires or huddled in our sleeping bags, usually with the comfort of a flash light in hand to shed light on the fears that were now becoming our realities.

The Holy Ghost Story here is much different than the spook tales of old. His work is explosive and His presence is comforting. He goes about His business drawing no attention to Himself perpetually leading, guiding, comforting and revealing the central character of our story. Let's let the Word of God Speak for itself!

### **John 14:26**

**But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**

### **John 16:13**

**Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.**

**1 Corinthians 2:9-13 (KJV)**

**9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**

**John 16:7**

**Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.**

**2 Corinthians 3:17**

**Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord [is], there [is] liberty.**

**John 14:17**

**[Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**

**John 14:16**

**And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;**

**Romans 8:1**

**[There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**

**John 3:34**

**For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure [unto him].**

**Matthew 10:20**

**For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.**

**John 4:24**

**God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.**

**Philippians 1:19**

**For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**

This is one Ghost Story that is vital to having a great story of our own!

## THE VILLAIN

Not only is He the Author and Finisher, the Hero, Comforter, and the Ghost in the Story but He is the Villain too!

### **John 3:14-16 (KJV)**

**14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

Jesus Christ became the Villain, or the Snake if you will in the story! How, you may ask did He do that? Simple! He who knew no sin became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21) in order that the wrath of the Father over the sin of the world would be appeased. Instead of smashing a world that is full of snake's and villain's, He turned to His innocent Son and laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.

Not only did Jesus know what this meant going into it, He did it any way, all while knowing that I was the worst villain of them all. I can only assume that this is why in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed with such intensity, and sweat drops of blood. "Father, if possible, don't let Me drink of this cup" (Matthew 26:39). But, it wasn't physical death Jesus feared; it was the wrath of His Father that caused Him to break out in a bloody sweat (Luke 22:44). Jesus knew what it meant to be the total satisfaction of my debt, the appeasement of Gods wrath that I had alone deserved.

God Himself became a Man, His name was Jesus. Jesus being fully God, absorbed the wrath of His own indignation. He died, arose again to be seated at

the right hand of the Father and sent His Spirit to guide and Comfort me. It is The mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of Jesus covering me, It is the Story of God as my Author, Finisher, Hero, Comforter, Ghost, Snake and Villain who was able to be all of this for me while wielding all of the wrath that I deserved upon Himself. The Ultimate Story!

Hopefully by now, You are beginning to understand why Jesus is not only the best Author of our story but that He is the perfect Finisher of our story!

## I LIKE ACTION ADVENTURE STORIES.

You ever feel like you thought you had a character figured out in a story only to find out that there was another side to them. That is the beauty of having Jesus as the main Character of our story! It makes for a great Adventure!

When I hear the Story of God, when I understand my roots, and believe in His plan for my story, My outlook on the plot changes. There is hope! Life becomes an adventure and the thought of exploring the storybook of my life now becomes one of interest. It as if I have just landed the supporting role in a good Action/Adventure movie and the movies director has just yelled... Action!

## SIMPLIFYING THE PLOT OF YOUR STORY

Now that we understand Jesus' part and role in our story, we can warm up to the idea that in order to really live and tell a good story, it all boils down to Jesus being lived out in and through our story!

Hebrews 1:9 says, Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness “more than any of His fellows.” That is, He had a gladness about Him that was unparalleled in any other person. Truly, whoever looks at the Lord cannot help but be impressed with Him. One would think however, that the secret to such attractiveness, effectiveness, and joy would be very complex. One would think that Jesus must have understood esoteric mysteries and implemented difficult methodology. But such is not the case, for throughout the scriptures, we see the simplicity of the secret Jesus understood that produced in Him the life that was so successful and so beautiful. What was this secret? The very foundational principle that governed His entire life was His relationship with His Father. If I were to question you about the defining principle of your life, you might say, “It’s my ministry,” or “It’s my family,” or, “It’s this vision,” or, “It’s this attempt to see the kingdom grow.” You might on the other hand, define your story as one that is full of tragedy, fear, rejection, failure, and disappointment. Regardless of your personal triumph or despair and as valid as those things might be, they are insignificant in comparison to your relationship with the Father. That’s all there is—no other agenda, no other failure, no other ministry, no other disappointment, no other vision, no other attempts to right all of the wrongs, and no other priority. By comparison to what had at one time been my own personal tendencies, Jesus was so focused on His relationship with His Father that nothing else mattered. As a result, everything else fell into place beautifully. His life was fruitful. His relationships were special. His ministry was bountiful, and His Story is amazing! A simple walk of faith in Him is the only thing that will get your story moving in the right direction! It is my hope to share His story, how it has impacted my story, and how every story, every path you are on, has been ransomed through Christ!

The chapters that follow are all about characters in the bible, characters in my story, a rogue sense of adventure and how we can go about living out the story of Jesus in in our own lives.



## CHAPTER 2

# AGAINST ALL ODD'S!

---

### THE LONG SHOT AND MAKING THE BAD BET

I've always been a long-shot. For most of my life I have tried to be a leader and the Hero of my story but for the most part, I always felt like I might be the guy who was the last one to be picked on the playground so I would always seek to promote my own character or abilities. I was a man with many gifting's but trapped like a prisoner in my own self fashioned perspectives of self. Spiritual pride first puffed me up, then it subtly lied to me, and then it left me spiritually bankrupt. I had become stuck there in my own story, un-touchable, un-reachable by the walls that I had erected through spiritual prowess, while devoid of an understanding of my own depravity and need for Jesus to be the Lord of all in my story. I had become a Villain!

What could the Lord possibly do with a man like that? As someone who had become so centered on themselves, I had lost hope, living in fear of the exposure that would ensue if the depth of my depravity were discovered. I was now convinced that I was alone and that everything that I had strived for would soon be lost. There on the edge of my bed, influenced by lies, depression and medication for chronic pain, I had decided that it wasn't worth it so, with a gun in my hand and in what could have been the last few minutes of my story, I cried out... "Why can't You pick me for once?" I will never forget the immediate answer – "I did." "What are you waiting for?" As if being awakened from a

childhood dream of playing Red-Rover on the playground, it was if the Lord was standing directly across from me yelling “Send Johnny on over!” Motioning me to run with everything I could muster, I sat my pistol in the dirt of that playground story and dream, but I had no strength to move or stand beyond that. When I looked up, the Heavenly Father had ran across that gap with open arms and with a warm embrace that instantly brought justification. Not self-justification but His Justification. He had not only elected to have me but He had come the full distance that was seemingly so impossible for me to make and was inadequate to travel. He did a work at my core that day and I have not been the same since!

**PICK ME, PICK ME!!!**

### **1 Peter 1:2...**

**...Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...**

To often we worry more about being the Elect of the people around us than we do being the Elect of God. We perpetually strive for the “People’s Choice Award” rather than resting in the knowledge that we are already chosen as God’s glorified one’s!

You see, because God elected us before the world began, He sees us as already glorified. People often look at us and they say, “Glorified? Them?” The Father, however, knows better than those around you!

Suppose you could suddenly travel back in time and you wind up in a place where you realize that you haven’t made any of the mistakes of your past yet. There you are and nobody has seen you mess up or make the mistakes that will eventually become part of your story. So, you think to yourself; “Hey, my

approval rating is much better now with folks than it will ever be in the future. So with the new found members of your incredible posse and a new approval rating, you find a bookie, and against unbelievably high odds, and even the marvelous expectations that your peeps have for you in life, you place a bet that you are going to have some major shortcomings and that you will fail along the way. Or, maybe you bet against yourself, that you're going to get beat in some way. Now stay with me! Because, you would walk away rich from your winnings because you would have made these bets with foreknowledge. You would have put your money down not as a gamble, but with certainty because you would have known the outcome despite the fact that you failed, despite the fact that it looked like a bad bet!

Here is the kicker! You see, the Father knows a good bet even before it looks like a bad bet. He sees the end from the beginning. He understands what no other person can comprehend. He knows we are going to struggle and mess up but He also knows that we're going to make it. As bad a bet as we might seem to ourselves or to others, as steep as the odds against us may be, He calls us already glorified. Therefore, we can approach Him boldly. We can enjoy Him intimately. We can ask of Him expectantly because we have been elected eternally.

Our Father takes an incredible chance on us even when people don't, even when other christians, family, friends and the crowd around us won't. Quit seeing yourselves as the good bet, gone bad and start seeing yourself as the bad bet, gone good!

So what, if you are a long shot! The word of God is chucked full of stories about the long-shot. Jesus Himself was viewed by His own disciples as a long-shot. This next part of A Rogue Story takes a brief look at the bad bets, the long-shot, and the real characters, who were all heros and villains alike!



## CHAPTER 3

# THAT GUY IS A REAL CHARACTER!

---

### HERO'S, VILLAIN'S, OR BOTH?

As you take a look at some of these random characters, notice that there is a plot that has been designed by God and that each story has one or sometimes all of the characteristics and roll's that play out in the story of God, some stories have characters that played multiple roles. Most had both Hero and Villain characteristics while a few had just one, or the other. They all were randomly chosen for the purpose of showing that all of their lives and stories demonstrate that God see's the big picture, He knows the plot from beginning to end and that in most cases there is a plan being worked out in their story that encourages us in our walk with God or illustrates the consequences of not following Him as was the case with Saul. Suffice it to say, everything is being played out to an expected end and for the pleasure of our Creator.

### **KING SAUL – BAD APPLE, NEMESIS, UNKNOWINGLY FOSTERS A NOBLE HERO AND A GIANT KILLER.**

The very first king of Israel, a head taller than any of his contemporaries, the predecessor, mentor and nemesis of King David, the father of Jonathan. His son, Jonathan, was a noble hero, but Saul was not.

