

Jesus is the Serpent Crusher

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- [0 : 0 0] And props here, we'll be playing with in a minute. Now we have a lot of Australians at this church. As you may have noticed, Karenza's an Australian, and the lady who read is also from Australia.
- And we had a funny accent last week when Aaron came, and he's from New Zealand, which is a very small, unimportant island from what I understand. And I'm wondering if you guys know where my accent's from.
- Where's my accent from? Where am I from? Canada. No? No? What do you guys think? Who thinks Canada?
- Who thinks I'm a Canadian? Not very confident, are we? Well, I can't really blame you. I'm actually from Vancouver. And it seems we don't have many accents from Vancouver here, so I'm glad to be here.
- It is a pleasure. So this week, we're going to continue in this idea of how Christ fulfills everything in the Bible. And this week, we look at the saddest story ever.
- [1 : 0 0] And we look at how Christ fulfills that story, and God turns what is the saddest story ever into what will become the greatest story ever. So that's what we're going to look at today.
- So last week, remember Aaron was up here, remember the funny accent, and Aaron got us all to remember one thing. Do you remember what Aaron really was trying to work for?
- It was one word. It started with a B. And he got a family up here, and they talked about what it meant to be blank to each other. And then he got his wife up, and he kind of made a fool of her, but he got her to say that he...
- Yeah, what is it? Belong! Way to go! Excellent. I lead a Bible study, and when someone does something well, I give them a gold star like this. So you can get a gold star. Absolutely.
- Belong. So last week, we looked at creation. We looked at how we all belong to Jesus. God created us through Jesus, for Jesus, by Jesus, to belong to him.
- [2 : 0 0] And if anyone knows, that is on page one of your Bible. Okay? Page one. Here it is. Does anyone know where we're going today? Yeah?
- That's great. That's not a page number, though. Does anyone have any idea? Yeah. Page two. That's right. So we are created to belong to God.
- It's this wonderful scene. And then just a chapter and a half later, humanity, Adam and Eve, decide we don't want to belong to God anymore. We don't want to serve Jesus anymore.
- We want to live as if we're in charge. We want to live as if God doesn't exist. And that is the saddest story ever. That humanity decided we don't want God to exist.
- And every single sadness comes from that. And that's why it's the saddest story ever. So every sickness, every disease, every war, every tyrant, every sad time, every time we cry, it all originally comes from the fact that we decided we don't want to belong to God.

[3 : 12] Isn't that tragic? All right. So God comes in Genesis 3, as Bev read, and God comes in the cool of the day. It's like he comes at night, because that's the best time to play with your friends, right at night, right before bed.

So God comes at the cool of the day in the garden. And Adam and Eve have just decided we don't want God to exist. We don't want to belong to him. And God says, Adam, Eve, where are you? Let's get together.

Let's enjoy each other. And they hide, because they don't want to see God. And God says, where are you? Why are you hiding? What have you done? And slowly, they kind of confess what they've done.

We've acted as though we don't want you to exist. We don't want to belong to you anymore. And God's devastated. He's very upset, because we have decided that we don't want him in our lives.

And what God does from that exact moment is he makes this lowest point in human history, the lowest point in the whole Bible, the lowest point on the whole earth. He starts creating what will be the greatest moment.

[4 : 13] God, in verse 15 of Genesis 3, starts planning what will be the most wonderful story ever. And he invites all of us to be members of that story. So God, in Genesis 3, verse 15, he turns to Satan, Satan who's made Adam and Eve turn away from God.

And he says, Satan, because you have done this, I will put enmity, I will make hostility between you and between the woman, between your offspring and her offspring.

And then he says, he will crush your head and you will bruise his heel. And what God's talking about is Jesus. He's talking about how Jesus is going to come to earth and he's going to destroy Satan.

He's going to destroy sadness and sickness and death and sin. And instead, he is going to bring us back to God because as soon as we say, I don't want to belong to God, we separate ourselves from him and there's nothing we can do about it.

And it takes Jesus to come back to do what's called to reconcile us. We'll look at that in a minute. So to show you what I mean, I'm going to give a little bit of a demonstration. It's a little bit silly, but it's a demonstration nonetheless.

