

There is Another King: Jesus

Luke – Acts

Tell the Jesus Story!

Luke 24:13 – 53

Introduction: All of Us Live in a Story

This morning I want to ask you, ‘What story do you live in?’ All of us live in a story. We have a storyline running through our heads. And we play a major role in it. Let me give you some examples.

Do you live in the hero story? This is a story where someone who makes a difference in the world and makes a name for himself or herself. You start off with some kind of hidden talent. You face obstacles, adversity, mountains and valleys of hard work, only to overcome in the end. What matters is the quest, the challenge, and the victory. It is the story of Aragorn, the one who overcomes all odds to fulfill his destiny and become king. Or it is the story of Frodo or Harry Potter, the unlikely hero who is given a burden that no one else could carry, who fulfills his destiny and saves the world. Or is it the story of Anakin Skywalker, who falls but then redeems himself to set things right? It is the story of the superhero who beats the villain, the scientist who finds the cure in time, the criminal investigator who uncovers the truth and protects the innocent, the trial lawyer who persuades the jury and brings justice. Is that the story you live in?

Or do you live in the princess story? Is your story the story of someone who wants to be discovered, to be seen? You are a Cinderella, sweeping and scrubbing floors in the mansion of the stepmother and stepsisters who don’t appreciate you, don’t recognize your potential and your beauty. You are waiting for someone to see who you really are. And then, your life will be complete, not only because you’ll find the one and get married and live happily ever after, but because someone sees you and finds you worth it all. Is that the story you live in?

Or do you live in the immigrant story? That’s the story of a rags-to-riches family that goes through lots of silent suffering and family dissonance. It’s the story of *The Joy Luck Club*. Parents and children both want different things. And the family goes through misunderstandings and tears and conflict and sacrifice. But in the end, this family achieves not only success but family harmony. Children understand their parents. Parents understand their children. Love and appreciation blossom like a desert flower after a long drought. The balance is restored. Western culture is balanced with Asian culture, at least for now. Both first and second generation can find peace – peace with one another, and peace in their souls. And then healthy grandchildren are born. Is that the story you live in?

We are story-telling creatures. Whatever story we live in, we usually try to make Jesus fit into it somehow. We try to bring Jesus into our own stories. And it’s natural – of course we do that. If you’re in the hero story, you bring Jesus into that and he makes you into the hero; he gives you the gifts and the opportunities and BOOM you make a huge difference. If you’re in the princess story, you bring Jesus into that and he helps you find the one; he helps you have a good marriage. If you’re in the immigrant story, you bring Jesus into that and hope that he’ll save everyone in your family and fix your problems. As Cnaan Taiwanese Christian Church, you might even expand on that – you want Jesus to fix all the problems between the 1st and 2nd generation folks in the church and make it a vibrant church community.

These are good stories, aren’t they? We want Jesus to fit into our stories. And yet the question that I want us to ask this morning is, ‘Is that what Jesus does?’ We’re going to look at two people who also wanted Jesus to fit into their story, and we’ll look at Jesus’ response. I’m going to look at Luke 24, verses 13 – 53. It’s a great section of Scripture, one of the most precious and most challenging to me. I break this down into three sections: (1) Jesus listens to our story in v.13 – 24; (2) Jesus reframes the story in v.25 – 32; and (3) Jesus commissions us to tell his story in v.33 – 53. The context of this section is immediately after Jesus’ death and resurrection. It is the last part of Luke’s Gospel and his connection point to Acts.

Jesus Listens to Our Story: v.13 – 24

We eavesdrop on two people leaving Jerusalem on that Sunday morning. ¹³ And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place.’ Who were these two people? They were two followers of Jesus. We know later that one is Cleopas. I think it is possible that the second was his wife Mary. What were they doing? They were trying to fit their story together. They were trying to make sense of something. But they couldn’t.

Now along comes Jesus to listen to them and help them sort it out: ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself approached and began traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, ‘What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?’ And they stood still, looking sad.’ Isn’t that amazing that Jesus is right here with them, and they don’t recognize him? Why were ‘their eyes prevented from recognizing him’? Was it because Jesus wore a hood? Was it because he somehow looked different after his crucifixion? Was there a supernatural block? I think there was, because the wording of this is in the passive voice. I’ll come back to that. Regardless, I think it’s cool that Jesus is present to them even though they don’t know it’s him. Can Jesus be walking with you and you not know it? I think so.

But I think it is challenging that Jesus comes at this particular time. He comes when these two don’t have a story to live in. They expected Jesus to fit into their story. He didn’t. So they are in limbo. That’s why they are so sad. Jesus has disappointed their stories. This ought to make us cautious. Does Jesus fit into our stories? Well, yes and no. There is a sense in which Jesus does not fit into our own stories, simply because our stories have ourselves at the center of them. But there is a sense in which he does, and we’ll see that.

