TOPIC: THE OLD, OLD STORY

Amid all the messages around us – the storylines and scripts we are fed and the stories we are telling ourselves – we need to get back to the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

KEY POINTS

- In Judges 6:14 (NASB) God said to Gideon (as he hid to thresh his wheat), "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?"
- Gideon had just mentioned "miracles our fathers told us about". He'd referenced the story of God delivering His people from slavery and oppression in the land of Egypt.
- The strength in that story – the faith, the truth, the promise within that story – was enough to transform Gideon's life. The thresher became a valiant warrior.
- That story was enough to cast down idols, calm a rioting mob, raise an army, overcome unexpected setbacks, and deliver a nation.
- Throughout the ages there has really been but one story. It's the story of God searching for us, and us searching for our God.
- It's the story of beauty, weakness, needs, self-will, actions and consequences. It's a story of redemption, of deliverance, of a very present help that is always there.
- Of not only seeking, but finding our God and realizing His presence is the only place we can truly call home.
- It's the story of Adam, learning how mercy feels and seeing the blood that it cost for him to be covered. It's the story of Noah learning that turning away from the wickedness around him was enough to catch God's attention; and that God would delay judgement as long as it took for there to be a way of salvation.
- It's the story of the young girl, Hagar, abandoned and crying in the desert, finding out that she was not alone, she was not abandoned and never would be.
- It's the story of Joseph – although many times it looked like a very different story, with a very different end.
- It's the story of Ruth and of Esther, who found out that if you claim this God as your own, He will claim you and make your life better than any fairy tale could be.
- Many things happen to each of us during a day. A week. A year. A career. A lifetime. But things that happen or fail to happen are not what affect us most.
- We are most affected by the stories we tell ourselves about those things. Stories we make up in our minds, whether instantly or as we go over and over them in our minds. There might be more than one side to a story, but ours is definitely the right side.
- Sometimes it's even God on the other side in our story, as in: "I don't know why God let this happen to me." Or, "I prayed and prayed, and look what happened. I'm so done with this!"

KEY SCRIPTURE: Judges 6:12-14

- There are all sorts of stories swirling about, ready for us to take them in. They are not original, they are not true, they don't make sense, and when we are thinking straight we don't entertain them for even one minute.
- Those stories used to be called lies, from the father of lies. But not anymore. In fact, we often start our stories with, "I feel like…" And that phrase transforms whatever comes next into absolute undeniable truth.
- Today, let's quiet the stories echoing in the world and in our own minds. Tune in to the old, old story. The story of creation, of being wonderfully made in the image of God. Of sin, forgiveness, mercy and redemption.
- The story of God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Of baptism into a body that will never die again. Of life in the Spirit, where we are more than conquerors through Him who loved and gave himself for us.
- Don't tell me about ancient philosophies. Don't tell me about the latest self-help fad. Don't tell me the new hot story about whichever entertainment or sports "star". They can't do anything for me or for you.
- Tell me the old, old story. The old, old story of Jesus and His love.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. "There are all sorts of stories swirling about…" What are some of these stories, as told by our current culture/satanic deceptions/our own human nature/etc.? (Reflect: which stories tend to grab hold of your mind when you get a little careless?)
2. Share specific messages provided in the old, old story (the word of God) that disprove the lies put out by the sources mentioned above.
3. Review the details from the old, old story given in the lesson. Which are especially meaningful for you in your current situation/experiences?
4. Reflect: We will all have to give an account to God for the stories we believed (or didn't). Does that affect what you choose to believe?

Prayer Time

Lord, the only story I want to believe is Your story. Please help me to keep it forefront in my heart and mind. In Jesus' Name, amen.

L.G. ice-Breaker: When you were a child, did you like fairy tales and nursery rhymes? If so, what was a favourite? If not, why do you think that was?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2017

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

 (Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS