

EPIC – Week 1

September 23, 2009 Teaching Outline by Mark Howard

Ever notice how life is always about stories?

- Each day begins...what happens next? A test, holiday, drama, fight
- By the end of the day, it's a story – maybe boring, maybe tragic, maybe awesome
- Life comes scene by scene, like a story, not a math problem
- There is a plot, a storyline, characters, good, evil, hardships, celebrations

Skit – “First Day of High School”

Life is a story

- How you tell about your vacation, or your weekend, or your day at school
- How you get to know each other...“So what did you do over the summer?”
- It's why we love movies...they tell us a story that inspires us or entertains

But the stories in life are more than just entertainment, or a fairy tale

- Our stories are real. They are who we are.

What does your story feel like?

- Boring? Exciting? Worthy of a book?
- If someone wrote a book about you, would anybody buy it?

Have you ever seen a great movie and wished you could have a story like that?

- Transformers
- Hanna Montana
- Gladiator

What if you found yourself in an epic story like that? Kinda like this...

TAKEN VIDEO

So maybe you're not in a story quite like that. BUT...

What larger story are you a part of? What is the bigger story we are all in?

- Life is more than just our own little stories – Like 9/11 in NYC
- Big things happen that we are all a part of, whether we were there or not
- We all WANT to be a part of a bigger story, bigger than ourselves
- “I was there when...” or cheering on your team when they win the super bowl

What if there was one great story that involves the whole world?

- And one great Author writing that story
- And the story was true, and real
- And it included the most important events of all time

Tonight I want to try to give your mind a fresh look at God and the Bible

- What if the Bible is more than ancient saying or rules for life
- What if it is just a glimpse at the greatest story ever told?
- A story still being played out...that YOU are a part of

Ever thought of the Bible as an epic story involving the whole world, creation to now?

- Ever considered that God knew this story all along? In the OT and NT he was writing one bigger story that continues today?

Think about it...what basic plot does every great movie or story have?

- Things are right, or good
- Something goes terribly wrong / evil happens / love is broken
- A great battle or journey begins to make it right
- There are hardships along the way
- The battle or journey ends. Hopefully goodness is restored.

That's the story of the Bible. It's an EPIC BATTLE and epic LOVE STORY

- God created man, in paradise, beauty, perfection, eternal, in his holiness
- Evil enters the scene - Satan tempts Adam and Eve – destroying eternal life
- God is willing to do whatever it takes to restore mankind
- Through the whole Old Testament, God shows the people that they can't possibly earn that perfect holiness back with rules, regulations, sacrifices...
- Through the OT, God shows us we NEED a Savior to be perfect for us
- Jesus becomes a helpless baby, and our Savior, and gives his life for us
- If we believe in Him, we receive his perfection, freedom from sin, eternal life
- Through Jesus we are restored to being with God again forever
- God invites us to be with him, tell others about this story, and become like Christ more and more each day

It's the most beautiful story ever told, and you are a part of it.

AND it is not finished. There is a battle still raging on

- God has lavished this love on us, offering it to the world, but people still reject it.
- Is it hard to tell that something has gone wrong? That evil is still out there?
- Is it ok that people are committing suicide? That millions die because of starvation? That there is pain and heart ache? Car accidents and divorce?
- The story is still happening, and we have been called to be a part of it.

LIFE IS NOT MEANINGLESS. There is a story happening all around you, and the story is a loving God calling you to be His people.

This year at Journey

- We will be looking in more detail, the BIG PICTURE of the Bible. What is the story being told through those thousands of pages and how are you part of it.
- I gave you just a taste of it tonight. There is so much more.
- Come Wednesdays – LATE if you need to...just come.

Why does all this matter? Why learn all about this story concept?

- Think of your favorite book or movie, and imagine asking someone else if they loved it too...and they say, "Its lame". And you ask, "Have you seen it?" And they say, "NO. It just looks lame."
- But you know if they just saw it or experienced it, they would love it.
- If we don't experience and understand they real story that God is writing in the Bible, we might just think it's lame too, because we don't understand it.

Remember how I told you that stories are how we know each other?

- Understanding the story shows us who God is
- Understanding the story shows us who we are
- Understanding the story shows us what God has done for us
- Understanding the story shows us the kind of life Jesus has made available for us
- Understanding the story affects the way that we live

But when we really understand it...it changes who we are and how we live.

- It is so powerful that you will give your whole life to it

This book is not a list of rules. It's the most beautiful story ever written.

There is a story. There is an Author, God. The story isn't finished. He is inviting you in.