Just as strange, though, Jesus has the patience to listen to our stories, misguided and incomplete as they are. He even invites them to tell it to him. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to him, ‘Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?’ ¹⁹ And he said to them, ‘What things?’ And they said to him, ‘The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to the sentence of death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²² But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but him they did not see.’ Jesus is a pretty cool friend – he listens, he hears us out; he even listens patiently to us when we tell him he’s disappointed us.

What were these two people thinking about Jesus? What does this reveal about their story? He was a prophet. We thought he was going to lead Israel out from Roman oppression. We thought he was going to kick Roman butt. Everyone expected a military Messiah who would bring Israel into a new Golden Age. That’s what it mean in their minds to ‘redeem’ Israel. ‘Redeem’ was the way Israel spoke of their deliverance from the oppression of Egypt. Redeem means ‘to transfer’ from one place to another. Their definition of redemption was a little different from Jesus’. They wanted to be redeemed from the oppression of the Romans. Jesus wanted to redeem them from the oppression of something deeper.

What’s more, they think that the story Jesus told about himself had failed. Jesus said something about rising on the third day. Some women disciples said they had a vision, but we haven’t seen him. We haven’t seen him at all. What is so poignant about this pair is that they say in v.21, ‘But we *were* hoping.’ They use the past tense. Now, they are not hoping, because in order to hope, you need a story with a good ending. But they didn’t know what story to tell anymore. They don’t know what story to live in.

Jesus Reframes Our Story: v.25 – 32

Jesus knows this, so he reframes the story in v.25 – 32. ²⁵ And he said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?’ ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.

How come the two disciples should have understood all these events? First of all, because Jesus had told them before he died. But also because the story of God was pointing to this climax. In other words, the Old Testament (Moses and all the prophets) had predicted it. They needed to understand the full story of God. When we don't understand the full story of God, we focus on only our story. They were doing this. They probably liked the parts about Israel being triumphant over the Gentiles. But they probably didn't like the parts about the Messiah suffering or the Gentiles being blessed by the Messiah. So when we read God's story selectively like that, pulling out only things we like, things that fit our story, but then we put aside the things we don't like, chances are Jesus will disappoint us. And then we won't understand why Jesus doesn't make our story happen. You'll wonder why you didn't get the girl or get the guy, why your grades aren't great, why your job make you the Hero, or why your ministry didn't skyrocket. You'll wonder why you're still waiting around for Mr. Right or Ms. Right. You'll wonder why your immigrant family is really struggling and actually more divided by Jesus right now. But Jesus' story is larger than our story. And he always needs to tell his story to us in order for us to not shrink it down.

Why doesn't Jesus reveal himself in v.25? Why do this Bible study? This pattern of Jesus doing Bible study with his disciples is an important one. It happens again in v.44 – 45, just below. This is obviously important to Luke because in Acts, Simon Peter, Philip, Stephen, Paul, and all the disciples of Jesus use the Old Testament. Luke needs to indicate that they have the right interpretation of the OT. But it's also important because Jesus wanted to establish a pattern for others. We come to know Jesus – how? First and foremost by reading the story of God. It's by understanding God's story that they are able to 'see' Jesus. We're able to see how he fits, why his life and death were the way they were. And they began to see the puzzle come together. The pieces started to fit.

Don't you wish we knew what exactly Jesus said? I think we can make some educated guesses. Jesus started with Moses, that is, in the beginning. First, God created life, and began with Adam and Eve in a garden land, a beautiful abundant land. But they disobeyed, and brought about death and decay. From that point on, God kicked them out of the garden. Then God started over with Abraham and Sarah and brought them to another garden land. But after three generations, the family of Abraham and Sarah was messed up and were outside the garden land, in Egypt. Then God brought the whole nation of Israel out of Egypt with mighty acts of power. He brought them into a garden land. But Israel disobeyed and God kicked them out. And now they are waiting. Someone had to bring them back into paradise, Eden, again. Notice that God keeps advancing the same story? It has variations but it is the same story.

Jesus probably then picked up a different thread of the story, that of the King. Moses in Genesis 49 and Numbers 22 – 24 predicted a person called the King of Israel. This king was supposed to lead Israel out of Exile and back into the state of paradise. This king was also supposed to bring the Gentiles under his dominion. King David and his heirs never actually did this for Israel. They sinned. So the whole house of David was stuck and Israel was stuck with them.

