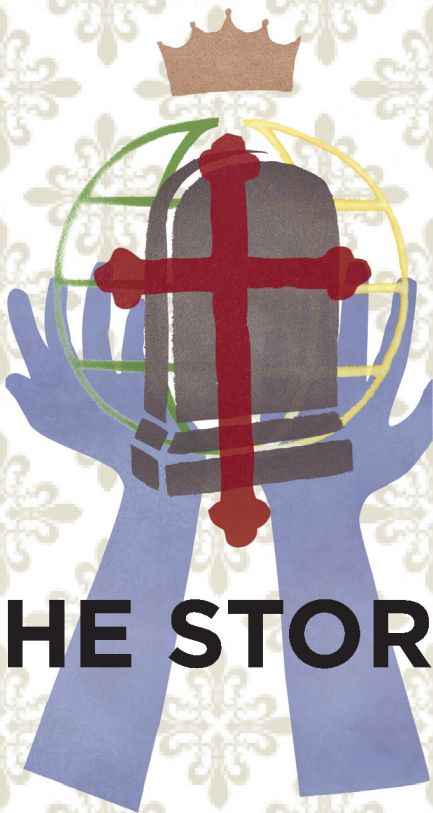




THE STORY

If You Only Read One Page...

The Bible tells the story of God's steadfast love for his stubborn people. In some ways it's a sad story, because human beings have made the world such a sad place. But ultimately, it is a happy story. The Christian story is about the good news that God so loved the world he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Some people have heard of John 3:16, but fewer people know the rest of the story. It goes something like this...



Creation: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The first man and woman enjoyed a perfect relationship with God. Everything in the universe was good.



Curse: But everything fell apart. Adam and Eve rebelled. Because of Adam's sin, we are all sinners, doing and thinking what is bad for us and displeasing to God.



Christ: So God sent his Son, Jesus Christ—full of grace and truth, power and perfection, humility and holiness—to make a way for sinners to be reconciled to God.



Cross: Jesus died for our sins on the cross, bearing the punishment we deserved. He rose again on the third day in demonstration of his power over sin and death.



re-Creation: Just as God raised Jesus to new life, so God is making all things new. In the end, God's people will live forever, free from pain and full of joy in God's presence.



Commitment: This good news is for those who turn from their sin and trust in Jesus. None of us deserve God's mercy, but we can get right with God through Jesus Christ.

Creation:

A glorious God creates a good world.

Genesis 1:1, 36a — *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*

- There is only one God. He is good and glorious, loving and holy.
- God made us in his image, to worship him, be in relationship with him, and reflect his character.
- God made the world perfect, a paradise where we could enjoy God and his gifts.



*See Genesis 1:1-2:3; Job 38-39;
Psalm 104; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 11:1-3*

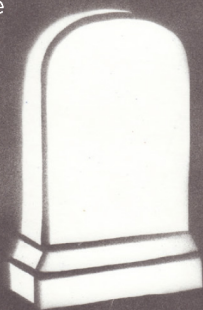
Curse:

Human beings rebel against God.

Romans 5:12 — *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...*

- Adam, the first man, disobeyed God's command. He wanted to choose good and evil for himself. He disregarded God's authority and rejected his love. As a result, Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise.
- The world is cursed because of Adam's sin. Things aren't the way they are supposed to be. The world is now full of suffering, pain, and evil.
- We sin everyday in thought, word, and deed by disobeying God's commands. We worship our jobs, our money, and our comfort more than God. We love people and things more than we love the God who made us.

*See Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-24;
Romans 3:9-20, 23; 5:12-21;
Galatians 3:10; Ephesians 2:1-3*



Christ:

God comes to us in human flesh.

Mark 2:5-7 — *And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*

- Jesus is fully human. He had a real body, desires, and emotions.
- Jesus is fully God. He was more than a prophet and moral teacher. He demonstrated his divine status and authority by forgiving sins and exercising power over nature, the Devil, disease, and death.
- Jesus is the Christ, the long-awaited Messiah. He is the Son of God and one with God the Father. Jesus is worthy of our worship, trust, and affection.