[5 : 20] So I have under here, it's not a magic trick and it's not an animal. If you're excited about what's under here, I suggest you stop getting excited right now because it is a water jug.

It is a jug of water. And for my purposes, this is going to represent God. I don't know if God has ever been represented as a water jug, but sure enough, here we are. And under here, what we have is when God first created us, he created us in his image.

So humanity was created in the image of God, okay? Silly, I know, but please bear with me. Your parents love to laugh. And so what God did is he poured himself into us, just like this.

He poured himself into us so that we belonged to him. Isn't that cool? But then in Genesis 3, we said to God, we don't want to belong to you anymore. We don't want to be like you.

We don't even want to be in your image. We want to live for ourselves. And so you know what happened to this beautiful creation God made? We ruined it. It's this disgusting brown filth.

[6 : 27] And there's nothing we can do about it. We can't turn this back into water again. We can't take our sin and throw it away or hide it. It's there, and it's there forever. So that's the saddest story ever.

And my question is, is that where the story ends? Is that the end of the story? No. I don't think we'd be here if that was the end of the story. That's a pretty sad story. Let's see how it becomes the greatest story ever, okay?

So God told Satan in verse 15, like we said, that Satan's going to be defeated. And he does that through sending Jesus. And let's go to Colossians to see how he does that.

So remember our memory verse up here? The long one that was difficult? I remember it too. Our memory verse told us that God will reconcile all things to himself through Jesus.

So if God's word was belong, this week's word is reconcile. And reconcile means, and this is very important, reconcile means to fix what is broken or to make wrong what is right.

[7 : 34] So when we are reconciled to God, it means that God reconciles, fixes what is broken, our sin. And when he does that, he brings us back into relationship with himself through Jesus.

But how does God do this? He can't just take the sin and throw it away. It has to go somewhere. There has to be something done with it. And what we are told is that God makes peace with us by the blood of his cross.

That was the end of our memory verse. God makes peace with us by the blood of his cross. We're friends with Jesus again. We're friends with God again. The story doesn't have to end badly because Jesus takes the sin upon himself.

So quite literally, and I haven't practiced this, so I don't know how it will go, Jesus Christ comes into earth and he takes the sin of humanity and he puts it on himself. It's a good thing it rained this morning.

And then God recreates us as a new creation through Jesus. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that the greatest story ever? And so what we do is we recognize our sin, we recognize we're separated from God, and then we accept that Jesus has come, he has taken our sin, and he has made us a new creation with himself, like Colossians 1 tells us.

[8 : 55] Isn't that great? Boys and girls, you can sit down if you like, and perhaps parents, you can sit down with them. And what we're going to do now is, so yeah, go ahead, sit down. And what we're going to do now is I want to put some flesh and bones on this idea of the saddest story becoming the greatest story.

So I'm going to call up a good friend of mine. Maybe you recognize her. She does have a funny accent, so if you're not used to the Vancouver accent, I'll give you an Aussie one back. Her name is Carenza. She is our memory verse queen.

And I'm going to ask Carenza a few questions about what it means in her life to be living, founded on the saddest story ever, and now living in the new light of the greatest story ever told.

So Carenza, first of all, let's go basic stuff. Who are you, and why are you here? Good question. I am Australian. Surprise, surprise.

I'm also an TIDZO intern, here at St. John's, and I moved to Canada to serve God here. Wonderful. Now, I was thinking of asking you to give us the memory verse, but I realized that might result in a big bruise on my arm, so I'm not going to ask you that, and I'm going to assume you've memorized it.

[10 : 09] And instead, I'm going to ask you, can you tell us a little bit more about yourself before you belonged to God? So can you tell us about yourself before you were a Christian? I think the best word, if I think about it, the best word to describe myself before I was a Christian would be nice.

People would say I was a nice person. I think I thought I was a pretty good person, but I didn't, God didn't play a part in my life at all. In fact, I ignored him.

I didn't think about him very much ever, actually. Yeah, and I ignored him. So that's pretty much, yeah. All right.