Saul started off okay, but his relationship with God was so thin that God didn't have any room to work with him and so he kind of let himself go and went downhill fast. He was the fraidy-cat of the Philistines, Goliath in particular, and became a deranged mad man who slaughtered God's priests. He attempted to kill his own son twice, and hounded his best follower, David, for years until Saul finally met his death after consulting with a witch because he was so out of touch with God.

Read about him in 1 Samuel 8-31. It is one of the richest portions of the Bible in terms of story, character and lessons for real life.

## **JOB – A STORY ABOUT WHEN YOU'VE BEEN GOOD BUT NOW YOU HAVE IT BAD!**

Job is the original good guy in the age-old question: Why do bad things happen to good people? Job was about as close to perfect as you could get and still be human. He loved God. He loved people. He used his great wealth and wisdom to help people. Then disaster struck. His wealth, his ten children and his health were all taken away. Left with nothing but suffering, his friends come to comfort him. But, instead of encouraging him, they start accusing him, and add insult to injury. Finally, he has a "face-to-face" meeting with God. God answers with a set of unexpected questions of His own. Job's story is told in the Biblical book bearing his name.

## **ABEL – AND HIS BROTHER AND MURDERER CAIN. A STORY OF SIBLING RIVALRY**

Abel found favor with God and Cain did not. Read about it in the book of Genesis. Abel is listed as a hero of the faith here. first child born to the human race,

Cain, grows up to become a murderer, killing his own brother in a fit of jealousy. Made bad decisions and even worse sacrifices.

I am drawn to this story because it Correlates well with my own failure in that if I believe that my works, sacrifice, and self-righteousness are sufficient offerings to the Lord that it will ultimately be my demise. Only the Lamb of God should ever be my offering.

## **SAMUEL – A STORY OF WHAT GOD DOES WHEN WE GIVE EVERYTHING TO HIM.**

The great prophet, son of Hannah, the childless woman who prayed for a son and promised to give that child to God. She did after he was weaned; she dropped him off at the temple where Eli the priest and his evil sons were the religious leaders of the day. Samuel was still a boy when God started talking to him. Eli and his sons were killed, but Samuel grew up to be the leader of Israel, and the one who selected both Saul and David to become Israel's future kings. Samuel's story is told in 1 Samuel and he was a guy who often performed the hard tasks that Saul was not able to perform. For instance He hewed Ahaz, an enemy king, into a 1000 pieces. He was able to do this because He frequented the Altar of the Lord in Gilgal.

He appointed his sons to judge over Israel but they were deemed unfit and God Appointed a King. Sammy didn't make an issue of it, I think he just had a fleeting moment where his radio got all staticy!

The main theme throughout Samuel's life is that God alone should receive the glory and honor. Read about him In 1 Samuel.

## **ESTHER – FROM HAREM TO QUEEN AND SAVING A NATION.**

A number of women come to mind as important Bible personalities including Eve, Mary, Sarah, Rachel, Elizabeth, Miriam, Mary Magdelene, Deborah, Ruth and so on. But Esther stands alone in the category of saving an entire nation by her courage. Chosen to join the harem of Persian King Xerxes, she rises to the position of queen in time to uncover a plot to destroy the Jewish people. She might have the power and influence to stop the plot, but only if she risks her own life to do so. The book that bears her name is unique in that God is not mentioned once in the book, but His fingerprints are all over the events.

Although God is never mentioned in the book of Esther we can see His acts in the background. Nothing gets past God! His timing is always best but we need to wait for Him before we act and realize that it's dangerous to jump out before it's time Your background does not hinder your future with God. Esther was an orphan. God still exalted her and used her. Some of Jesus's disciples where fishermen, tax collectors, and one was a Doctor. Your background does not determine what God can do with you but your simple faith does! A powerful story!

## **SAMSON – BUFF GUY WITH A THING FOR BAD GIRLS. ENDS UP BLIND GUY WITH BAD HAIRCUT BUT FINISHES WELL!**

This guy very well may have been bipolar! He could go from Hero to Villain in 3 seconds flat. Famous for his great strength, he was an individual fighter rather than a leader of men. Dedicated at birth as a Nazirite, he never had his hair cut. He believed this was the reason for his prowess in harassing his enemies, particularly the Philistines.

Not good at interpersonal relationships, he picked the wrong women and had a propensity for making many enemies. This long-haired strong man once

picked up the jaw bone of a donkey and killed a thousand Philistine soldiers on the battlefield. He is still the UFC Belt holder of all time in my book! If Samson were alive today, he would probably spend some of his life in jail—let’s just say he was no choir boy. But he had a job to do, and he did it well, that is until his woman friend, Delilah gave him a bad haircut and sold him out to the Philistines for 140 pounds of silver. Now Samson wasn’t opposed to getting back in the ring even though the Philistines had blinded him and put him in prison. He had one last appearance on stage where he finally retrieved his honor, and got back his belt, by killing thousands of Philistines before the curtain fell. Samson’s story is told in Judges 13-16. He was both a Hero and a Villain in the plot and his story warrants exploration and comparison of our own!

Keep your vows and stay away from bad girls. When you feel like you are blind to what God is doing in your story, realize that even though you are a pinhead, God is not finished with you yet!

## **JONAH – GOD CAN USE A PERSON EVEN THOUGH THERE IS SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT THEM!**

Famous for being swallowed by a “great fish,” he had a knack for going the wrong direction. Ring any bells? Ever felt like you’ve thrown overboard? Jonah’s real contribution is presiding over the greatest mass conversion of all time meanwhile learning a few things about human prejudice, what complaining gets you, how storms in life can move you, and how God’s love is at work in you at the same time.

## **ELIJAH – PROPHET, PART RAIN MAN, PART TRASH TALKER AND DISPOSER OF FALSE PROPHETS. GOOD WITH FIRE TOO!**

The great prophet who stared down an entire nation and didn't blink. After King David, Israel split into two nations. The northern kingdom went from bad to worse until they were ruled by a truly depraved couple, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Elijah walks onto the scene and announces that rain won't fall without his own personal okay. Then he disappears. For the next three years a bone-dry nation searches for Elijah, but he's nowhere to be found, until one day he shows up again and offers a showdown on Mount Carmel: your god vs. my God. Elijah was a Prophet on Steroids. His successor Elisha was noted for receiving a double portion of the Elijah stuff and didn't like having his bald head made fun of! Elijah got a little whiny at the Brook of Cherith when it ran dry and briefly thought God's provision was for the birds!

## **PETER – A SMART FISHERMAN WITH A PROPENSITY TO CAUSE TROUBLE! FREAKS OUT AROUND LITTLE GIRLS!**

Originally known as Simon, his name was changed to Peter by Jesus, and he became a leader of the early church. Hanging out with Jesus will make a smart man out of anyone! Peter had listened to, eaten with, and traveled alongside Jesus for three years. The result was obvious. He was also noted as being impetuous, bull headed, a fisherman, a sword wielding ear lopper, and I'm afraid little girls around burn barrels put him right into a state of denial. Still He stuck with Jesus and that is important because as we spend time hanging out with with Jesus, we will take on His characteristics just as noticeably, as readily, as wonderfully as did the fisherman-turned-scholar: the apostle Peter.

## JOHN THE APOSTLE – CAN'T YOU HEAR THAT THUNDER?

Among Jesus' twelve disciples, Peter, James and John formed an inner circle. Out of them, John appeared to be Jesus' closest friend here on earth. He wrote one of the Gospels, three important letters (which are recorded in the Bible) and the powerful book of Revelation. John mentioned himself as the one Jesus loved.

John was initially a walking powder keg whom Jesus called a “son of thunder” (Mark 3:17). John was upset because someone outside the circle of disciples was using the name of Jesus to see people released from demons. “We told him to stop because he’s not part of our denomination,” he said. “He doesn’t share our doctrinal understandings. He’s not one of us.” We do this as well. People can be saved, blessed, helped, and strengthened—but because we might not have doctrinal agreement, we put them down. Because they might worship differently from us, we find fault. Such is not the way of love.

John went through an incredible transformation himself. You see, John is known as the “apostle of love” because more than anyone else in Scripture, John both preaches and personifies love. Another result of being impacted by the work of Jesus.

## PAUL – ONCE A POACHER OF CHRISTIANS, GOES TO WORK FOR THE SAVE THE CHRISTIAN'S FOUNDATION!

He was originally Saul (not the king, but the persecutor of Christians who lived a thousand years later). This guy started out as a orange vested, one-man, hunting machine, with a no bag limit tag fresh out of a Sportsman's Warehouse. He became Paul the Apostle after having a powerful encounter

with Jesus on the road to Damascus. First Barnabas, and then Silas were his ministry partners. Most of the books of the New Testament were written by Paul who became a powerhouse leader in the early church. go figure! He is responsible for much of our understanding of Christianity. Paul first bridged the gap between Jews and Gentiles by demonstrating that the way of Jesus was open to anyone, regardless of ancestry. Such a stark contrast in his story! There is hope for you and me!

## **DAVID – SHEPHERD, GIANT KILLER, WORSHIP LEADER, WOMANIZER, MURDERER, KING, HUH?**

Best known for facing the giant Goliath and beating him with a sling and a stone, David was the most famous king of Israel, one of the greatest men who ever lived. Author of most of the Psalms, his story is told in 1 & 2 Samuel. He was a shepherd, a worshiper, He had a heart after God and sadly, he is also often remembered for his greatest failure, his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, who later became the mother of wise and wealthy King Solomon. There is much we can relate to in the life of David.

