

From the Ashes to All Things New

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

And that's the series that we're starting tonight. And over the next several weeks, Lord willing, we're going to look at men and women and nations and leaders and families in the Bible whose life did not go the way they thought it would.

Their plan did not come to pass. At some point in their journey, their plans or hopes or dreams turned to ashes. And yet in that moment, God met them there and he did a new work.

[1 : 59] He brought a new perspective. He brought beauty from those ashes. And this series is to encourage us because at some point in your life, some of you right now are in that kind of situation where you look around your life and it seems like there's a whole lot of ashes.

And others of you, if that's not what you're going through, be encouraged. You will. You will. Amen. At some point, you're going to go through either in a big way or a small way, life becoming ashes. And I want to encourage us from God's word that God meets us there and he is still in control. Tonight, what I'm going to do is show us the big picture.

This is not odd for me at the beginning of the series to really just kind of introduce a topic. So before we jump into individual stories, I'm going to kind of show you the entire story.

Okay, we're going to look at the entire story of scripture and how it relates to this theme of God bringing something beautiful from ashes. So tonight is really just an introduction that frames much of the other stories that we will look at, Lord willing, these next few weeks.

[3 : 17] So Genesis chapter three, if you're able to stand, please do so as we read God's word. And by the way, if you're a part of the youth Bible study, you can already be dismissed.

Genesis chapter three and verse one. We're going to skip around to a lot of different scriptures tonight, but we're going to start here. Verse one says, Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

And he said to the woman, did God actually say to you, you shall not eat of any tree of the garden?

And the woman said to the serpent, why are we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden?

But God said, you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden. Neither shall you touch it lest you die. But the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.

[4 : 26] And she also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked.

Pray with me. Lord, you know, my heart's desire tonight is to encourage your people from your word to encourage us in the gospel.

And I just, I pray that you would help me now. I teach your word faithfully. Help us understand the beautiful story of the gospel from Genesis to Revelation.

God, what you are doing in the world and what you're doing in our life. And so I ask you now, come talk to us. Give us perspective and hope.

In Jesus' name we pray. And God's people said, amen. You can be seated. It was the greatest fall in human history. It happened on April the 24th, 1967.

[5 : 33] That's when Vladimir Komrov, a Soviet cosmonaut, returned to Earth from a mission to outer space. He was an exceptional cosmonaut.

Even from a young boy, Vladimir had a passion for flight. Anything that had anything to do with aviation, he was all about it and all into it.

He said on one occasion, quote, Whoever has flown once, whoever has piloted an airplane once, will never want to part with either an aircraft or the sky, close quote.

He was obsessed with anything aviation. That's why by age 15, he joined the Soviet Air Force. By 1959, he graduated from the Air Force Engineering Academy and was well on his way to becoming a cosmonaut.

On the 50th anniversary of the Communist Revolution, the Soviet Union decided that they would plan something special, a space journey. And Vladimir was just the man for the job.

[6 : 44] And on April the 13th, 1967, Vladimir took off on his space journey. But if any of you remember this story, you know the mission did not go as planned.

After orbiting the Earth 16 times over 24 hours, two of his solar panels that supplied energy for the spacecraft started failing.

The mission was canceled and he was ordered to return. But his re-entry to Earth would prove fatal. Despite his skill, he had difficulty handling the spacecraft and apparently had trouble firing the rocket brakes. It took two more trips around the world before he was finally able to re-enter.

But tragically, when he reached the altitude of 23,000 feet, his parachute failed to open. And on April the 24th, 1967, get this, Vladimir fell all the way back to Earth.

[8 : 01] By the time he hit the ground, there was very little that remained. Of his body. There's actually a famous picture, and I'll admit it is somewhat unsettling, but it's of Soviet officials standing over the charred remains.

That was all that was left of him. And he would forever be known as the man who fell from space. Faith family, have any of you in your life ever experienced a fall? I doubt that anybody's experienced one quite like that.