And can you tell us how you became reconciled to God? Yeah. When I was in grade 10, I had a best friend at school. Her name was Sally, and she was a Christian, and she used to go to this youth group, and on Monday, she'd come and tell me all this stuff she learned on Friday, and blah, blah, blah.

And it sounded really cool. And I'd never asked to go, but one time she invited me along, so I started going. And I heard a lot about this guy, Jesus, who I'm sure I had heard about before, but it never really struck a chord previous to that.

[11 : 23] And we were learning about all these amazing things that he did, and the big thing that I learned was that Jesus came to earth to die on a cross because God loved me and wanted to have a relationship with me.

And it was then that I figured out that I couldn't ignore God any longer, that I actually needed to follow him with my life. And it was a gradual process for me. I don't actually remember the first time that I accepted Jesus or asked for forgiveness, but it was somewhere within the six months from the first time I started going to youth group in grade 10.

Wonderful. And my final question is, what is it like now to be a child of God knowing that your sins are forgiven? It's great. It really is.

It's not easy. It doesn't mean because you're a Christian that you're going to have an easy life. In fact, it probably means you're probably going to have a harder life. But in everything, I have hope.

I have the hope because I've been forgiven by God that I can spend all eternity with God in heaven. And that is a great thing. I look forward to that immensely.

[12 : 34] But it's also in day-to-day things that I know that God is in control of everything and that includes my life and that makes me a lot less worried that it's out of my hands.

Yeah. So it's pretty great, I have to say. But I wanted to read this verse. I think it sums up everything I'm saying. So it says, it's from Colossians.

I thought it was a good place to be. And it's Colossians 1, 21 and 22. And it says, and you, who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he is now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

And that's what I can be because of God. I can look forward to being in heaven and being pure in front of him. And it's really exciting. So yeah. Wonderful. Wonderful. Do we want to thank Renza? Thank you.

Thank you. I'll pray for us and then we'll sing. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that you have reconciled us to yourself.

[13 : 40] We thank you that Christ has taken our sins and he has now made peace with us by the blood of his cross. And Spirit, we pray now that we might live lives that reflect that truth, that we would no longer be founded upon the saddest story ever but instead lead the new life grounded upon Christ and his gospel and that our sins are gone forever.

We pray all this in your name. Amen. Let us pray. Father, you are the one who rescued us out of the saddest story and insert us into the greatest story.

We thank you and we praise you and we ask that these gifts might be useful as you call more and more people out of the saddest story and into the greatest story of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen. Shall we pray? Our creator God, we turn to you now in prayer.

You are a great creator. You created our eyes and you see. You created our ears and you hear.

[15 : 04] So see us now and hear us now in your grace. For we pray to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Lord, in your mercy. In your mercy.

Lord, in your mercy. We pray today for peace in our troubled world. For peace in Afghanistan, remembering our soldiers there. May peace come to that place.

We pray for refugees. We pray for prisoners. We pray for the poor, for the homeless. We pray for all who are in desperation and despair.

Lord of the nations, in your mercy. Amen. Amen. We pray today for the church. We pray for God's people throughout the world.

We would pray for missionaries, for evangelists. Especially we pray for those persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. We would pray today for bishops and clergy and all who lead us in the body of Christ.

[16 : 15] We would remember and pray for the Archbishop of Canterbury. We pray for Archbishop Venables, for Archbishop Duncan. We pray for our bishops, Don Harvey, Ron Ferris, and Mike, Malcolm Harding.

We pray for our pastors, David and Dan and Jim and Eric. Lord, we pray for this sacred mystery, your church, your body filled with your spirit.

And we would pray that it would witness always to your holy love, speaking the truth of the gospel in love. the truth that Jesus is Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. And we would pray today, of course, for the suffering. By name today, we have been asked to pray for Rowena and for Harold.

We pray for Ron and for George. And we pray today for Don. and in a moment of silence, we lift before you, Lord, all we have on our hearts today who we stand in need of our prayers.

[17 : 52] Lord, you have known every pain being near these that suffer and grant them patience and a knowledge of your love.

We thank you, Lord. We thank you for hearing our prayer. May we always pray and rejoice and wait and glory always in your answering love.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. firstnh in your fountain