## **ABRAHAM – FATHER OF MANY GENERATIONS, SIMPLE FAITH, ACCOUNTED UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS! GETS AHEAD OF THINGS!**

The father of faith and ancestor of nations. In reality, If it were not for some of his major mistakes, Israel would have deign in a great famine! God made His promise to make Abraham the Father of many generations while Abe was still worshipping idols like a Moon goddess. He had a propensity for taking things into his own hands and got ahead of things with his handmaiden because he and Sarah thought that they were too old to cut the mustard! His

son Isaac was born to him at age 100 when his wife, Sarah, was 90. Isaac became the father of Jacob and Esau. Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and his descendants became the nation of Israel. One of Jacob's sons was Joseph (not the husband of Mary mother of Jesus) who was sold into slavery by his brothers, but, in a great turn of events, he was delivered to Egypt by Ishmaelite's or the direct descendants of Ishmael. (Ishmael was the byproduct of Abraham's sexual relations with Hagar who was Sarah's handmaiden). Joseph ended up becoming second-in-command in Egypt, and in that position he saved his family, providing food for them during a terrible famine. Abraham trusted God and it was accounted unto him as righteousness!

## **JABEZ – THE LORD HEARS YOU!**

Jabez is only mentioned in a few verses of scripture and is known for his famous "Prayer of Jabez" mentioned in 1 Chronicles 4:10: Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, 'Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!' And God granted what he asked.

It is a simple prayer prayed in faith and serves as a powerful example of answered prayer and receiving blessing from the Lord.

## **THE THIEF – ON THE CROSS, SAVED BY THE BELL!**

We do not know much more about the thief on the cross other than he was: A criminal, crucified next to Jesus, and brought into paradise at his death. His powerful story is told in Luke 23:32-43, that describes the conversation between Christ and the two criminals crucified alongside of him.

The first criminal mentioned mocked Christ, “Save yourself and us!” (23:29). The other criminal, of whom we are writing, defended Jesus in a humble manner, acknowledging the justice of God and the innocence of Christ. His response to the mocker was, Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong. Then in verses 40-41 he pleaded with Jesus to “remember me when you come into your kingdom.” This desperate and humble cry for mercy is all that God needed to welcome him into the family of God. Jesus answered, vs 43. “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

What an incredible story! A man who presumably led his entire life in opposition to God, by the great mercies of God, was able to be saved in his dying moments. This demonstrates that a humble heart that cries out to God for salvation will be heard!

### **Romans 10:13)**

**Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

## **EHUD – AN UNCOUTH LEFTY GETS USED BY GOD!**

The story of Ehud comes right out of Judges 3, but would fit in nicely into the plot of a James Bond movie.

Israel was under the oppressive rule of Eglon the king of Moab so they cried out to the Lord for deliverance. The Moabites were idol worshipers who did evil in the sight of the Lord. God sent Ehud a left handed man who would have been considered unfit along with his cubit-long (about a foot and a half) sword to assassinate the king and liberate God’s people from his rule.

Ehud must have been a smooth talker, because when he told the servants of the king that he had a “secret message” for him (Judges 3:19), they left Ehud all alone with the king who was built like Jabba the Hutt. Ehud’s “secret message” was the sword that he brought and a stab to the belly Eglon as he was sitting on the pot, which killed him!

Then Ehud quietly locked the doors to the roof to keep the guards out and made a quick getaway. When Ehud returned to the people of Israel, he led Israel in conquering their enemies the Moabites.

It is a great picture and story of how when the Word of God (the Sword) is thrust to the core of our lives, how that the Dirt comes out!

## **JESUS – AUTHOR, SAVIOR, SUPER HERO, AND OH LET’S NOT FORGET GOD!**

The whole Bible is centered around Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, Savior, the God Man, the solution to the problems caused by our own waywardness and the only Way to living a great Story! Jesus is the center of it all! If you place Him as Lord of all in your life, you will be able to see your story through the lens of The Creator of the Universe, Author and Finisher of our Faith!

## CHAPTER 4

# DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

---

### ANYONE CAN PLAY THE DAMSEL! ARE YOU TIED TO THE TRACKS?

Some Hero's aren't what they are all cracked up to be! There's something about a helpless woman that men can't resist often rendering the man more of a super fool than a super hero. Why is it that men love a damsel in distress but are so horrible at actually pulling off a rescue? There are many characteristics that come into play. (Side note!) Just because you are a guy doesn't mean that you aren't as big of a damsel as the one's that we typically see in traditional story lines. I say this from personal experience! Although the idea that most guys are genetically predisposed to be a hero is for sure and for certain, some of us are not immunized from the need of drawing attention to ourselves, being needy, or wanting someone to fix us. In fact, most all of us want to be Superman, Superwoman or at least super-human but, our lack of dependency on the Lord along with being wired with on board super-stupid powers, we all have a tendency to get into a plethora of trouble over our lifespan and this is why we took the time to lay the ground work in the previous chapter, whilst taking a look at the messiness surrounding some biblical characters and their stories.

When it comes down to considering wether or not there are characteristics of playing a damsel in our own lives, I think it is important to consider some observations that will help us identify if it is a factor in our own

stories. First of all, I think most women hate being a damsel in distress and understandably so! I don't think they ever aspire to be in that position and often find themselves there not because of their own personal weakness but generally because one of the more "stupid super heroes" got them in a mess to begin with while he was simultaneously creating other messes.

With the men on the other hand, some just can't help falling for damsels in distress. The world says that it is inevitable for the man but as a man, I believe it is totally preventable if we are submitted to God and can figure out how to put our pride in check.

It generally goes without saying that every time a man sees a woman who needs help; it only takes a half brain dead guy a few short seconds to turn into a chivalrous knight in shining armor because he doesn't make it a habit of setting his mind on things above. Most of the time because of men's own spiritual ineptness and rationalization of their response as being purely heroic, they will play the roll at least until they have made enough of an impression to capture said damsels attention or make her fall for him. Either way the scenario can be typical in society and even in the church.

Another observation is that in my relationship with my wife, part of our courting game of dating and falling in love was dependent on mutual attraction, but there's another secret force that most men and women don't think about - the force of desirability and need. In my own super-stupid hero scenario, my wife was both desirable and had the need of care and protection. She was and still is beautiful but she is also meek and that is not to be mistaken for a lack of strength or sufficiency. Over the years I have discovered that what she needs is not me but another Hero and that it was my pride that kept her pinned to the tracks so to speak. I had literally tied her up and left her on the tracks, leaving her spiritual strength bound, her personality and godly characteristics always hidden in the dark shadow of my supposed super heroes

cape of pride and religiosity. Yep, I'll go right ahead and say it, "I created the Damsel!"

Looking back on that season, I realize that because of my pride, religiosity and manipulation, I had created all of the dynamics needed to have a perpetual damsel in distress to be the hero for. Not only did I have a bad Hero complex, I had a Savior complex. This complex had an impact on other relationships also. It led to sin and personal failure in my own life and without going into the details of the hard lessons I would personally have to learn, I can share a couple more observations that are important for anyone reading this book. 1. No matter how distressed, no matter how compassionate you may feel towards the difficulty surrounding a damsel, and no matter how noble your cause seems, there is only one priority for a married man and it is his own wife! His priority is not to fix his spouse but to lead her to the one who can not only fix our issues but provide the love and intimacy that we all long for. His name is Jesus, The Author and Finisher of our Faith and rescue attempts should only be through by Him! As far as the others damsel's are concerned... It is not your job you "Super Stupid Human Fool!" Nuff said!

## SO, WHAT IS A SAVIOR/HERO COMPLEX?

Put simply, a savior complex can be defined as someone who feels compelled to save or fix other people. The savior or hero, otherwise known as a person who thinks they have to either rescue you or fix you from your past baggage is the guy or person, usually self-designated, that becomes the savior that nobody wants and is most likely the reason for your baggage in the first place. Just say'n!

As you've probably noticed, the stereotypical perception of the savior/hero complex is ridiculously gendered, with men ready to sweep in and do the

saving and women supposedly wanting to be saved. In reality, any individual or relationship can have a savior complex. Regardless of your gender or your spouse's gender anybody can have the Savior/Hero complex in the same way anyone can become a Damsel in Distress.

## REVERSE SAVIOR/HERO COMPLEX

While you often only hear discussions around so-called “rescuers,” it’s equally important to note that there’s also a reverse savior complex, referring to those who feel they need to be saved. It’s just another nice way of saying Damsel in Distress!

In this particular scenario, this is known as the “victim” role. We find ourselves drawn to repeat trauma of the past in present situations. The victim is described as feeling “helpless and oppressed.” Basically, victims feel as though they’re bound to experience the same personal failures repeatedly. In the context of a relationship, this can mean that they feel their inadequacy as a partner has been predetermined. They may also look to or depend on a Hero to compensate for or even enable these perceived flaws to the point of flattering or the manipulation of their Savior/Hero. This is particularly perplexing for the “Super-Stupid Hero” because they are sucked right into the rescue and development of another Damsel.

This is probably the most common scenario in marriages where both partners struggle with emotional or physical affairs in the relationship. If our relationship with Jesus our real Hero is left unchecked. We will ultimately try to be a hero or, save a hero by becoming his or her damsel.

With that said, I suppose having a reverse savior complex can go beyond wanting someone to fix you and in some cases turn into believing that no one can fix you.

People who seek a Savior/Hero tend to think that they are damaged in some way, leading them to believe that they need a partner to “heal” them and make them whole.

If you want to be the savior/hero, you’re essentially saying to others that you see them as a project to be fixed. Once we begin to realize that none of us can fix one-another, We can begin the process of reconciliation in our relationships through the work of Christ on the Cross.

If you look for flaws as a means of finding a purpose or direction for the relationship then you have become a super-stupid hero like I was! This kind of thinking only speaks to the issues that have not been submitted to the foot of the cross.