No one here has fallen from outer space, I assume. But let's be honest tonight. Most of us know what it's like in one way or another to fall. Amen? That feeling of failure, of not living up to expectations, of falling short of a goal, of letting other people down, letting yourself down, letting so you feel God down.

Maybe some of you here tonight, you have fallen in your marriage. There may be some of you here tonight, or watching online, you have fallen in your business attempts.

[9 : 14] There are some of you that have fallen because of some kind of addiction in your life. You maybe have fallen in some type of leadership capacity, and you didn't lead others the way they thought you would lead them.

Or maybe you have fallen as a parent, and you struggle with knowing whether or not you are doing a good job at all. All of us, either in big ways or in small ways, know what it's like to experience the fall.

And not only do we know what it's like to fall, we know how, like Vladimir, how sometimes with a fall, things are left in ashes.

It may be your finances, it may be your relationships, it may be your surroundings, but you look at life after the fall, and all you see are ashes.

The great theologian, he's one of my favorites, his name is Chris Stapleton. He's a great theologian, amen? Anybody amen? You should amen that. If you don't know who Chris Stapleton is, we shouldn't let you here in church, but we will, alright?

[10 : 27] Grace abounds. Chris Stapleton writes in one of his songs, Falling feels like flying till you hit the ground. Falling feels like flying till you hit the ground.

And I know that there are many of us in this place tonight that know what that's like. We have experienced a fall, and the ashes that come with it.

This is where we're going the next several weeks, Faith Family, as we look at life when it turns to ashes. And what I want to show you tonight, is it okay if I get a little bit excited?

What I want to show you tonight, as I get just a little bit excited here, is the good news of the gospel. I really just have one big, main, central idea tonight, and you would think that would mean a short sermon.

Not so much. I have one big, central idea that is going to kind of catapult this series over the next few weeks, and here it is. Notice it on the screen. Jesus can resurrect your story from the ashes because Jesus has resurrected the entire human story from the ashes.

[11:37] Let me read that again. Jesus can resurrect your story from the ashes. Why? Because Jesus has resurrected the entire human story from the ashes.

That's what I'm going to show you here over the next three hours. Hush. Go back here to the very beginning in Genesis chapter 1. Genesis chapter 1 and verse 26.

It says, Then God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. And he blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the heaven, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

And God said, Behold, I've given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, every tree with seed and its fruit. You shall have them for food.

[12:49] And to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the heavens, to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food, and it was so.

And God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

I want to take us back to a place of human flourishing. That in the beginning, human beings were created to flourish. That Adam and Eve were put in a context of flourishing.

Now, I realize that when I say Adam and Eve, there's a lot of people that immediately start thinking some kind of a cartoon. Talking snakes, and bad apples, and appropriately placed leaves, and things like that.

It's almost kind of cartoonish, like fairy tale. But I want to tell you that this is the beginning of the human story. Now, what I don't have time tonight to do is to go through the New Testament text that speak of Adam as a real person.

[14:01] A literal Adam. I say that because you realize over the last several years, in many theological circles, many have tried to say that there was no literal Adam, or no literal Eve.

You're aware of this, right? What shocks me is how many Christians are actually okay with that. We sit back and say, well, yeah, we don't really have to have a literal Adam and Eve.

Well, according to the New Testament, you do. And I'm going to show you why tonight, but let it be clear that both Jesus and the New Testament authors affirm the existence of a real Adam.

Now, that's all I'm going to say about that. Anybody want to amen? Amen. All right. What I want to say is that this real story happened and was created with a time of flourishing.

That God created everything and said, it is very good. Life was to be enjoyed. Let me just walk you through this. First of all, humanity in the beginning was in right relationship with God.

[15:05] Adam and Eve were created in God's image. They were dwelling in God's presence. Eden was a temple setting. God dwelling with his people, his people dwelling with God.

