



Life Groups in Central Telford Parish

Spring 2019 "Talking Jesus"

Week beginning 13th January 2019

Genesis 17 – A Story Rooted in History

- **Introduction**

The story of salvation doesn't begin at Calvary but in the Garden of Eden and the Old Testament is key to understanding the Story of Jesus and, ultimately, our own story of salvation.

- **Welcome**

Who have you know for the longest time in your life - and how did the relationship begin?

- **Worship**

Read Psalm 139:11-17, Romans 5:8 and 1 John 3:1-2. God loved you before you were a twinkle in your parents' eye. He knew about you and your life at the start of time. He knows about you now - at this very moment. What is your reaction to being told this and to know that you are part of the story of history? You are a precious child of God! Respond to his love for you.

- **Word**

It is often tempting to feel that we are on the outside, looking in at history as it develops around us. We are insignificant to the point of being nothing. And yet God loves us, individually, as a parent loves a child, with passion. Imagine God seeing you from space - his lens of attention zooming in on you, where you are right now. Now let that picture draw back until the earth, spinning in space, is all you see before you. That's the big story!

If you know the Harry Potter books, you will know that there are seven of them and each deals with a particular year in Harry's life at Hogwarts School. Each book is a separate story - and yet there is an overarching tale of Harry's battle with Voldemort - a bigger story. We call this a "metanarrative", the big story. The story of salvation and history is the metanarrative of the Bible and if you think about it, we haven't got to the end of it yet - Revelation is still to come! Your story, my story, the story of the Church in Telford and all the other stories are not separate stories, they are part of a bigger metanarrative. And you and I are vital characters in the big picture ...

- The story begins in Genesis with Creation and Adam and Eve are about the simple fact that people do wrong things
- The stories of Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are about people discovering the idea of a God who actually wants to relate to them and deal with those wrong things
- The stories of Samuel, David, Solomon and the Kings are stories about who is in control in society and that society does wrong things too
- The stories of the prophets are about God's promises to sort out the relationship.
- And then we get to Jesus.

- ❖ What is your favourite story in the Bible?
- ❖ What do you think it says about the overarching story of God's relationship with his Creation?
- ❖ What does it teach you?

Go around the group and talk about these stories!

Read Genesis 17:1-8

- ❖ How old is Abraham? Why is this relevant to the story? What does it say about his story so far?
- ❖ What is God's promise? What does it mean in real, practical terms?
- ❖ What's the problem with it?
- ❖ What's the deal? (see v1, v7 and v8)
- ❖ How does this fit in with what you know of the stories that follow of Isaac and Jacob?
- ❖ How does this fit in with the story of Joseph and Egypt and the Exodus?
- ❖ How does this fit in with Psalms?
- ❖ How does this fit with Jesus?

The point is that we cannot take an individual story and see it as isolated from the rest of the story. Why? Because God is consistent - he doesn't do one thing in one place and something different in another place. We learn from Abraham and it fits with what we know about Jesus - Abraham is mentioned 30 times in the Gospels!

• Works

The most often mis-quoted verse in the Bible is Roman 8:28 ***"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, and have been called according to his purpose."*** If we love God, ***nothing*** is every wasted – but only if we love God.

So here's a thought for you to discuss ... is there something in your story which you think was a waste of time? God sees it differently. He sees it as something that may have led to something else that was better, or something that taught you a profound lesson, or something which meant you recognised the truth of your sin and his love for you.

Over the coming weeks, we're going to be thinking about our story and the story of Jesus and how we can talk about them naturally to others.

- ❖ What excites or scares you about that thought?
- ❖ What do you think about your story being part of a bigger story?
- ❖ How have things worked for good in your life?

Talk about these things!

Spend some time in prayer for each other and ask God to speak into the silence with pictures, words or verses for each other, to encourage and challenge you as a group and as individuals, and us all as a Church for the year ahead.

• In The Coming Week ...

Pray that you will be open to what God is wanting for you ...

- ✓ Open ears ... to hear what he is saying to you.
- ✓ Open eyes ... to see what he is showing you.
- ✓ Open heart ... to receive what he wants to give to you.
- ✓ Open lives ... ready to respond and go as he leads you ... wherever it may take you.
- ✓ Keep in step with the Spirit!
- ✓ Ask God to talk to you about his - and your - story.