Once my wife and I truly began to give everything to the Lord the tendency to turn our relationship into a plot that had a perpetual to-do list and that put a heavy strain on trust building, became simplistic in nature. Refocusing on trusting the Lord began to renew our trust for each other and put the fun back into the dynamic of sharing our struggles and experiences allowing the Author and Finisher of our faith to restore us and to see things through the lens of Jesus. No longer have we felt the need to stress or worry about rescuing each other. Neither of us feel bound by my prideful heroics or look to each other as the source for fixing our lives and we’re able to focus on getting stronger as a couple. While it is certainly true that a healthy relationship involves nurturing and taking care of one another, our relationship and story has now become a natural simplistic response to what our real hero Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith is doing in us.

## THE DAMSEL'S TRAGIC STORY

When we find that the narrative our our story has taken a turn for the worst and it seems like our lives are bound to the fate of being run over by a freight train or, we actually did get run over, what do we do?

You may think that your story is a train wreck, you may think that your ending will be just another tragic story. Here are some things to consider.

First. Who is writing your story?

### **Jeremiah 29:11**

**11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Does the Narrative of God demonstrate that rescue was not part of the plot?**

Does the Narrative of God demonstrate that rescue was not part of the plot?

### **Galatians 1:4**

**...who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.**

We must shift our attention off of our circumstance no matter what it is and look to the only true Hero in the Narrative of God.

You may be in a bad place right now but have you considered that you are already rescued?

### **2 Timothy 4:18**

**18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

We are only bound by the things we won't let go of!

**Psalm 107: 13-14**

**13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.**

I've always liked the story of how you can trap a monkey. You do it by placing an object in a knot-hole of the monkey's tree that is just a little bit bigger than the object and just big enough for the monkey to get himself into. The monkey being very good at getting himself into all kinds of predicaments then climbs the tree, sticks his hand through the knot-hole, grasps the object of his affection and attempts to retrieve it from the hole only to realize that he has now been bound to this object of his affection and that he or she can't get out of the hole! When you think about it, it seems funnier than all get out! The stupid monkeys are not really bound by anything and all they have to do is let go of the things that have them stuck in their circumstances.

Who Will Save Me?

We have been provided a Hero. You make not think that He fully understands the scope of your circumstances but don't forget that He is also the Author of your story. If you are bound to the track like a damsel in distress, consider letting go of the rope or chains that have been restraining you!

Again...

**Ps 107:14**

**He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.**

**Isaiah 35:4**

**Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Dead Villains Make Great Hero's**

## THE VILLAIN GET'S THE GIRL... WHAT?

I know! Sounds crazy right? But this is how it worked in my own relationship and it bears out practically through out the Story of God and all of the glories provisions of His New Covenant with us. We will discuss this more in the following chapter so I won't give the story away now but, it's true! I originally thought that I was going to loose everything or that I didn't any longer deserve anything. I didn't think that any of my story or hers could possibly have been rescued but it has now been restored and I got the girl! Oh, I know it's still the same one that I have been married to from the beginning but she is not the same and neither am I! All It took was an assassination! It was rescue by death that broke our bonds!

## CHAPTER 5

# SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

---

## Noah on the New Covenant

### GET IN THE BOAT!

The Story of Noah and the Ark is often passed off as a fairy tale of epic proportion in this day and age. It has often been reduced to a nifty little bedtime story that lulls our children to sleep as we gently turn the pages and fondly recall the pictures of all those animals that proceeded two by two onto the Ark. There is however, much more to the content than just how the Ark was built, which animals we're selected, and who would ultimately take the journey with Noah. This story not only warns us that God is a righteous judge but that the story of God is being written into each and every one of our lives. It is my hope that each of us will consider that just over the rainbow there is grace, mercy, and the reality of a new covenant with God that should not just be read about but, lived out in our daily lives, experienced with every breath we take. It is an opportunity to experience and live in the Story of God so... "Get in the Boat!" Why? You may ask!

**Gen 6:8**

**...Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.**

### ANCHORED IN REST

## **Gen 8:4**

### **Then the ark rested...**

There are two components that I would like to first focus on in this verse because as I said before, historically we never connect with the deep waters of the Word of God because we are more interested in the pictures.

First lets look at what the Ark is. In scripture there are a couple of interesting thoughts about the actual word used in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew word "Tebah" pronounced tay-baw' is rendered as a coffin, a chest, or an ark like we would use as a vessel for carrying or transporting something. It is also the same word that is used for The Ark of the Covenant and for the basket that Moses was sent down stream in as an infant. In reference to the Ark of the Covenant, you will remember that it contained the Law, that is the stone tablets that Moses was given on the mountain. Now this is significant because that Law, which as we all know, no one can live up to, that law that none of us is able to fulfill. It ultimately brings death to everyone. But here is the good news! That Ark was covered and its contents were concealed by the Mercy Seat. It was a lid if you will, that was sprinkled with the blood sacrifice of a lamb. This is the picture of the propitiation that is spoken of in Romans where we understand that Jesus through His sacrifice for you and me became our lid of mercy ultimately coming between us and Gods wrath, concealing our sins with his blood we can now rest in knowing that the lid of His Mercy has covered our sins and that they are no longer seen.

Contrast this now with the Ark of Noah which is also a vessel of mercy. Not only was its purpose intended to spare people from the judgment of God but it's contents were also concealed and surrounded by Mercy.

## **Gen 6:14**

**“Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.**

The Hebrew word for pitch is kâphar. Pronounced kaw-far’ it means figuratively, to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel, appease, make an atonement, cleanse, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge away, put off, make reconciliation.

This Pitch/Mercy was used as the glue that held everything together! It was used to completely encase, the gopher wood inside and out, In other words, the Ark was completely concealed by mercy. I like that!

Let’s take this even deeper in our correlations with the Story of God to see how it bares out in the narrative of Scripture.

#### **Genesis 8:4**

**Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.**

Here is another portion of the story that there are no pictures in children’s books for and the perspectives certainly don’t come up in your average fairy-tail!

The Ark was not only at perfect rest but it is significant that it also happened on the seventh month, and the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. Why is this a significant part of the Story of God you ask? Well, you may remember the story in Exodus Chapter 12, The night of the first Passover was the night of the tenth plague. On that fateful night, The 14th night of Nissan, God told the Israelites to sacrifice a spotless lamb in the twilight hours and mark their doorposts and lintels with its blood (Exodus

12:21-22). Then, when the Lord passed through the nation, He would “pass over” the households that showed the blood (verse 23). In a very real way, the blood of the lamb saved the Israelites from death, as it kept the destroyer from entering their homes. The Israelites were saved from the plague, and their firstborn children stayed alive. The Passover is now celebrated on the 15th of Nissan, every year, celebrating the exodus from Egypt and the Israelites’ freedom from slavery to the Egyptians.

Now, fast forward to Jesus who in a upper room with His twelve disciples celebrates a Passover.

### **John 13:1**

**Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.**

Here we are again on the fourteenth day of Nissan. Only this passover meal looks different! There is no Lamb because Jesus is about to become the sacrificial lamb. here at this last meal, Jesus begins to do things that are unorthodox to how they have walked with Him previously. Here he takes out a towel and washes their feet and they don’t understand. He then takes a piece of bread and says this is my body, He takes a wine filled cup and says this is my blood. You see these men whoo Jesus loved so much didn’t know what Jesus meant by these things, What do you mean, “Unless you do this, you will have no part with me?” What does all this mean? What they did not know is that God himself was about to become the sacrificial lamb for the sins of the world. He was about to become the Propitiation and Mercy seat, coming between us and the all wrath and judgment that we deserved, He would take on my sin and wrap us in His mercy!

They may not have understood it on the 14th day in that upper room but, 3 days later when Christ was resurrected from the grave on the 17th. They would know and would finally be able to anchor in the perfect rest that “It is finished,” Our sins are remembered no more! By the Mercy of God we are able to rest in His work!

### **Genesis 22:8**

**“And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.”**

God really did provide Himself as the Lamb!

## **THE CURSE GETS REVERSED**

It is important to understand the significance of the location that the Ark comes to rest at. The Mountains of Ararat! The Hebrew Lexicon renders the definition of Ararat as; “The curse reversed.” Is it any wonder or is there any clearer observation that can be made to the significance that mercy and rest come to the place where there was once a curse and now reverses it. That’s what mercy and grace does, It reaches into the barren, rocky, desolate places of my life and begins to tell a story of reconciliation, redemption, restoration. It is how the story of God plays out in my life and gets to be lived out as my story!

### **Genesis 8:21**

**Then the LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.**

This is Gods promise to you and His promises are for sure and for certain!

## WHAT'S THAT SMELL?

It really does please God then we get in the Ark, or when we are moving on in obedience to the story He is writing for our lives. He is faithful to remind us of those things that bring Him pleasure too! It is important to understand that not only has the curse been lifted but, that you no longer have to feel like your story is cursed. Have you ever come across someone who has fallen in sin, who has repented and received Gods grace and mercy but they just can't move on? Perhaps they are surrounded with folks who just don't want them getting in the boat, or others won't let them get out of the boat when it's landed and the curse has been lifted. I don't know how it has played out in your story but I do know how it has played out in mine. Everyone has to come to a point in their walk where they have to stop trying to earn mercy and finally come to grips that it has been provided once and for all. Some would have you believe that the things you have done and that the sin you have committed, really stink! They would take the position that your life and story has a bad odor about it. Not so with the Lord! The stench of death has been lifted! Every day that you walk in the steadfast love of the Lord, when you understand that His mercies are new every morning, when you offer yourself as a sacrifice and your story as an offering to the Lord. Your life becomes a soothing fragrance to Him. He smells you and He likes the smell! So quit buying cheap cologne!

**Genesis 8:21**

**And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma.**

## COVENANTS VS CONTRACTS

If someone defaults in a contract, the agreement then becomes null and void. There can even be judgements and certain repercussions when someone doesn't hold up their end of the bargain. Jesus didn't establish a new contract with us, He made a New Covenant with us. He held up the deal for all of us even all of us have broken our promises with Him. Because of this covenant with us and what it provides for us, there are no stipulations on what we do, there are no clauses, keeping our end up, or performance requirements, because the covenant is based solely on what He did and has nothing to do with us.

