

Merry Christmas Pickens 2020- God's Story

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[0 : 00] Everyone on this platform has done a great job of telling us the Christmas story, haven't they?

Well, I want to spend a very few minutes putting this in the perspective of God's grand story. That's what the Bible describes, God's grand story.

And it begins with creation. In Genesis chapter 1, we read that God created everything, including human beings.

In fact, human beings are God's highest creation. It's really the climax of creation. Well, because God created everything, He has the authority to rule.

He has the authority to tell us how to live because He's our Creator. The Bible also tells us toward the end of chapter 1 of Genesis that when creation was complete, everything was very good.

[1 : 10] Not just good, but very good. Now, something has happened because life in this world is anything but very good, isn't it?

Something did happen. It's the second part of God's story. The fall is how it's often described.

It's found in Genesis chapter 3. Yeah, Genesis chapter 3. It describes how the first two human beings, Adam and Eve, they rebelled against God.

They disobeyed Him. They rebelled against His rightful authority as their Creator. What happened was they decided they wanted to live life their way instead of God's way.

Well, that's when sin entered the world. And when that happened, everything changed. That's when the good creation was not destroyed, but it was certainly marred.

[2 : 22] There was a lot of destruction that took place. All the problems in the world, in fact, can be traced to Adam and Eve sinning in the garden.

Think about it. Our problems with God, our relational problems, our problems with other people, even our problems with the creation itself, it all can be traced back to their sin in Genesis 3.

But you know, God was not surprised by that. Nothing ever surprises God. God had a plan. His rescue plan. And that is chapter 3 of God's story.

His rescue plan. Now the focal point of God's rescue is His Son, Jesus Christ. That's what the Old Testament points to.

That's what the Gospels reveal. That's what the remainder of the New Testament explains and even applies. The Bible's main theme is that God graciously sent His Son into this world to be our Savior.

[3 : 36] The Christmas story describes how Jesus entered this world. And as we heard read from Joseph, Matthew 1.21, Jesus came to save His people from their sins.

Jesus' primary mission was to come into this world, die on the cross as our substitute, pay the penalty for the sins that we deserve.

Jesus came to experience God's wrath against sin as He hung on the cross so that we would not have to. Jesus died on the cross and then was buried.

But three days later, God raised Him from the dead. That helps us to understand that God accepted His sacrifice. I want us to understand this is what God has done for us in Christ.

But He requires that we respond in order to experience the benefits of Christ's death on the cross. And here's the way God calls us to respond. You've got to admit that you are a sinner in need of a Savior.

[4 : 51] You've got to repent of your sin. That means to change your mind about the way you've been living. Instead of living life your way, you want to turn around and start living life God's way.

You've got to trust that when Jesus died on that cross, He paid the penalty for your sins. Trust Him as your Savior. Ask Him to come into your life and save you.

If we truly trust Jesus, we're going to surrender control of our lives to Him. We're going to want Him to be our Lord. We're also going to want God the Father to be the ultimate authority over our lives and live life His way instead of our own way.

The Bible says that God will save all who come to Him this way. Many of you know this. It's very simple in John 3.16. For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but will have everlasting life.

Chapter 4 of God's story is about restoration. God has a plan to restore everything back to its original perfect condition.

[6 : 07] Now, God's already at work in the lives of every Christian, shaping and molding us into the image of His Son, Jesus. But God's rescue plan will not be complete until Jesus comes back into this world.

We can read about that at the end of the Bible in Revelation chapter 21. Now, that's the short version of God's story. What about you?

What about your story? Are you still living life your way instead of God's way? Well, you know, if you will come to faith in Jesus now, you can be sure that your life story will end well.

You see, we can guarantee that our life story will wind up in a way that truly pleases God and satisfies us.

In fact, through faith in Jesus Christ, seeking to follow Him with the help that God gives us, we can be pleasing to God now. We can live a satisfying life now.

[7 : 25] And for all eternity. Would you bow with me? In an attitude of prayer, if you don't know Christ as your Lord and Savior, I want to encourage you right now.

Admit your sin to God. Change your mind. Truly repent. Call upon Jesus to save you. And He will. If you're a Christian, I want to encourage you to draw back close to the Lord right now.

If you're away. But do whatever is necessary for you to truly honor your Lord as we celebrate His birth right now at Christmas.

Father, show every person in this room how they should respond to either become a Christian, a follower of Jesus, or to live their life in a way that demonstrates that.

Not just at Christmas time, but every day of the year. Just in an attitude of prayer, let's just listen to the Lord now. And you respond to Him as He makes clear to you.

[8 : 35] Bye-bye. Bye-bye.

You