

## Storylines – The Jesus Thread

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2017 St Matthias, John Beckett**

**Readings: Isaiah 9:2-7 and Luke 4:14-22**

Several of you will have been wondering why for the last few months there is been a strange piece of blue rope tied up at the back of the church? It's because we're on a series based upon a book entitled Storylines which look at core threads or themes that run through the Bible.

As we look together at these biblical threads, we see not only where he fits into our story, but more importantly where we fit into his story.

So let's have a quick recap and then see how the Jesus thread holds them altogether.

### **1 Covenant or promise for Testament**

God wants us to be his people and he wants to be our God. He wants to bless us. He's provided for us a new covenant deal (based upon the old covenant) through Jesus Christ. Jesus is sacrificial death was sufficient to pay the penalty clauses of the covenant and his blood was used to seal the deal whereby we might become his people and he might become our God. And every time we celebrate holy Communion we recall Jesus words at the Last Supper "this is my blood of the covenant". And every time and say amen as we receive that bread and wine we seal the deal on our part too.

### **2 Presence**

God made us human beings that we might enjoy living in his presence. He wants every person he's made to know him. He loves us so much he wants us to be in his presence, to know his presence and to be in his presence for ever.. And I was reminded only this week the wonderful words of Zephaniah 3:17 *the Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will*

*take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.*

we often cry out to God as Psalm 63 verse 10 God, *you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you,*

But have you ever thought that God is earnestly seeking you so that you might hear him singing over you and rejoicing in you? Some people here today need to hear that...

### **3 worship**

When we really know God's presence we can only respond in worship as in awe and wonder we realise who he is and what he has done for us. So we offer our songs and we offer our hearts we offer our lives back as we look forward to that time we spend all of heaven in worship:

in the words of the song Imagine by Kathryn Scott

*Surrounded by You glory  
What will my heart feel  
Will I dance for you Jesus  
Or in awe of You be still  
Will I stand in your presence  
Or to my knees will I fall  
Will I sing hallelujah  
Will I be able to speak at all  
I can only imagine....I can only imagine*

### **4 Kingdom,**

as his people he wants us to let him be of King, but he also wants us to work **with him** to bring in his kingdom – to create a world which is filled with his justice and peace and hope and forgiveness and joy. What a privilege!. What a purpose! What a challenge with its upside down kingdom ethics, and how exciting...

## 5 Salvation

this promised kingdom will come in all its fullness when we are finally rescued as god's people and when this world is rescued to become a new heaven and a new earth.

And we will know the fullness of that rescue when Jesus Christ comes again!

But It's a rescue mission that began long ago. God's people were rescued from slavery by the death of the Passover lamb. They were rescued from their enemies and brought to the promised land. But in their inability to keep God's covenant ways God knew his people needed rescuing at a deeper level.

To be rescued from death – that death which is ultimately the inevitable separation from sinful humanity and the most holy God

And all through this book, all through God's story of his action with his world, with his people, are multiple promises of someone who would come to bring about that rescue. A Messiah figure - like a treasure hunt leaving clues over hundreds of years for us

The prophecies about who this Messiah figure would be and what they would be like.

Here's a few for you:

You will be familiar with some because we often use them in our carol services, but I've written them in some notes in the notice sheet so you can look them up when you get home to encourage you, and also to equip you better when we are talking about our faith to other people.

The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem **Micah 5:2 to 5 a** *but you, Bethlehem Ephratha, though you are small among the*

*plans of Judah, out of you will come one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times...*

Maybe that's not surprising since Bethlehem is David's city and the prophecies also tell of how the Messiah will be of David's line and how he will be holy and righteous:

**Jeremiah 33:15** *in those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land (also Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5 -6; Numbers 24:17; Samuel 7:12-16).*

He will be a great King

**Isaiah chapter 9** *For to us a child is born, to us son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called wonderful Counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, Prince of peace.*

So not just King, but **mighty God?**, everlasting father!

Perhaps those two concepts of a human being who is also like God come together in the prophecies of **Daniel chapter 7 verse 13 to 14** in his incredible vision of what happens in the end times: *in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the ancient of days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away...*

So it should be no surprise that earlier in Isaiah **Isaiah 7:14** we have the prophecy about the virgin giving birth to someone special called **Immanuel**.

One like us, a son of man and yet God with us – that rings some sleigh bells doesn't it? It's all about Jesus!