Jesus probably then shifted to the pattern of suffering leading to blessing. So when the King of Israel came, he was supposed to be like King David, but greater than David. David was rejected by the powers that be, he was driven into the wilderness, he had to form a movement out there, and he had to come to Jerusalem in order to declare himself King. That is just like David. David suffered. So did the heir of David. But David was eventually raised up, and so would the heir of David in a greater way. How was the King of Israel to become a blessing to Israel and the world? By suffering and later being elevated, just as Joseph suffered and was later elevated. That's why Isaiah 53 and the Psalms use Joseph as a model. The first Joseph suffered at the hands of his brothers, betrayed for silver. The greater Joseph suffered at the hands of his brothers and was also betrayed for silver. But Joseph was raised up, and so would the greater Joseph in a greater way.

On and on the list goes. What is important here is not that Jesus fulfilled little prophecies here and there. Instead, Jesus fits into much larger patterns in the story. And these two start to get it. ²⁸ And they approached the village where they were going, and he acted as though he were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he had reclined at the table with them, he took the bread and blessed it,

and breaking it, he began giving it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to one another, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?’

Now what exactly happened here? Did Jesus have a distinctive way of breaking bread? That’s possible, since the phrasing of v.30 is almost the same as the feeding of the 5,000. But what is it that causes them to see Jesus? It’s primarily because he had opened their minds and hearts to understand the story.

Creation and Fall	The Restoration
A couple had been commanded to spread over the earth to proclaim their rule over it	
Two people, a couple	Two people, possibly a couple (Cleopas’ wife was named Mary)
Walking with God	Walking with Jesus
Knowing Him	Not recognizing him
They disobeyed God’s word and ‘gained wisdom’	They are told God’s Word, they understood and gained true knowledge
Eat what was forbidden	Eat what Jesus encouraged them to eat
Their eyes were opened	Their eyes were opened
They focused on themselves	They focused on Jesus
Fell into separation from God	Reunited with God
Recognized they were naked, then they clothe themselves	Clothed with power from on high
Could not eat with God as freely as before	Are encouraged to have table fellowship with God and eat with God often (communion)
Lost their ability to proclaim their rule over the earth	Commanded to spread over the earth to proclaim Jesus’ rule over it

What this means is that even as these two people told their story of how they met Jesus on the road, it echoed the Creation and Fall story. Except their story is the reversal of the Fall story. They are two people who walked with Jesus, not recognizing him. They are told God’s Word, they understood and gained true knowledge. They ate what Jesus encouraged them to eat. Then their eyes were opened. They saw Jesus, focused on him instead of themselves. They were reunited with God as opposed to being separated from him. They were later ‘clothed with power from on high’ instead of being naked and clothing themselves. They are encouraged to eat with God often. And they are commanded to spread over the earth to proclaim not their own, but Jesus’ rule over it. This is a return to paradise, Eden. It is just what Jesus said on the cross, uniquely in Luke’s Gospel, ‘Today you shall be with me in Paradise,’ i.e. Eden. **THIS IS A NEW CREATION.** And their story has now become a part of the much larger story Jesus is telling.

Illus: Let me make an analogy. Let’s say that you’re a young woman, and you’re at home in your kitchen. You’re chopping vegetables for dinner just like you’ve done many, many times before. **SUDDENLY THIS STORY YOU’VE HEARD ABOUT HAS NOW BECOME THE STORY YOU LIVE IN!!**

It is not what they expected. It is more than that. It reaches farther back and farther down than they could ever have imagined. And what’s more, Jesus has woven them into his story. They have now become the privileged pair that could say, ‘Our eyes were opened, and we saw that we were a part of the bigger story Jesus is unfolding.’ **THIS IS THE GREAT STORY, THE ONE STORY, THE STORY OF GOD!!** Learning to live in that story is a challenge.

For me, if you couldn’t guess before, it is very attractive to try to live in the Hero story. I was trained to think about what I could accomplish. But my life today in many ways isn’t one that you would really consider successful. Throughout these messages I’ve told you stories where I saw exciting outcomes. But I have to be honest with you and tell you that I haven’t always seen those things, and neither will you. (1) The very first Bible study I ever led was when I was in college. It was with a group of friends and it went for a few weeks. It ended because the group became fairly divided. I was really sad. (2) I graduated from

Stanford in 1994 and soon afterwards started living with immigrant Mexican families in East Palo Alto. I moved into one of the most dilapidated apartment complexes in the city. Some Christian friends came with me. We hung out with families, tried to assist people in legal issues, mentored kids, took them on field trips, tried to help build community in the entire apartment complex of 100 units. But a few years later everyone was evicted, the apartment complex was torn down. That Home Depot and Ikea mega mall on a big parking lot is what stands there now. (3) For 6 years I worked at Intel during the tech heyday of the late 90's, and then left to join an African American friend of mine, also a Christian, to do a startup business. We hoped to start an IT and software business in the inner city, bring employment to single moms and others, redistribute wealth back into the community, and so on. But a year later, the dot-com meltdown had hit us. We had both gone without pay for 8 months and our company owed money. So we closed shop. Bills and paperwork are all that's left. (4) I told you the story of taking in Stacy in 2001 and how Ming home-schooled her. My wife does this for 9 months; we see some real improvements. Afterwards, mom decides to bring Stacy back next door, doesn't enroll her in school for 3 months, Stacy lost everything she had learned. (5) I am getting more and more passionate about evangelism, seeing the Spirit of Jesus work on campuses, and yet my parents both do not know Jesus, and at this very moment, I have only one more thing I can think of to do. What happens if they don't respond well to that?