And so that temple language, you see that mankind is in right relationship with our God. In fact, in Genesis three, it says that God walks in the garden in the coolness of the day.

It's a picture of relationship and intimacy. And, and this was what humanity was created to experience. Uh, where have you heard this language?

God with us. Does that sound familiar? God was with his people and his people were dwelling with him.

Not only was humanity in right relationship with God. Secondly, humanity was in right relationship to one another. Uh, human beings were in a, a oneness kind of relationship with one another.

[16:09] Uh, this will not be on the screen, but if you have your Bibles or, or, uh, uh, apps, uh, flip over to Genesis chapter two and look at verse 18. Uh, then the Lord God said, it's not good for the man should be alone.

I'll make a helper fit for him. Now out of the ground, the Lord God had formed every beast of the field, every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them.

Whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the livestock and the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam, there was not found a helper fit for him.

And so the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. And while he slept, took one of the ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

And then the man said, this is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife.

[17:16] And they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. That is a beautiful picture of union. Human beings are not only in right relationship with God, they're in right relationship with one another.

God makes male and female, and they are compatible. And they do or experience oneness and trust and love and union and joy and intimacy. For the record, God is the one who created two naked people, put them in a garden and said, multiply.

That is our God. All right. So he is pro-union and intimacy and joy. And there will be no pictures of that on the screen. All right. So we are in right relationship with God.

And we are in right relationship with one another. This is paradise. This is flourishing. Thirdly, humanity is in right relationship with creation.

Not just God, not just one another, but creation as well. Genesis 1 says that human beings were given dominion over creation. We just saw that in Genesis 2, as Adam has the authority to name the animals.

[18:31] In other words, here's what you don't see in the beginning. You don't see then what you often see now, which is creation at each other's necks.

Fighting, trying to destroy one another, trying to tear other people down. What you see in the world around you is a creation in chaos. Creation that is at the throat of others.

Why do you think so many people want peace? Why do you think Miss America answers her question every time with world peace?

Right? What do you want in the world? World peace. Why do we long for that? Because we were created for that. It was the very flourishing that humanity was intended to have with the created order.

God created us in a context where we would be one with God, and one with one another, and one with the creation.

[19:40] That is at peace, not at odds. Number four is humanity was in a right relationship with vocation. Adam and Eve were given a job to do, and they were able to do it with great fulfillment and satisfaction.

They can enjoy their work without frustration. There's sermons in every one of these statements, but in this last one, it's interesting that God gives Adam and Eve a job to do, and a part of what will come from that job is, because Adam is to work the ground, so he's going to cultivate the garden and expand it, and then what are they given the freedom to do?

Eat as much as you want. I can't believe I didn't get an amen on that one. Some of you didn't know the biblical basis of old country buffet.

There you go, right? It is all you can eat, baby. I mean, God is saying, listen, what else can I do for you when it comes to flourishing? I want you to be in relationship with me, and I want you to be in union with one another, and I've put you at peace with creation, and I've given you a job to do, and you're going to be fulfilled and satisfied, and you're going to be able to eat and enjoy all you want. This is human flourishing. This was the human story. Is everybody with me tonight? This was the human story.

[21:16] It was a beautiful rhythm. A beautiful rhythm. God and man and creation. In fact, if you want the Old Testament word that summarizes what all of that is, and some of you know this, some of you, my dear friends, have it tattooed on you, it is shalom.

Shalom. We often think a shalom is just peace, but it's so much deeper than that. Shalom was all of this. It was the fullness of human flourishing.

But, shalom, the beautiful design of God, soon turned to ashes.

What happens next? It's the text we read earlier. Now look at it, Genesis 3, verse 1. The serpent was more crafty than any of the beasts of the field that the Lord God had made.

And he said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree of the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You

shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

[22 : 34] But the serpent said to the woman, He didn't really say that. You're not really going to die. God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you'll be like God, knowing good and evil.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit and ate, and gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate, and the eyes of both were opened.

