

Fly Through the Bible

1. Introduction

Keswick 2024

A single conversation can change your life.

- That happened to me at a conference many years ago.

Over lunch, I sat next to someone I had never met before, and never met again.

- He was a pioneer missionary and he told me the story of how he had made contact with an unreached tribal group in Northern Thailand.
- How the tribal chief had invited him to make his home there
- How he build his own home, and then learned the tribal language, and began to serve these people.

It was jaw dropping stuff.

At one point in the conversation, I asked him,

- ‘Where do you begin in explaining the gospel
- to people who don’t even know who God is?
- and He said, “We tell them the Bible story.”

I’m convinced that we need to learn from the approach of pioneer missionaries in our evangelism and discipleship today.

We’re going to we’re going take a high altitude flight over the entire Bible story.

- We’ll do it in four sessions.
- One on the Old Testament, one on the Gospels, one on the NT letters

But I want to begin today, by explaining

- why you should consider using the Bible story
- in evangelism and in discipleship and
- how you or your church might go about it.

Three questions

1. Why the Bible?
2. Why the Bible Story?
3. Why you?

1. Why the Bible

Oner thing that draws us together at Keswick is the strong conviction we share about the Bible.

We believe that

- The Bible is the Word of God, and that
- The Bible does the work of God, -
- and especially that it does the work of evangelism and discipleship

The twin convictions that the Bible is the Word of God and that the Bible does the work of God are beautifully expressed in Psalm 19:7-8

There are four pairs of statements

- In each pair, the first tells us what the Bible is
- And the second tells us what the Bible does.

*The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;*
(Psalm 19:7-8)

The Bible is the Word of God, and the Bible does the work of God.

- I have had many conversations with folks who are convinced of the first but they are not so sure about the second.
- Some think of the Bible primarily in terms of information. The Bible tells you what you need to know
- Others think of the Bible primarily in terms of inspiration, giving you a thought for the day

But the Bible is more than information, and it brings more than inspiration.

- The Word of God is living seed.
- It brings new life and
- it sustains the new life that it brings.

Evangelism: The Word of God brings new life.

*you have been born again,
not of perishable seed but of imperishable,
through the living and abiding word of God*
(1 Peter 1:22-23).

Peter is using the analogy of how a new life is conceived.

- The living seed comes and in a moment, a new life is conceived.
- The seed does not always bring new life
- But there is no new life without the seed.
- You are born again by the living seed of the Word of God.

The woman man not even be aware of it at the time.

- A few days or weeks later she feels different
- ‘I wonder if I could be pregnant?’

This is surely the point of the parable of the sower

- The seed is the Word of God.
- If we want to see a great harvest
- We must sow this seed that brings new life

Paul says that the Scriptures that are
*able to **make you** wise for salvation
through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 3:15)*

Make you: There's a change, a transformation here:

The Scripture can do all that is needed to bring a person to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Conviction of sin
- Eyes opened to the glory of Christ
- The heart renewed,
- Faith and repentance being formed

God's Word will accomplish the purpose for which He sends it.

Discipleship: The Word of God sustains the new life that it brings

The Word of God is the living seed that **brings** new life

- It is also the food that sustains and **sustains** new life.

The Bible is like bread and milk and meat, and honey .

*Man shall not live by bread alone
but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)*

*Like newborn babies, desire pure spiritual milk that by it you may
grow up into salvation (1Peter 2:2)*

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching,
for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that
the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
(2 Tim 3:16-17).*

The man or woman of God... *equipped for every good work.*

That sounds like a pretty good definition of discipleship to me.

- *The man or woman of God equipped for every good work!*
- What gets a person there?
- The Word of God

The Bible is the Word of God, and the Bible does the work of God.

- It is the sword of the Spirit.
- The means by which the Spirit of God
- brings new life and sustains new life.

2. Why the Bible Story

The Bible story gives us the building blocks we need to discover

- who God is and who we are
- who Jesus is, and all that can be ours in Him.

Step by step, the Old Testament builds a world view that

- opens our eyes to who Jesus is, why we need Him and
- what He came into the world to accomplish.

Suppose you have tickets for a two-act play.

- You are caught in an accident on the road to the theater
- so you miss the whole of act one.

It's all very frustrating, but at least you've arrived in time to see the second half.

The curtain rises on act two, and the scene is set in a stable.

- A manger and a newborn child are center stage, with animals nearby.

As the scene unfolds, you learn that this is not an ordinary child.