## HERE'S YOUR SIGN! GRACE REVEALED

### **Genesis 9:12-15:**

**This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh (NKJV).**

The covenant of the rainbow is between God and man and all the animals that were with Noah on the Ark: a promise that there would never be such an event again that would destroy all flesh on the land. We do learn in the Word however, that there will be a future, global judgment, but next time by fire, not water (2 Peter 3:10). Some suggest that the watery colors of the rainbow (the blue end of the spectrum) remind us of the destruction by water, and the fiery colors (the red end of the spectrum) of the coming destruction by fire. It would make sense in that there is much correlation to be made with the Story of God.

For instance the 7 visible colors, Seven being the number of perfection! However, I believe that the most important aspect of the rainbow are the ones that point us to the covenant of grace. It is actually a symbol of Christ Himself.

When the world hears the account of Noah's Flood, they will often accuse God of being an ogre for bringing this terrible judgment on people. However, the story of God of God shows us that He is not only a righteous judge but full of infinite mercy and grace.

So, God tells Noah to build an Ark to save the animals and Noah's family. However, this Ark was much larger than needed for just these animals and this family and just as Noah and his family had to go through the door to be saved, so others could have gone through that door to be saved. In fact, after the Ark was loaded, it stood for seven more days before God Himself shut the door—seven more days of grace. I have a tendency to think that because mercy was being built into Noah's story that he must have preached from the doorway, wanting others to share in this mercy, imploring people to come in and be saved. Noah's Ark is actually a picture of salvation in Christ, as He is the door through which we need to go to be saved for eternity (John 10:9).

We all need to be reminded that we sinned in Adam—we committed high treason against the God of creation. God is holy and pure—completely without sin. A holy God has to judge sin, but in His judgment, He also shows infinite mercy. When God judged sin with death in Genesis 3:19, He also promised a Savior (Genesis 3:15). God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, stepped into history, fully human and fully God, to be a man so He could pay the penalty for our sin. Through the shedding of His blood, He offers the free gift of salvation to all who will believe.

The Bible reveals to us that the rainbow is a symbol of Christ in Ezekiel 1:26-28. In Revelation 4:2-3 where John saw Christ clothed with a cloud and a rainbow on His head.

As Bible scholar John Gill said this about the rainbow, “It has in it the full spectrum of beautiful colors, it may very well represent Christ, who is full of grace and truth, and fairer than the children of men; and may be considered as a symbol of peace and reconciliation by him, whom God looks unto, and remembers the covenant of his grace he has made with him and his chosen ones in him; and who is the rainbow round about the throne of God, and the way of access unto it.

So the next time you see a rainbow, remember that God judges sin. He judged with a global flood at the time of Noah. But He is merciful, and He made a covenant of grace with Noah and the animals that He would never again judge with a worldwide Flood. Not only that, but the rainbow, as a symbol of Christ, reminds us that He is the mediator between man and God and that those who receive the free gift of salvation are presented faultless before their Creator.

God declares those redeemed who have trusted in Christ. They are clothed in the righteousness of His Son. For the redeemed, the wrath of God toward sin was satisfied on the Cross—paid in full by the shed blood of His sinless Son. And as John Gill puts it, “though it is a bow, yet without arrows, and is not turned downwards towards the earth, but upwards towards heaven, and so is a token of mercy and kindness, and not of wrath and anger.

## CHAPTER 6

# THE CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

---

### GRAVESIDE!

Even though in the greatest story ever told, History records that the Hero in the Word of God died, but He also was resurrected! Now if my story is going to turn out the way it was planned by its author, then the villain must die also and indeed He did! Here is the key! The villain is also resurrected by the Author of this epic story and not only does He emerge as the Hero but He makes us out to be hero's too!

#### **Romans 6:3-11**

**Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

## STUCK IN THE GRAVE YARD?

Too often, when I hear the story of others, I will hear terms associated with life like I'm stuck. or I feel dead! This is where the enemy of our story - We'll call him the Publisher for now, He perpetually tries to keep our book off of the shelves. he will tell you it's not good enough or that you need to change the story line. The Publisher only wants to publish the dirt and will always try to keep you stuck at some point in your story-line. He is Friends with the Lawman and will constantly twist your story into something it is not. This ultimately keeps you grave side if not six feet under, where your story never has a chance to be lived, heard, or resurrected.

## CHAPTER 7

# THE LONG ARM OF THE LAWMAN

---

### HEADED FOR THE GALLOWS, WE WE'RE SO BUSTED!

The long arm of the law usually has the same story line. The role of Law Enforcement always seeks to see its prosecution seeks to provide the When it comes to Gods laws, I came already one who was in a heap of

For years I ran from the law said "wanted dead or alive." My was on the run from an inevitable found my self bound and in was in danger of being tried, the gallows.



rules carried out and ultimately the entertainment of a good lynching! to the conclusion early on that I was trouble because I was born lawless.

and my story read like a poster that mugshot was everywhere I looked, I end. Like all of us so often do, I shackles by the sin of my past. I convicted, found guilty, and sent to

#### Revelation 20:10-12

**10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white**

**throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**

## THE PROSECUTION IS A DIRTY RAT

The books were open, the court was in session. the judge was presiding and the prosecutor was speaking. The Prosecutor earlier in Revelation chapter 12 is identified as the accuser of the brethren, also called the Devil, who's name literally means slanderer. He is the prosecutor Revelation 12:10-11 tells you and me and he is accusing us constantly just like a district attorney who is determined to get a conviction. He is out to do me in and take us down. He stands before the throne night and day pointing out our foibles, failures, faithlessness, flaws, our phoniness and our fickleness and he accuses me just like he will accuse you. We see him there standing before the great white throne, the Judge of all the earth is presiding, there seated there on the throne he opens the books. The books that record everything that you and I have long since forgotten. The things we have done that are not right and we have forgotten about. The things that we thought that no-one else would know and in fact that we wouldn't even admit to ourselves. Everything is there in those books, and there in the heavenly court, before the great white throne, the books are available, the evidence is there. Everything I have done that's not right, every motive that was mixed, every thought that's unfair, every evil stinking thing that I have participated in, and my heart sinks because I realize that there is so much evidence against me. It would take books, ten times the size of the whole Encyclopedia Britannica even with very small fonts to contain

just the amount of sins I had committed yesterday! And I know I am in big trouble!

The prosecution then starts his arguments and pointing his big rat finger at the Judge, opening with look what John said, look how he behaved, look what John failed to do, look what John thinks about, look what John did, and on and on it goes, making his case against me, against you, and against us, day and night!

## WHAT'S YOUR PLEA HOMBRE?

The Judge in my case looks down from His Great White Throne and says “John, Hombre, How do you plea? Guilty or not guilty? (Me) What? (Judge) The books are open, the District attorney has made quite a case against you. How do you plea John, guilty or not guilty? (Me) Your Honor, umm... My Father, how do I plea? (Judge) Yes, John. Guilty or not guilty? (Me) I plead... I plead... I plead...? (Judge) Yes, guilty or not guilty? (Me) I plead... the blood! yeah, I plead the blood!

## I KNOW A GOOD LAWYER!

If you can't afford a lawyer, one has been provided for you!

Here is the deal! By pleading the blood I am at this point able to respond to the righteous Judge, who is also my heavenly Father, and I can respond to the accusations by saying “Father your Son, my lawyer, You, yourself, took my sin and paid the price for every one. I plead the blood of my lawyer Jesus, that's my plea, the blood, the blood, the blood... That's my plea! His blood was

provided for a plea! My lawyer substituted Himself for my punishment and His blood covers not just my sins but a multitude of sins for all mankind.

## **IN GOOD WITH THE JUDGE**

The Father gets a big smile on His face and He hits the throne with His gavel and proclaims, “Absolutely Righteous!” John, the blood of my Son has cleared the record, wiped out every sin, come boldly before my throne! Come into My kingdom, come whenever you choose to and cast your cares upon Me, talk things over with Me, expect to receive blessings from Me, because you have pleaded the only thing that could get you off of a trip to the gallows! It put Me on the tree John and you pleaded the blood.

This is the only confidence we cling to, the only hope that we have, any day, every day, throughout the day, to enjoy a walk with the Lord and to receive blessing from Him. It is the only thing that has the power to refute the accusations of the accuser, the prosecution, the enemy so I plead the blood!

## **UMM... WE LOST THE EVIDENCE YER HONOR!**

What the prosecution doesn't understand is that we have the best Lawyer and Advocate in Jesus Christ. His blood has blotted out all of the evidence that there ever was against you, me, and us! The prosecution is forced to leave in shame because the evidence of his case against us has been lost forever. Our righteous judge not only blots out the evidence but He throws the case out of His courtroom completely. It is a total mis-trial and always will be on the part of our accusers. Make sure and put him and them on notice that you will be enjoying your pardon for eternity!