*See John 1:1-3; 8:56-58; 10:29-31;
Hebrews 1; 4:15; 7:26-28; Titus 2:13*

Cross:

Jesus dies for our sins and is raised to life again.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 — *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...*

- Jesus died on the cross to take upon himself the wrath of God so that we might be reconciled to God. God forgives us, not because of our good works, but because of the sacrifice of his Son on the cross.
- Jesus was a kind of second Adam, fulfilling what the first Adam did not. He obeyed God in place of our disobedience and died the death we deserved as our substitute.
- By his death and resurrection, Jesus demonstrated his Lordship over all things. In coming back to life, Jesus showed that even death itself had been conquered.

*See Isaiah 53:4-5; Mark 10:45;
John 10:14-18; Romans 5:6-11; 6:23;*



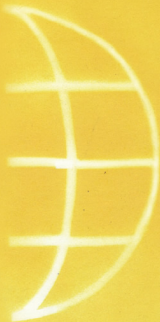
re-Creation:

God is making a new people and a new place.

Revelation 21:5 — *And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."*

- God makes us new creations in Christ so that we die to our sinful ways and can learn to love God and our neighbor.
- Through Jesus, God has already begun to exercise his reign right here on earth. Those who follow Jesus are to be agents of change, hope, and renewal.
- At the end of history, God will finish this work of re-creation. Those who have not received Christ will be eternally punished for their sins. Those who belong to Christ will live forever in a new paradise where we will be free from suffering and enjoy God forever.

See John 3:16-18; Romans 12:1-2;
2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Revelation 21-22



Commitment:

Those who trust in Jesus Christ will be forgiven and made new.

Acts 2:37-38 — *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

- God's forgiveness is entirely an act of grace. We cannot earn it. We receive God's mercy through faith solely because of Christ's work on our behalf.
- Being a Christian means we renounce our old ways of thinking and living; we trust Christ alone as our Savior, obey him as Lord, and love him as our greatest treasure.
- Following Jesus means living for him, obeying his commands, and believing his promises.
God gives us power through the Holy Spirit and teaches us by his Word (the Bible) so we can live in this new way.

*See Isaiah 55:6-7; Matthew 4:17; John 20:31;
Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 5:16-25;
Ephesians 2:4-10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*





So what do you believe about this Story?

Maybe your response is apathy: “I’ve heard this all before—big deal.” Maybe you like the parts about Jesus, but haven’t thought of yourself as a sinner in need of forgiveness.

Perhaps you are confused, wondering how anyone can be saved by grace alone. Or maybe you figure since you’ve been to church before you don’t have to think about your relationship with God. Being a Christian may just seem like a cultural thing you inherit from your family or from growing up in a certain place.

These are honest responses, but they are not Christian responses. Those who believe in the Story of God’s good news will respond with:

Understanding: “I know I am a sinner, separated from God and can do nothing to earn his favor.”

Faith: “I believe Jesus is God’s Son, that he died for my sins and rose again from the dead.”

Repentance: “I am sorry for my sinful thoughts and actions. I turn from them and trust in Jesus alone for forgiveness.”

Purpose: “I want to live for Jesus, be a new person, and learn to love others.”

Hope: “I will live forever with God in the joy of his new creation.”

**If you believe the Story summarized in these pages,
we encourage you to do the following:**

1. Talk to a Christian who can tell you more about Jesus Christ.
2. Start praying to God. It's okay if you don't know "how to do it." Just speak from your heart. God will listen. Ask God to reveal himself to you.
3. Get a copy of the Bible and read it for yourself. We encourage you to start with one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John).
4. Join a Christian church where the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection is believed and the Bible is taught.



Good News Tracts
1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, IL 60187



For helpful Christian literature, please write to the address above or visit our web site at www.goodnewstracts.org. Bible references: ESV.