- He is born of a virgin, and an angel announces that
- He is the Son of God and that
- He will save His people.

In the row front of you, a woman nudges her husband.

- "He be the One" she says.
- You wait and see: He'll solve the problem."

But you have just arrived, and you don't know what the problem is.

- And when you hear that He is the Son of God, you don't know who God is.
- When you hear that He will save His people, you don't know what they need saving from.

You don't know the problem and you don't know the promise,

- so all you see is a baby lying in a manger, surrounded by a few animals.
- Having missed act one, you struggle to grasp what this story is about.

This describes the situation many people find themselves in today.

- They may hear about the story of Jesus, but they do not understand it, because they don't know the big story of the Bible.

Many think that God is some kind of impersonal force located within us.

- If that's who God is, then getting in touch with God is essentially a matter of getting in touch with yourself.
- And if God is an impersonal force within us, then sin is about hurting ourselves, and if sin is hurting ourselves then the solution is that we need forgive ourselves.
- So the message of salvation became if we can learn to be in touch with ourselves and forgive ourselves, then we will enjoy spiritual health.

If people don't know who God is,

- If they don't know what the human problem is.
- If they don't know what God's promise is
- The coming of Jesus may seem nothing more than a sentimental story: A wonderland of children, angels, babies, and animals in cattle stalls and snow and Father Christmas. It will all be a blur.

Why would I need Jesus?

- Why would it matter to me who He was?
- What could He do for me that we could not do for myself?

In the 19th century and through much of the 20th century, evangelists in Britain and America had the advantage of being able to assume a Christian world view,

- The vast majority of people had a moral framework that was built around the 10 commandments, and if people were living in flagrant sin, they knew that they were rebelling against God.
- Even if people did not believe in God, it was the God of the Bible they had chosen not to believe in.
- People knew at least something of who God is, and what sin is, so they had a framework in which they could see who Christ is, why we need Him and what He came into the world to accomplish.

We are living in a very different world today:

- We are in the world of Judges 2:10
- *A generation arose who did not know the Lord*
- *or what He had done for Israel*

Progressive revelation

God introduces us to His Son through an unfolding story in which God reveals to us

- who He is, who we are,
- what is wrong with us and our world, what it will take to put it right, and
- why hope is found in Jesus Christ and in Him alone.

Step by step, the Old Testament builds a world view.

- It puts in place the understanding we need to grasp
- who Jesus Christ is, why we need Him
- and what He came into the world to accomplish.

Discussion Break

Take five minutes to discuss.

- What approaches have you used in evangelism and discipleship?
- What advantages and challenges do you see in using the Bible story

1. Why the Bible

2. Why the Bible Story

3. Why You?

The journey we're going to take through the Bible is not just for you so I'm asking you to ask this question:

Who is there in your life who needs to know the God of the Bible and might be willing to open the Bible with you if you asked them?

We're going to take a high altitude flight over the entire bible story.

- We'll meet 5 people in the Old Testament
- Look at five events in the life of Jesus from the gospels
- and five gifts God gives to every believer.

This is short, simple, and most of all **shareable**.

- It's a place for someone to **begin**.

I am convinced that the greatest opportunity we have in evangelism is for

- believers to open the Bible with a friend, a neighbor, a colleague or a family member.

This is easier to do that you may think.

- For some time now, we've been asking the congregation I serve this question:
- **Who is there in your life who needs to know the God of the Bible**

Most people can think of someone.

- And many of our people have found that someone in their life is open to this invitation:
- Would you be interested in opening the Bible with me?

People are doing this over a cup of coffee, during a break at lunch, over the phone or by zoom,

Any Christian can do this.

- **Any church can encourage this.**

John records at the beginning of his gospel that Philip, one of the disciples of Jesus had a friend by the name of Nathaniel.

- He said to Nathaniel, we have found the Messiah.

- Nathaniel didn't believe him,
- So Philip said "*Come and see*" (John 1:46).

Come and see!

That's what you are doing when you open the Bible.

- You are inviting a person to come and see.

Come and explore this strange world of the Bible

- with its priest and prophets and kings and sacrifices,
- and most of all with the glorious Savior
- who brings living hope to all who believe.

The Word of God does the work of God.

- If you can encourage someone to open the Bible with you
- you have good reason to hope God's Spirit will work in their hearts
- and that through what they once saw as a dusty old book, God has brought new life to them.

Questions?

Short. Simple. Shareable. Flexible. Relational.