## CHAPTER 7

# DISCOVERING YOUR HEART

---

### A ROGUE HEART SERVES FOR GREAT PURPOSE!

We had a horse growing up. His name was Thunder. Thunder was a Mustang that came out of an adopt a horse program through the BLM. He was not what you would consider to be your typical equine flesh. In fact, this horse was unique from every horse my father ever owned in that he had a what I would describe as a rogue heart. He didn't do anything in the ways that a normal horse did. At 14 hands, Thunder was short, he had a passion for eating purple thistles and poison oak, he did not fancy a bit in his mouth so was hackamore trained... (A hackamore is a type of headgear which does not have a bit). This horse that nobody really wanted not only came full of heart, but he would not be out walked by horses that were of fairer breed or longer legs. Even on a bad day when other things might interest him, he could out pace a horse 17 hands tall, and always wanted the lead. My brother and I rode him bareback most every where we went and he would pull us up the most difficult terrain just by grabbing him by the tail and saying "Lets go!" Thunder was afraid of his shadow and would always stop to analyze water crossings. In my hometown, he would often stop on the bridge that spans the Rogue River at every structural expansion joint to view the river below through the crack, reassuring himself that he wouldn't fall through!. He was inquisitive, gentle, always allowed to respond to his own rare, rogue style of doing things. As long

as Thunder was allowed to do life outside of the box and in his own way, he served for more fun and purpose than any other horse you would expect to rival him. Once he was jumped by a Mountain Lion while being ridden in the back country. The death of the said cougar ensued as it was shot from the little horses saddle. Once the cat was latched to the rear of Thunder's saddle, this little rogue mustang packed the feline out of the wilderness on his own back. Very rare for a horse!

I have shared all of this to establish that anything with a heart can be used for God's purposes, but the ones with a heart and tendency to be a little rogue can do mighty things! This kind of heart is a diamond in the ruff! It can and should be cultivated in relationship and likeness to the way it was



created to be. It is the same with a human heart and that heart should be cultivated in a relationship with the very one who created it to begin with. If you are a person who has been described as “a little rogue” throughout your life, It's okay to not like the bit, it's okay to go bareback, it's okay to think a little differently than the other horses, and most importantly it's okay to out walk, out ride, and out run, the other horses. Find your heart, give it to God, and discover the great purpose of a rogue heart! You may just be a Mustang!

## **GOD DOESN'T CALL THE QUALIFIED, HE QUALIFIES THE CALLED**

“Jacob was a cheater, Peter had a temper, David had an affair, Noah got drunk, Jonah ran from God, Paul was a murderer, Gideon was insecure, Miriam was a gossip, Martha was a worrier, Thomas was a doubter, Sara was

impatient, Elijah was moody, Moses stuttered, Abraham was old,... and Lazarus was dead. God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called!"

No matter where you are in your life with God, HE is qualifying you for his service because you are called. He can help you overcome the mistakes you have made, and even use them to help others. Just allow Him to use you.

### **1 Corinthians 1:27-29**

**27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.**

## **ELIMINATE THE DISQUALIFICATIONS**

### **Judges 1:19**

**And the LORD was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.**

Why couldn't Judah drive out the inhabitants of the valley? Because their eyes were fixed on the iron chariots rather than on Almighty God. If your eyes are fixed on the Lord, I care not how formidable your foe might be, it can be overcome. But if your eyes are on the obstacle - if you're focused on the problem, if you're in bondage to your past - you will not drive out your enemy no matter how small it is. You've got to lift your eyes higher and fix them on the Father. Yes, the enemies of Judah had chariots of iron, but if Judah had

lifted their eyes higher and focused upon the One who has twenty thousand chariots at His command (Psalm 68:17), they would have been victorious.

Judah had successful campaigns when they were high up on the mountain tops, but they got their tail whipped in the valley. We have tendencies to live on in the story of our past. This is most prevalent when the message of grace we teach, lacks the components of mercy that was also provided with the new covenant. Unfortunately, this allows grace to be dolled out on the terms of others and has cultivated a false perception that leads God's loved ones to think that because we've had problems with iron chariots previously, we need always be fearful whenever we see them on the horizon. This perception is just not true! We need to be a people who put the past behind us - past defeats, past discouragements, past wounds, past failures, past sins has been covered by Christ our mercy seat and propitiation.

"This one thing I do," said our brother, Paul, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). We need to put the past away and lift our eyes higher - beyond the failure of the past, beyond the chariots of the present - to the high calling of God Who enables us to do all that He asks of us.

## A HEART AFTER GOD

"David was a real pinhead! How could David be considered a man after God's own heart?"

To understand why David was a man after God's own heart, we need to see what characteristics he had to qualify for such what seems to be a rather lofty description. In the book of Acts, the apostle Paul speaks of God's feelings about King David:

## **Acts 13:22**

**“After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’”**

My observation as to why David was considered to be a man after God’s own heart is found right in the verse: David did whatever God wanted him to do. But an even more obvious question is how could God still call David a man after His own heart when David committed such terrible sins, including adultery and murder?

## **A POINTED HEART**

We learn much of David’s character in the book of Psalms as he opened up his life for all to examine. David’s life was both a portrait of success and failure, and the biblical record highlights the fact that David was far from perfect. But what made David a cut above the rest was that his heart was pointed toward God. He had a deep desire to follow God’s will and do “everything” God wanted him to do. He was a man after God’s own heart. Let’s look at some characteristics of David’s life to discover what that entails:

## **ABSOLUTE FAITH**

Part of why David is called a man after God’s own heart is that he had absolute faith in God. Nowhere in Scripture is this point better illustrated than in 1 Samuel 17 where David as a young shepherd boy fearlessly slew the Philistine, Goliath. Shortly before the duel, we see direct evidence of David’s faith when David says, “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion

and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’ And Saul said to David, ‘Go, and the Lord be with you!’” (verse 37). David was fully aware that God was in control of his life, and he had faith that God would deliver him from impending danger. How else would one venture into a potentially fatal situation with such calm and confidence? David knew early on in life that God was to be trusted and obeyed. As we see in the Word, David’s simple faith pleased God, and God rewards David for his faithfulness.

## HE LOVED THE WORD

Another reason David was a man after God’s own heart is that he absolutely loved God’s Law. Of the 150 psalms in the Bible, David is credited for writing over half of them. It seems to me that David wrote mostly while in various and often troubling times in his life, David repeatedly mentioned how much he loved God’s perfect Word. We find a beautiful example of this in Psalm 119:47-48: “For I delight in your commands because I love them. I lift up my hands to your commands, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees.” It is not hard to see his complete adoration for God’s Word. Also notice how David “meditates” on God’s statutes. God granted David understanding and wisdom through daily meditation. We would do well to not only read God’s Word but also think about it throughout the day, for God loves us to think about Him. “Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways” (Psalm 119:2-3).

## THANKFULNESS

David was a man after God’s own heart in that he was truly thankful. “I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, O Lord, proclaiming

aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds” (Psalm 26:6-7). David’s life was marked by seasons of great peace and prosperity as well as times of fear and despair. But through all of the seasons in his life, he never forgot to thank the Lord for everything that he had. It is truly one of David’s finest characteristics. “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!” (Psalm 100:4, ESV). As followers of Jesus Christ, we would do well to follow David’s lead of offering praise through thanksgiving to our Lord.

After he sinned, David was truly repentant. David’s sin with Bathsheba is recorded in 2 Samuel 11:2-5. The mighty fall hard, and David’s fall included adultery, lying, and murder. He had sinned against God, and he admits it in 2 Samuel 12:13: “David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.’” But admitting our sin and asking for forgiveness is only half of the equation. The other half is repentance, and David did that as well. Psalm 51 is David’s prayer of repentance to God: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!” (Psalm 51:1-2).

David was a man after God’s own heart because he demonstrated his faith and was committed to following the Lord. Yes, his faith was tested on a grand scale, and he failed at times. But after his sin he sought and received the Lord’s forgiveness. In the final analysis, David loved God’s Law and sought to follow it exactly. As a man after God’s own heart, David is a role model for all of us.

## ROGUE LOVE FOR THE ROGUE HEART

This passage stands alone and on its own merit concerning the wild, passionate, unbridled, rogue love that the Lord has for you. And you thought you were unlovable!

**Psalm 139:2-23**

**You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night," Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day Darkness and light are alike to You. For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand When I awake, I am still with You. O that You would slay the wicked, O God; Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed. For they speak against You wickedly, And Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with the utmost hatred; They have become my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;**

## ROGUE HEART / NEW HEART SAME THING!

### **Jeremiah 17:9.**

**"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"**

This passage of Scripture has come up over and over again and it is often used by those who are fatally Calvinistic in their interpretation of scripture. It is most often used to characterize the depravity of the believer and in my opinion has kept believers all over the world stuck in their story, stuck in their sin and unable to enjoy the new heart, nature, spirit, along with the new creation that we have become. Scripture is very clear that the issues of the depraved heart are directed to the heart condition of the unbeliever. It has been my personal and humbling experience that any heart that is not submitted to God is a depraved heart. This type of heart can reside in the worst of us in the same way that it can in the self-righteous, or religious. Depravity is an equal offender in the hearts of those who will not access The Work of Grace under the New Covenant through Christ.

### **Ezekiel 36:26**

**A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.**

That deceitful and incurable heart is that stony heart that is taken away and is replaced by a heart of flesh! The Holy Spirit gives His people a new heart and causes them to walk in obedience! And not only is the heart new,

everything is made is new. The regenerated person is a new creation and no longer possesses a lifeless heart of stone.

### **2 Corinthians 5:17**

**So that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

When this verse talks about old things, it includes the old heart. It is gone! The Holy Spirit makes a person new again! There is a total metamorphosis that has taken place and to say that the heart of a believer remains deceitful and incurably wicked is to deny the transforming work of the Holy Spirit!

Does the Christian still sin? Yep! He most certainly does. The presence of sin is still constantly with him. It will harass him, make him do what he does not want to do, to the point of making him cry out that he is afflicted, distressed, grieved, and even vexed (Rom. 7:14-24). But there is a stark contrast between the depraved unbelieving heart and what I call a new rogue heart. You see, the sin of the old, unbelieving heart is cultivated by not allowing God to do His work in the heart. This type of heart does not understand the Story of God nor is it allowed to be impacted by the plan of redemption. In contrast, the sin of believers, or the new rogue heart understands that sin is still very much with them but believers hate their sin (Rom. 7:15). They have died to sin, don't want to live in sin, purpose to no longer serve sin, they are no longer under the dominion of sin, have been set free from sin, do not walk according to the flesh, they are free from the law of sin, and are not in the flesh (Rom. 6:2, 6:6, 6:11, 6:14, 6:22; 8:1-9).