In other words, now they're starting to see a different reality, and they were naked, and they hid themselves.

The dance is now out of step. The beautiful rhythm has been broken, this picture of human flourishing, has turned to ashes with a great fall.

The moment humanity decide to live their own way, instead of God's way, this beautiful rhythm of creation was fractured. The picture torn. The band out of key.

[23 : 41] Pleasure is now mixed with pain. Relationships filled with strife. Work now frustrating. Life now ends in death. And this beautiful union with our loving God has been broken.

Life has turned to ashes. There's an old, old movie. Some of you probably have never even seen it. There's an old movie called Grand Canyon.

Grand Canyon. And in it, there's a scene where an attorney, his car breaks down, and he calls for a tow truck to come and help. And while he's waiting, he starts becoming harassed by some men on the street.

And when the tow truck driver arrives, just in time to kind of break things up before it gets too hostile, the tow truck driver turns to those men who were trying to cause mayhem, and says this. Listen to it. Quote, The world ain't supposed to work like this. Maybe you don't know that, but this ain't the way it's supposed to be.

[24 : 46] I'm supposed to be able to do my job without asking you if I can. And that man is supposed to be able to wait with his car without having you rip him off. Everything's supposed to be different than what it is here.

Close quote. Be honest with me, Faith Family. Do you ever feel like that? This is not how it's supposed to be. This is not how it's supposed to go.

I don't know if you feel that way, but I feel that way usually Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, right?

It's like every day there's usually some, that's not how kids are supposed to respond. That's not how I'm supposed to be. That's not how the world's supposed to work. That's not how we ought to react to one another.

We are constantly being reminded that life has come to ashes. That there has been a great fall. And it has changed everything in terms of God's design for how human beings are to flourish.

[25 : 58] Notice this on the screen. The reason we see so much fallenness in the world is because we live in a fallen world. And I know that's probably cliché a little bit, but it's true, is it not?

There's so, there's fallenness everywhere because we have entered into the ashes. We live in a world under a curse.

And it's not just the world, it's true of us. Look at what Paul says in Romans chapter 5 verse 12. Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, Adam, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sin.

That means, faith family, that we were not just born into a broken world, broken world, we were born broken in sin. The way we need to think about it is this.

Okay, I told you, this is the big picture. This is the overarching story of the Bible. Notice this on the screen. Humanity started in a garden. Right relationship with God.

[27 : 12] Right relationship with others. Right relationship with creation. Right relationship with vocation. But fell into a grave. If you eat of it, you shall surely die.

And that's what happened. And you say, well, what does that have to do with me? Well, don't you see, once the human race died, it gave birth to dead things. We are born dead.

Spiritually separated from God. It's why Paul says, all have sinned and fallen. All have sinned and fallen short.

The fall isn't just true for Adam. The fall is true for all of us. And there's a point in which we must come to accept the reality of the fallenness of our lives.

I came across just recently a manuscript from J.K. Rowling, who's, any of you are Harry Potter fans, probably not a lot of you, but some of you I know are.

[28 : 19] And she actually gave, I think it was like the commencement address at Harvard. And it was interesting. Part of her speech said this. Hang with me. Quote, a mere seven years after my graduation day, I had failed on an epic scale.

An exceptionally short-lived marriage had imploded. I was jobless, a lone parent, and as poor as it is possible to be in modern Britain, without being homeless.

The fears that my parents had, had for me, that I had for myself, had both come to pass. And every usual standard, I was the biggest failure I knew.

Now, I'm not going to stand here and tell you that failure is fun. That period of my life was a dark one. I had no idea then how far the tunnel extended. And for a short, for a long time, any light at the end of it was a hope rather than a reality.

So why do I talk about failure? Simply because failure meant a stripping away of the inessential. I stopped, listen to this, I stopped pretending to myself, that I was anything other than what I was.