What is challenging but ultimately helpful for me to remember in all of this are three things. First, Jesus is unfolding *his* story. It's hard for me at times because I think I should be successful. But then again, I am not at the center of Jesus' story. Jesus is at the center of Jesus' story. And although he is very committed to me, he is not committed to my story. He is committed to his story.

Second, he welcomes me into his story. He makes me a living, breathing part of it. Illus: I usually have a difficult time remembering names. That makes it hard for me to be in campus ministry!! Well, at one retreat with some students, I was walking around at the campgrounds. I felt like the Lord said, 'Mako, let's think about the students by name.' So I did. One woman crossed my path, and I looked up and just said, 'Hi Heather.' She said hi, but looked a little surprised. Later she told me that she had been asking God to show her a sign that He really knew *her name*. So that little incident was important to her. Now, that's nice, and I'm glad it happened. But it's not why I get up in the morning!! I have a grand sense of importance, a huge desire to do significant things by my own definition. But God brings me into His larger story so that I could play whatever part He wants: big or small.

And so what is important is that I tell his story. I can tell you what he has done in my life as part of his story. Not everything has gone according to the way I had hoped my story would go. I tried to fit Jesus into my story, but it didn't make sense. But when I back up and see his story, I see how my life fits into that. There is a song based on Psalm 84 that says, 'Better is one day in Your courts than thousands elsewhere.' And better is one mention of my name in his story than a dozen books written about me. Better that I appear as an extra in Jesus' cinematic story than a hundred stories in which I am the major character.

Third, Jesus takes what I really wanted and affirms it, even though he changes the story. So as I live in the Hero story, what I want is significance. Jesus says, 'Good! Let me give you significance on my terms.' If you live in the Princess story, what you want is to be known. Jesus says, 'Good! Let me know you intimately on my terms.' If you live in the Immigrant Family story, what you want is community. Jesus says, 'Good! Let me bring you into the community I am making, and make you a part of making it.'

Jesus Commissions Us to Tell His Story: v.33 – 53

Well, the final part of Luke's Gospel is where Jesus commissions us to tell his story over and over again. Here is the practical application of where this is all going. This is what we are supposed to do.

³³ And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, ³⁴ saying, 'The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.' ³⁵ They began to relate their experiences on the road and how he was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. ³⁶ While they were telling these things, he himself stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be to you.' ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?' ³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I

myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.⁴¹ While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’⁴² They gave him a piece of a broiled fish;⁴³ and he took it and ate it before them.⁴⁴ Now he said to them, ‘These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

The story is the story of God shared with Israel. In v.44, it is written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. The entire Old Testament tells Jesus’ story and points to him. The Old Testament is a story without an ending. Jesus provides that ending. It’s like *The Return of the King*. It’s a story that expects a king who triumphs over evil, reaches out to the world and beckons that world to acknowledge him.

The implications: Repentance and forgiveness for sins. People must be willing to let Jesus change them in order to eat at Jesus’ table. Can Jesus be Savior and not Lord? I don’t think so. Jesus is Lord, and his lordship is what saves us. But if the nations are willing, then Jesus grants them forgiveness for sins. A completely new start. Nothing held against them and they can eat with God in an intimate meal.

The target audience: The nations. Jesus’ heart is for the whole world.

The starting point: Jerusalem. Just as King David reigned from Jerusalem, the heir of David that was greater than David would reign from Jerusalem. And just as Adam probably reigned as a king from Eden, with his descendants going around the world to bring forth more and more life in creation, so the heir of Adam who was greater than Adam would reign as the king from a new Eden, sending his followers around the world to bring forth more and more life in the new creation.

Let me reiterate that this is not our story, even though we are in it. This is not my story or your story. It is his story, and we take our place in it. The story flows out from Jesus through us to the world. We are between Jesus and the world. So it makes sense that when we will feel closest to Jesus is when we do not make ourselves the center of the story we live in. We will feel closest to Jesus when we allow him to tell the story. We are caught between him and the world, but in such a way that brings us life and purpose and love and hope.

So we need to reinterpret our stories as we learn more and more of Jesus’ story. For me, I see how I had been too ambitious and selfish. But I have hope.

We will need Jesus in this