Which do you believe? Has God worked a great change in you by making you a new creation with a new heart, or is your heart still vile and deceitful? One thing is for sure: if you believe that your heart is vile and deceitful, then it

most certainly is. Why would God write His will on the heart that is deceitful and desperately wicked?

It is time to click your heals Dorothy! Burn the script on this horror story, because the witch is dead, you are not the Tin-man, and you are not in Oz, Ding-Dong! If you have been stuck in this kind of story, If you have been held hostage by an old heart, If you want a new story and a new heart. Consider what the lord can do with a Rogue Heart!

### **Jeremiah 31:33-34**

**33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it ton their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."**

The old covenant failed because it depended upon man's faithfulness to God. The new covenant cannot fail because it depends upon God's faithfulness to man. Without going into all of the theological detail, under the new covenant, we are now hidden in Christ. I know that many would try to derail this line of thinking but for you who are students of the Work of Propitiation that Romans speaks about, if we are hidden in Christ... What heart is being looked at? Whose faithfulness is being looked at? I hope that you will take time to discover more as it relates to your story and I will leave it at that.

## CHAPTER 8

# WHEN STORIES COLLIDE

---

### Luke 7:11-12

**11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. 12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.**

## HAPPY STORIES COLLIDE WITH SAD STORIES FOR A REASON

Jesus had traveled with the disciples and many others with him about 25 miles from Capernium, where he had previously healed a centurion's servant. He then travelled to a town called Nain. The name Nain means lovely or pleasant and Jesus is now making this 25 mile journey in a processional or with a parade of people with him. There is no doubt in my mind that this procession was one of celebration and anticipation of what the Lord might do

in Nain that next day. Smiles on faces, songs perhaps being sung. It truly was a joyous storyline that had been unfolding. But when He got to the gate of the city and there was another procession of people. It was a different Storyline altogether where they were carrying a dead body wrapped up in a basket, a basket for the purpose of transporting a person to their place of burial. It was the son of a widow and that procession was that of a funeral procession. Not a procession of rejoicing, celebration and anticipation but a procession of tension, distress, anxiety, desperation and death. Ring any bells in your story? Here in this story, I see a divine collision happening as the procession of Jesus and many people with him are traveling into the city when at the same time there is also a simultaneous procession of many people going out of the city. This collision of story if you look closely demonstrates that there are always two or more unique and very different story lines happening at any given moment.

There are many with stories of celebration and anticipation and at the same time there are many with stories of death, consternation, loss and desperation going on at the same time. Jesus sees this precision along with this Mother who had lost her husband and now only living son and it says in this passage that Jesus not only saw her but he had compassion on her. He had compassion on her in the way that he has always had compassion on everyone of us in that he took her pain in his heart. This was a realization for Jesus because it wouldn't be very long before his mother Mary who was a widow at that point, Joseph having died when Jesus was yet a teenager Mary would encounter her own son, the only begotten son being led out of the city, as she wept. He could see no doubt that this was the desperation and consternation of this woman's situation. He sees the anguish, confusion, depression, and realizes prophetically no doubt that this is the same thing that his very own mother will be experiencing in the not so distant future.

Now watch what Jesus does coming from a story of anticipation and celebration as he collides with a story of pain and tension here in Nain. It says that He had compassion on her and tells her “weep not.” How is that compassionate you ask? It sounds crazy! How is what you are asking compassionate the mother might say. We are burying my son, there is loss, I have nothing left! We are carrying him to the tomb where He will be laid to rest and you say weep not! But Jesus knew what he was about to do not just in this circumstance but on behalf of you and me. It was in anticipation and celebration of the Joy that was set before him. It was for us who have been ravished by sin and death that he proclaims weep not and resurrects this young man in the same way that after having been laid to rest himself, He would provide life for all of us who have been sentenced to death, ravished by sin, experienced loss, despair, disdain and the inane.

The story of our life is short! We can simultaneously experience joy and celebration in one moment and at the same time experience loss, and despair. The real key to seeing the plot of our story have a glorious ending is by having our stories collide in a place that is altogether lovely and pleasant. His name is Jesus and he is the reason that our stories collide simultaneously! Weep not! Let not your heart be troubled!

## THE DIVINE COLLISION OF SCRIPTURE

I would like to give you just a couple of examples of how stories, types, and names collide across the span of scripture and then leave you to your own discoveries of how they unfold throughout the bible and even in your own story.

## THE NAME GAME

These guys were important not merely for who they were but by what their stories tell and what their names meant.

Peter - His name means "Rock". Not The Rock, as in Petra. That is in reference to God but Peter's name references a small stone. You remember how dogmatic Peter had a tendency to be. Oft remembered for lopping off the ear of the centurion in the presence of Jesus. Peter is a picture of the Stone tablets that the Law of God or Ten Commandments were written on.

James - His name is Jacob in the Hebrew. In both cases, James or Jacob both mean "Supplanter" or "Replace".

John - His name means "Jehovah has Grace" in both Greek and Hebrew.

Combine the stories of these three guys together and you will realize why that when they were called apart by Jesus from the other twelve that it is always in the order of Peter, James, and John. No exception!

Why?

The "Stone" or Law has been "Replaced" by "Grace".

The Law has been superseded by grace and these three men knew it more than anyone else!

## PROPITIATION AND THE MERCY SEAT

One of my favorite collisions in scripture is the correlation of the Mercy Seat of Exodus 26:34 and the work of Propitiation that is mentioned in Romans 3:25. If you are not one who goes deep into the stories of the Bible then this is a huge collision that is frequently missed in our churches unless you are in a place of fellowship that meets frequently for the purpose of the

exegetical study of God's Word. I say this because I firmly believe that this kind of study is of the highest priority in the day and age we live in. I went through much of my life and most of my ministerial training without ever hearing about the connections that cover the whole span of scripture so, allow me to explain to the best of my ability the story of how Jesus put a lid on it!

## JESUS PUT A LID ON IT!

As you may very well know, God Himself became a Man and absorbed the wrath of His own indignation. The mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of propitiation is that God actually inflicted death on a cross upon Himself.

Now we won't go into the deep theological perspectives of grace, justification, and propitiation here. Let's not forget, I too am a commoner, and a sinner. That being said, the custom of many is to dissect Romans in such a way that we will get bogged down in theological debate rather than simple application. So, allow me at this point to throw out this one big word for a moment and define propitiation so it is simple to apply to a common pinhead such as myself.

The word Hilasterion, or "propitiation"—A word we don't hear much today—is used only five times in the entire New Testament: Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:1-2; 1 John 4:10; and Hebrews 9 are four of them. The Hebrews reference is really cool because it gives us insight and understanding. You see, in describing the mercy seat, the author of Hebrews uses the word hilasterion. The mercy seat, or hilasterion, covered the ark of the covenant. It was like a lid. The ark of the covenant contained the law. Now, this is where it gets interesting because, through the mercy seat, God says, I know you've broken the law. I know you deserve to be consumed because of it. But I'm going to put a

lid on it through the sacrifice of My Son. He is the helasmos, the mercy seat, the propitiation. It's not something He gives. It's who He is!

## WHOA! . . . THIS IS MELTING MY BRAIN!

If you are getting what I'm laying down then you now understand that Jesus has come between you and the broken law. The wrath that the Father should have vented on me and you was instead placed upon His Son, who died in your place.

The fifth use of the word "propitiation" is found in Luke 18:10-14. It is a brief illustration, concerning the prayers of a Pharisee and a tax collector. If you look at verse 13: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." It begins with "God" and ends with "sinner." The middle phrase, "be merciful"—the verb form of hilasterion stands between God and sin. Every one of us is in one of two categories. You're either the self-righteous Pharisee, or you're the tax collector, grateful that Jesus is standing between God and your sin.

When I first began to understand the work of propitiation I finally gave in and gave up on the idea that something I was doing would appease the wrath of a Righteous Judge. Wow! Talk about a game changer and major impact on how my personal story plays out!

Propitiation adds an entirely different dimension to what Paul calls "so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3). It's not just the Father saying, "I'm going to settle mankind's problem judicially." No, He deals with it personally. That God would love me so much He would actually become the object of His own wrath frees me up in a profound way. Not only did He put a lid on it, He became the lid!

I know I'm a sinner. But because He absorbed the anger that should have been poured out upon me, I can walk throughout the rest of my days, weeks, and years because the story of God is being perfectly planned and played out in

my life personally and for the first time in my life I can recognize the divine collision of God's Story with my story and the Old Testament Pictures with their New Testament Truths and counterparts. Furthermore! I recognize that the tensions and difficulties that come into my story are there by divine providence!

## **CHAPTER 9**

# I PROMISE YOU A GOOD ENDING!

---

## WE'RE BEING SPOILED BY OUR COMFORTER!

Everyone loves to snuggle up to a good book with their favorite comforter. It is as if this blanket of warmth and security has a hidden purpose of helping us through the story line. This is none other than the Work of the Holy Spirit in our Story. I want to wrap this Rogue Story Book up by spending a little time to take a look at how we can see our story become a best seller and how that if we allow the Holy Spirit to do His work, It can radically change our perspective and our story.

**John 14:16**

**And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;**

Please note that when we reference God in the following pages that it is synonymous with the third person of the trinity, God, the Holy Spirit, The Ghost in our story along with His work!

## YOU'VE GOT THE GREEN LIGHT

First we must develop an understanding of how God answers. If I was paid every time someone asked me what God's will was for this or that, I would

be rich enough to never work again. What is the will of God? What is God saying about this? I don't know what God wants me to do... These are questions and concerns that seem to roll around the minds of countless Christians. When pressed on the issue, here are some of the simple realities that always come to mind.