[29 : 34] Hear that again. I stopped pretending to myself, that I was anything other than what I was. I was set free, because my greatest fear had been realized. Rock bottom, became the solid foundation, on which my life was rebuilt.

In other words, there's a point in which you have to come to realize, this is who I am. It's why every one of us here tonight, watching online, has had numerous falls in your life.

Because we are fallen. Aren't you encouraged? You said, I thought, I thought you were really, you know, in fact, rewind the tape. Let's listen.

He specifically said earlier in the message, that he was excited to bring us good news. He has failed. Thus far. No, I've brought you the real news.

The biblical news. That life, because of the fall, has turned to ashes, but is there hope for the fallen? Is there hope for life?

[30 : 46] And this is what we're going to see over the next few weeks, so come back and be with us. Is there hope for life when it has been turned to ashes? And that's the good news of the gospel.

I want to show you, I want to show you what the apostle Paul does in 1 Corinthians 15, and we'll be here for just a moment, and then we'll wrap it up. 1 Corinthians 15, Paul takes that Genesis story that I briefly summarized, and he makes a very specific connection.

Look at 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 20. 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 20. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in, talk to me, Adam, did Paul believe in a literal Adam? I thought so. For as in Adam all die, life was turned to ashes, so also in, talk to me, Christ shall all be made alive.

[32 : 03] In other words, Paul makes, this is the part I'm going to get excited, okay? I apologize in advance. Paul makes a specific connection, namely, that in Adam, life turned to ashes.

All died, but in Christ, are you listening? You can be made new. The human story that fell in Genesis 3 does not have to be your story.

There is a new Adam who has done a new work. God, in the person of Christ, entered into our ashes.

That'll preach. God, in the person of Jesus Christ, entered into our story. He entered into our ashes. He took on flesh. He lived the perfect life that Adam did not live.

And on a Friday afternoon, outside Jerusalem, He placed Himself under the curse that came in because of sin. And that's not all. Three days later, Jesus was raised from the dead.

[33 : 13] And what the Apostle Paul is saying is, that changes the whole human story. The human story was that of ashes, but now God has come into the ashes, and because He has been resurrected from the dead, it changes it all.

In fact, notice this on the screen. Am I excited enough for you? Humanity, humanity, humanity started in the garden, right relationship with God, one another, creation, vocation, and then fell into a grave, death, ashes, separation.

creation. Jesus overcame the grave to take us back to the garden. That's what Paul is saying.

In other words, the real Adam brings in the ultimate story of human flourishing. And so, if you want your life to go from ashes to all things new, the only way that will ever happen is the one who walked out of the grave.

Who overturned the curse that made life ashes in the first place. Don't you see?

[34 : 30] I felt we have to start here before we start looking at these individual stories. What I'm trying to show you is that the whole story of the Bible is that life turned to ashes.

But God, the only way to get it back to the garden, back to a place of flourishing, back to the newness of life, is for God to come into our ashes and take our sin upon Himself and walk out of the grave.

And Paul then is then giving you, there's these two humanities. There's the Adam humanity. And if you're in Adam, you're still in ashes.

But if you're in Jesus, any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is passing away. Behold, all things are new.

Your story is being resurrected. I don't care how many times you've fallen. Now, let me give you four quick results of the resurrection that Paul points out here of how Jesus reverses the story of humanity and He reverses our story.

[35 : 46] I'll give these to you quickly for the sake of time. Number one is that Jesus reverses our identity. In the resurrection, Jesus reverses our identity as human beings.

Verse 17 says, And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. You see, in other words, in Adam, we are condemned before God. We are still in our sins. But if we're in Jesus, we have been forgiven.

For there is, listen, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The mess you've made of your life, all the condemnation you've brought on yourself because of your sin, it is washed as white as snow.

[36 : 45] If you're in Adam, you're still in your sins. But if you're in Jesus, you have a brand new identity. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God.