...who probably deliberately chose to be ambiguous in calling himself the Son of Man – reflecting both the glorious Messianic figure in Daniel and the frail human being that he was.

And yet, perhaps blinded by their understanding that for the Messiah to be the rescuer he would have to come in power and strength, the Jewish people missed seeing the prophecies that are there to about the weakness and self sacrificial living life of that same Messiah.

They did not expect to find their Messiah born in a stable

They did not expect him to arrive on the scene as a lowly carpenter - which is why perhaps when they heard him speak so authoritatively and graciously in the synagogue of his hometown Nazareth as we had in our gospel reading they still couldn't make the link, disbelieving, isn't this Joseph son?

They did not really expect to see their Messiah as the suffering servant passages in Isaiah where it is as if he has been there himself on Good Friday:

Open up your bibles, or bible apps (you can get free ones! ) or pew bibles and look with me at one of those suffering servant passages in **Isa 53**

verse 2 & 3 *He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*

<sup>3</sup> *He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.*

v5 *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

And Isa 53 even points us to the resurrection!

Verse 10 *and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days,*

No, we proclaim this Christmas, he isn't just Joseph son.

He is indeed the Saviour, the Messiah, the Anointed One:

I hope you have been encouraged to listen to these storyline threads through the bible – you can read the sermons again from the website if that helps you –

Hopefully, they have given you a better overview of God's storylines through the bible

Hopefully, today, you have been reminded that our faith is not blind faith, but we have logical reasons for believing Jesus is who he is.

Hopefully, you will ask God to provide you with an opportunity to invite someone who does not yet know Jesus as Messiah, to come with you to one of the Christmas services so they can begin to be part of God's story too.

Actually God's ove story – Jesus puts it so well in John 3:16...

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but eternal like.

Finally, in case you were in any doubt, I wanted to remind us all of our need for the Saviour...

In the gospel reading we heard today Jesus identifies himself directly with The Anointed One in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC prophecy of Isa 61:

– and ask yourself as I read these from which ones do you need him to save you from?

- to preach good news - to us who may be rich in things but who actually know the poverty of our inner resources

- to proclaim freedom - for us who are imprisoned by our own shame and guilt
- recovery of sight - for us who blind to our own faults or simply cannot see hope ahead
- release - from the oppression of the materialistic spirit of the age, or any other spirit that is not of God.

Come, Lord Jesus, Come! Come and save us!

In quoting as he does, Jesus claims the rest of that prophecy too. He comes to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour to you, and to bestow on you:

- *a crown of beauty instead of ashes,*
- *the oil of gladness instead of mourning,*
- *and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.*
- *We are to be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.*

That's how I want to live.

That's what I want to be. That's what I want us to be.

Don't you?

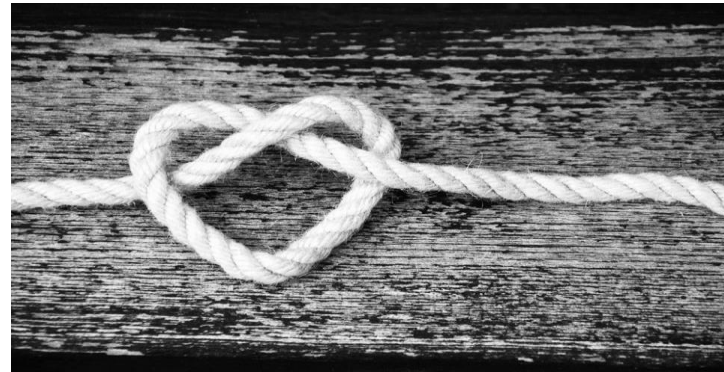
I will be your God - will you be my people?

What will we say?

Yes, God, be our Lord, be our King, and Lord, this Christmas – as we listen and study in wonder at your story, will you not just be the words on a page to us, but be the Word made flesh.

Be God with us. Come Lord Jesus, come!

## Storylines



### 1. Covenant

### 2. Presence

### 3. Worship

### 4. Kingdom

### 5. Salvation

### 6. Jesus

- Born in Bethlehem *Micah 5:2 to 5a*
- Of David's line *Jeremiah 33:15 (also Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5 -6; Numbers 24:17; Samuel 7:12-16)*
- A great King – God *Isaiah 9:2-7; Daniel 7:13-14*
- Born of a virgin *Isaiah 7:14*
- God's suffering servant *Isaiah 53*
- Anointed for Good News *Isaiah 61*