

Communion: God's Spirit Lives with Us

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[0 : 0 0] So, this morning we are looking at what comes next after Jesus changed the story.! And we're going to look at three things that God offers us in this new story.

It all comes into, now the story's changed, it doesn't go backwards. Because actually, when we are part of that new story, of that new turn in the story, things will never be the same again. So, we are offered three things.

The first of those things that Jesus offers us is a new life. I am going to do a short quiz in typical all-age service fashion.

This is, there are 10 questions in this quiz, and you can call out the answers. I'm not doing heads and tails this time. These are 10 people, some of them fictional, some of them historical, and some of them biblical. 10 people whose lives were completely changed, and they became somebody new. So, first off, he was just an ordinary teenager, until he was bitten by a radioactive spider.

Suddenly, he could climb walls and swing across the city. Who is he? He is Spider-Man. And before he became Spider-Man, he was Peter Parker. Although, he is still Peter Parker. Question two. He was a villain who tried to steal from the whole world. But after becoming a father, when he adopted three girls, he found his life was never the same again. Who is he? It is Gru. Well done. I left out a very key detail if he tried to steal the moon.

[1 : 5 7] That might have made it a bit easier. So, Gru is from Despicable Me, the film. Question three. She was a curious young girl who found a mysterious world hidden in her house owner's wardrobe.

After meeting a lion, she defeated a witch and became queen. Who is she? She is Lucy, and do we know her surname? Lucy Pevensy, from The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, or The Chronicles of Narnia.

She was a quiet, book-loving daughter of an inventor, until she became prisoner in an old castle. When she stayed good-natured, kind, and loving, she became the only person a beastly prince could love beside himself.

Who is she? It's Belle from Beauty and the Beast. He was the captain of slave ships and an investor in the slave trade.

He cried out for mercy one night when he thought his ship was going to sink in a storm, after which his life changed. He became an Anglican cleric, a slavery abolitionist, and a hymn writer.

[3 : 1 1] Who is he? It's not Isaac Watson. It's John Newton. She was a quiet seamstress and activist in Montgomery, Alabama.

After deciding to refuse to give up a seat, she was arrested. She became the mother of the civil rights movement. Who is she? It is Rosa Parks.

He was a staunch atheist who insisted the life, death, and resurrection of Christ was a myth. After years of wrestling with the idea of faith, a late-night conversation with Tolkien and Dyson prompted him to become a Christian, a theologian, and a writer of a series of seven books reflecting the truth of Jesus.

Who is he? C.S. Lewis. He was a tax collector who many people did not like. He stole from his own people, and he flouted the laws of God for years.

After Jesus visited him in his own house, he gave away everything he had stolen and lived a new life. It is Zacchaeus. She was a young girl in Nazareth who was engaged to get married and live a quiet life.

[4 : 29] After a visit from an angel, she became pregnant and gave birth to the most influential person in history. Who is she? Mary, mother of Jesus to be specific.

There are multiple Marys in the Bible. And last one. He was a murderer, an exile, a runaway, and a shepherd. But after seeing the impossible and meeting God when he stared into a fire, he returned to his home, spoke up for the freedom of slaves, and became a leader of his own people.

And that is Moses. Ten people whose lives were completely changed. We started off with fictional people, but even then, Lucy is a metaphor for meeting Aslan.

It's a metaphor for when we meet Jesus. But most, a lot of these people either were Christian or they encountered Jesus or God in some way, and their lives changed.

Some of them had good lives before that. Some of them had fairly easy, comfortable lives. Some of them had very, very difficult lives.

[5 : 47] And those difficult lives didn't necessarily become easier. Those comfortable lives didn't necessarily stay comfortable. But they didn't necessarily go bad either.

Their lives changed when they met God. Because that is what Jesus did. When Jesus changed the story, he offered all of us a brand new life.

So if you have a life with Jesus, it cannot be the same. Whether your life was difficult or easy, whether you struggled with temptation, or actually you did pretty well before you became a Christian, your life can never be the same after being in a relationship with Jesus.

There's one more person who I could have included in this list who I deliberately didn't.

And actually we have a video that will tell us his story. If we can have that, please. The story of Paul. Possibly one of the biggest transformations that we get to read about after meeting with Jesus.

[6 : 59] Because it's not just a new life. That Jesus offers us. The chance to do things differently. Actually when Jesus changed the story, we were offered the chance to be a completely different person.

Instead of just living for ourselves, we get the chance to live for God. Instead of saying, well yeah, I'm following the rules, I'm doing the right thing.

We get the chance to understand why we're supposed to be doing that in the first place. And instead of living for the sake of the rules, we're living for God.

So when Jesus changed the story, we were offered a new life. We were also offered a new spirit as well. And instead of it being our own spirit, we go right back to the video we had at the start of this service.

Pentecost. The first big thing that happened after Jesus left the earth. Receiving God's spirit.

[8 : 07] And that didn't just change things because it was a new way of looking at things, a new purpose. It changed things because God's spirit was now living inside people.

God, who created the world and started by walking in the world with people and stayed communicating with people, wanted to be part of his story, but wanted his people to be part of his story as well.

Got pushed further and further and further out of it. By the time Jesus came along, he wasn't the main character. But with the Holy Spirit, with God's spirit, he can be that main character again.

So after Jesus died and came back to life, he left and went to heaven and the Holy Spirit was offered.

God offered us a new life. He offered us a new spirit. Because God offered us a chance to be part of this new direction of the story.

[9 : 15] To live this story in communion with him. And there's one final thing that I want to add that God offers us at this point in the story.

Because when you live as a Christian, when you have the Holy Spirit, you live with God. But that doesn't mean it's just you and him.

God never says you have to do this on your own. Actually, God gives us people to share this new life and this new spirit with.

It is just after this, shortly after this time, that we get the new church. Starting with that early church where they did everything together.

They shared everything together. In this new life, those who had plenty sold what they had and gave to those who had need. But they spent time eating together.

[10 : 14] That's why we do things like breakfast church. The Bible tells us eating together is an amazing thing to do. They spent time praying together, singing together. They did their new life together.

God offers you a chance to be part of this new church. This new body of people.

And that's what we want to invite you to do today. God, even if you already accepted this new life that God offered years and years ago.

Or if maybe you accepted it a few months, a few weeks or a few days ago. There's still more that God can offer.

There's still more change that God can do with his spirit. But he wants you to do that together with us as a church. Not just us here today.

[11 : 12] But the churches down the road that way and that way and that way. And the churches all over the country, all over the world. We are one church that we get to share together.

If anyone has given your life to Christ, the old has gone. The new has come. You are a brand new creation.

Before Jesus. Before Jesus, God used people to make a difference in his story. After Jesus, he draws us right into his story.

Through his spirit, he gives us a new life. He gives us new spirit. And he makes us into a new church. Because that's the communion that God offers to us.

Life with God and with each other. The old has gone. And the new is here. Thank you.