Talk about turning your story around. Number two, He reverses our eternity. He reverses our eternity. Verse 18 says, Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

In other words, Paul is saying that if you are in Adam, guess what? The grave is it. Right? I'm not talking about that there's no eternal separation from God.

I'm just saying your life ends in death. Death and separation from God is all you will ever know forever. But if you are in Jesus, guess what?

There is nothing that can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, not even death. Yesterday, what was it today? Saturday? Thursday, I got to, the honor of doing the funeral for one of our faith family members, Rick Morgan, and his wife Cindy.

[37 : 58] They watch online because of health concerns. And Rick went to be with the Lord back in December and got to do his funeral on Thursday. And do you know the joy it is to be able to stand up and say, this is not the end.

Death has no victory here. Listen, sin brought life and humanity to ashes, to a place of death and sin and separation from God.

But Paul is saying that in Jesus we have eternal life. And cancer, car accidents, murders, tornadoes, brain tumors will not have the last word because Jesus already has the final word. number three is the resurrection and what Jesus has done, the new and greater Adam. He reverses our mentality. He reverses our mentality. Verse 19 says, if in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

In other words, it's a great argument. If you're, you're putting all your hope in a world that's turned to ashes, ashes, my money, my money that gives me all, really?

[39 : 28] That's going to turn to ashes. Right? Well, my fame and popularity, like, I got to hold on to that. That's going to turn to ashes. Why?

If, if your hope is in this world, you are to be pitied, the Apostle Paul says. But if you have put your faith in Jesus and if you belong to this true Adam, you have a totally different perspective about this life because of eternal life.

You are able to have bills but not be overly worried about them to have a medical report come back bad and not be in total despair.

Why? Because, listen, while those things are important to you and while you do care, your hope is not ultimately in your money and your hope is not ultimately in your health.

Your hope walked out of a grave 2,000 years ago. And that begins to change your mentality on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday when you face the ashes.

[40 : 43] Lastly, is Jesus through the resurrection reverses our security. Verse 22, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, for in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

In Adam, the only security you have is hoping you can reverse this on your own. Amen.

I hope you can do enough. I hope you're good enough. I hope that you somehow in your own ability can turn your ashes into resurrection.

Or, you can give up trying to do it yourself and realize that Jesus and only Jesus is enough.

In Adam all die, but in Jesus we shall all be made alive. My security is not in what I can do.

[41 : 52] My security is in what Christ has done for me. Amen? So, this is the start of this new series from the ashes.

And we've seen the big picture. The Genesis to Revelation gospel story is this. We were created for human flourishing, but it all turned to ashes.

And the only hope we have is Jesus Christ. Faith family, Vladimir may be known as the man who fell from space.

but he is not the man who experienced the greatest fall. You see, in the beginning humanity didn't fall from space, humanity fell from grace.

And we have been falling in big ways and small ways ever since. But the good news of the gospel and the good news for your life is that God entered into the ashes in the person of Jesus Christ.

[43 : 02] And he offers you a new way, a way of resurrection. And if you will trust him with your life, he can take your ashes and make all things new.

Let's pray. God, thank you for this time tonight to study your word and I pray that it is a hopeful word, an encouraging word, because I know, I know that there are people in this place that just every week we're constantly facing the fallenness of the world, the brokenness, the ashes, not only in our own life, but all around us.

And we have to be reminded that there's a much bigger story going on here than our life. Oh, a much, much bigger story. The story of humanity and how it has fallen and yet in Christ, you are taking us from the grave back to the garden, back to right relationship with you, with one another, and the world around us.

And you will one day make it all new. And that starts by putting our faith in Jesus and having you turn our story around.

Would you do that, God? If there is somebody here tonight that has never trusted you, they've never surrendered to you, I pray that tonight would be that night that they would come before you and believe.

[44 : 34] Others in this room that have lost hope, others in this room that are in despair, others in this room that do not know where to turn, give them the hope of the gospel, the hope of an empty tomb.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.