The will of God is first relational. At the core of these popular questions is a relational issue. Guidance is the by-product of abiding in a right relationship with God. As we abide, we become sensitive to His heart. Abiding requires a simple turning and yielding of our hearts throughout the day—remaining joyful and thankful, and seeing all of life through the eyes of God's goodness. Staying, being still, remaining, consciously indwelling and being a partaker of Christ within—these are the realities of abiding. We must bask in His love, living every day under His smile. We must live as much-loved children, learning to become more confident and mature sons and daughters.

God always wants us to move forward so you don't have to remain stuck in any part of your story. Everything in Christ is “yes and amen” (2 Corinthians 1:20). Therefore, the Lord does not have to speak all the time about everything. For example, the Father takes responsibility for the light turning amber, which means wait; or red, meaning stop. Green is the obvious Yes! Yes, no, and wait are the main directives but according to this passage, Yes is always the priority with us.

I'll say it again. We always have a green light — everything is yes!

When I look at it from this angle, I realize that I may never have to ask for a word of guidance again. You see, as long as our priority is relationship, God is a master at letting us know what His will is.

We need to be aware of the times when He takes away our peace or allows us to be confused or uncertain. Perhaps we are sensing that this is not the right time to proceed. Maybe God wants something for us eventually, but not

immediately. Maybe we need to be further prepared But there is a very staunch difference between a time of waiting and preparation versus being stuck in your story!

God absolutely loves us, and has ways of communicating these things to us. He will never let us walk in darkness. When we give ourselves to a full relationship with Him, His will becomes crystal clear. In fact it becomes the outflow of our lives and is the result of the largeness of His love for us. This is what I call “Living our Story”.

## SEEING TRANSFORMATION IN OUR STORY

When we understand how God interacts with us, our lives are transformed. We are able to see what God is doing in us, and what He is doing through us. And we no longer confuse the two. We’re able to spend time in His presence receiving revelation, guidance and love. But this is not usually an immediate experience. Waiting on God takes patience, because there is a perfect time for everything. “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven,” as Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us. We have to resist the urge to doubt God when things take longer to happen than we want or expect. “But nothing’s happening,” we say sometimes. Or, “Am I even in the right place?”

I’ve discovered the more impatient I am, the more God slows things down. He’s like a watched kettle — He never boils when we’re in a hurry. So it’s important we remember to live in Christ, not in our circumstances. He is our rest and peace. We cannot benefit from trying to apply peace to our life situations. Peace comes from the heart, not the head. Peace is relational, not circumstantial.

Rejoicing and true thanksgiving produce peace and rest. That's because giving thanks from the heart will always overpower anything negative. Rejoicing from the mind gives only a temporary relief, but rejoicing from the heart changes our lifestyle.

Thanksgiving is not casual; it's an experience of the Lord's joy that liberates us to rejoice. Joy is the abiding atmosphere of Heaven, and so it has the power change our internal atmosphere permanently.

Joy is not only who God is, it is what He brings and so rejoicing becomes our response to who God is! We can abide in joy, simply because that's what He does, He is, He brings!

As we wrap our brain around these things and more importantly God gets a grip on us, peace and rest become a lifestyle, they are lived out in our story, it spills out of these cracked pots (jars of clay) until the overflow gets everyone else.

If we want to see the story of God impact our story and be lived out in our story, we must do more than just infrequently visit the attributes of His nature; We must decide to live in Him. Abide in Him, and He will abide in you and me. ( John 15:1-11). Peace and rest are the consequence of abiding, and they are a part of our inheritance— HE is our inheritance. He is the Author and Finisher of our Faith!

God wants us to be constantly moving forward in our faith in him and the truth of His Gospel. We are called to walk a path of spiritual maturity, it's not always as clear as we would like it to be but we must grow up in our understanding of waiting on Him. He has made more provision for us than we can possibly imagine, as we read in 1 Corinthians 2:9, "No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But if we want to experience His gifts in our story, we have to live in Him. We have to enter the place He has set aside for us

in Christ. He gives us the Holy Spirit to learn how to abide. Grace is the teacher who shows us how to live in Christ, and the rest just follows!

## THE BEST STORIES HAVE ADVERSITY

We've all been in a situation where we had absolutely no idea what to do, or how to get out of our situation. Usually we find ourselves with a sudden hankering to take one or two steps back to where we were before the problem arose or leave the country. That rising panic and desperate wish to be somewhere else are key parts of what is known as the fight or flight reflex. If we're fortunate, we are rarely if ever placed in a situation where the fight or flight reflex requires literal fight or flight, but our little pea brain is trained to stimulate that response when there are unknowns or we become stressed and afraid. It goes without saying that just because there are no wild animals trying to eat us and just because we don't have rival tribes hurling their spears at us, so to speak. It doesn't mean we don't have problems but, so often in adversity we panic. We may get fussy or we may even wish we were somewhere else and then, whether it's an hour or a year later, we finally warm up to the idea of dealing with the matters. Often we focus on the problem, or we stew about that problem, trying to figure out how to alter the circumstances so that we come out on top, or how to ease as much pain or embarrassment as humanly possible. Every fiber of our being becomes devoted to sorting things out so that the problem goes away. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work at all. Most of the time, it's either somewhere in-between or we make an even bigger mess of things. That's just how good we are about it!

Whatever the outcome, at the very least we're always left down a peg or two from where we started, whether it's financially, emotionally, physically, relationally, or some horrible combination all these things leaving us absolutely, completely, and thoroughly exhausted. That's because it's hard

work, sorting our lives out. The worst thing is that difficult circumstances don't just go away. They replace themselves on a regular basis, because it doesn't matter how rich you are, how happy you are, how alienated and isolated you are from life and all its trials. Adversity is a beautiful part of life.

Here is what you need to know about your story and the perspective you may have that it is all jacked up. It's not our circumstances of our story that define us. It's not even how we deal with each individual problem. No, what defines us as people, what defines our story as the men and women of God that we want to be, is how we deal with adversity. And what defines us, as Christians in a relationship with a loving Father, is how we how we approach adversity in faith.

In any circumstance, in any story, the best possible route for us to follow is the one that leads us towards a deeper and more intimate relationship with God and the fullness of His Spirit. Everything that God does is relational. Everything.

On the Day of Pentecost, people were faced with a situation that had no precedent for them: the coming of the Holy Spirit in its fullness upon the apostles. The people observing this phenomenon were baffled, and more than a little scared, but the questions they asked were perfectly tuned to get the most out of their experience: "What does this mean?" and "What shall we do?" When we reach moments of adversity, our first response must be to step back and say ABBA, Father, Daddy. Reveal to me by your Spirit, "What does this mean?"

The issue's we are presented with are just that: issue's. But the significance of those issue's, within the context of how it affects our fellowship in the Kingdom, is something that will remain long after the issue itself has been settled in the world. Focusing on the trial we're facing doesn't change the nature of the trial itself, and very often it will bring in negativity and unhelpful

emotions that aren't in any way connected to the relationship in the Spirit that we should be pursuing.

The fact is, as Christians, we don't live in the world. We are not even of this world! Our hope is in heaven, and dealing with problems that arise in the world without involving the question of what God wants to do as He sets up His kingdom means that we are stepping back into a person and a history that we are no longer a part of. We're dead to that person, and frankly, we should leave grave robbing to Indiana Jones. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven!

If we are to develop a story that will be a best seller then first, I think that it's crucial to ask God how our relationship with Him must develop as a consequence of the trial that afflicts us at that moment. Faith works by love, and it works best and easiest in the context of an intimate relationship with our Author.

If we've asked God "what does this mean?", then we should be in anticipation and even already be excited because the answer is that God has plans for us and for our relationship with Him. Anticipation and excitement is precisely the opposite of the feeling that adversity normally engenders in people. Awesome! This means we're on the right track. As we think about how God will use this situation to bring about something wonderful in our relationship with Him, or how he will manifest His glory in us then our first natural reaction is to rejoice and give thanks. I hear a good story developing already!.

Now the second question—"what should we do?"—is the really the only possible question we can ask next.

It's literally asking, "what's next, Lord?"

When we can ask this kind of question, the Holy Spirit has already got us looking straight through our adversity with happy hearts and in anticipation

of moving forward in our story with a skip in our step. It's so far away from the floundering that we're used to incurring in our stories. Dorothy, your not in Kansas anymore! Hang on!

Here's what 's great about "What does this mean?" and "What should we do?"

Both of these questions are open questions. Closed questions require a single answer, usually a yes or a no. Open questions allow for the answer to go into some detail. They express a desire to know more, rather than to simply confirm information we already hold or a bias we already possess. By opening ourselves to the Holy Spirit in this way, we allow God to empower us as to the outcome of our circumstances and the plot of our story. Focusing on Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith and upon the plot that He has created for our story at the beginning of a situation or adversity fixes our hearts on the plans that He has for our story. That plan becomes real to us, more real than whatever problems or adversity has arisen in our lives. When God's outcome for us is more real than the adversity we face, not only do we fight from victory but we experience true joy in our story.

## WHAT THE AUTHOR SAYS ABOUT YOUR STORY

### **Jeremiah 29:11-13**

**11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.**

### **Psalms 50:15**

**And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.**

**Isaiah 58:6**

**Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?**

**John 8:36**

**If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**

**Romans 8:1**

**There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

**Galatians 5:16**

**This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**

# TELL ME A STORY!

---

## DISCOVER, LIVE, ENJOY, AND DO TELL!

Because this is an online publication in pdf format. We have the ability to continually update this publication. That being said, you can use this book as a means to determine how God is writing your story or we would even like for you to tell us your story! You can submit an excerpt or your story at <http://www.iriderogue.com/a-rogue-story.html>

We will review it for submission to this “Tell Me a Story” section. Simple!