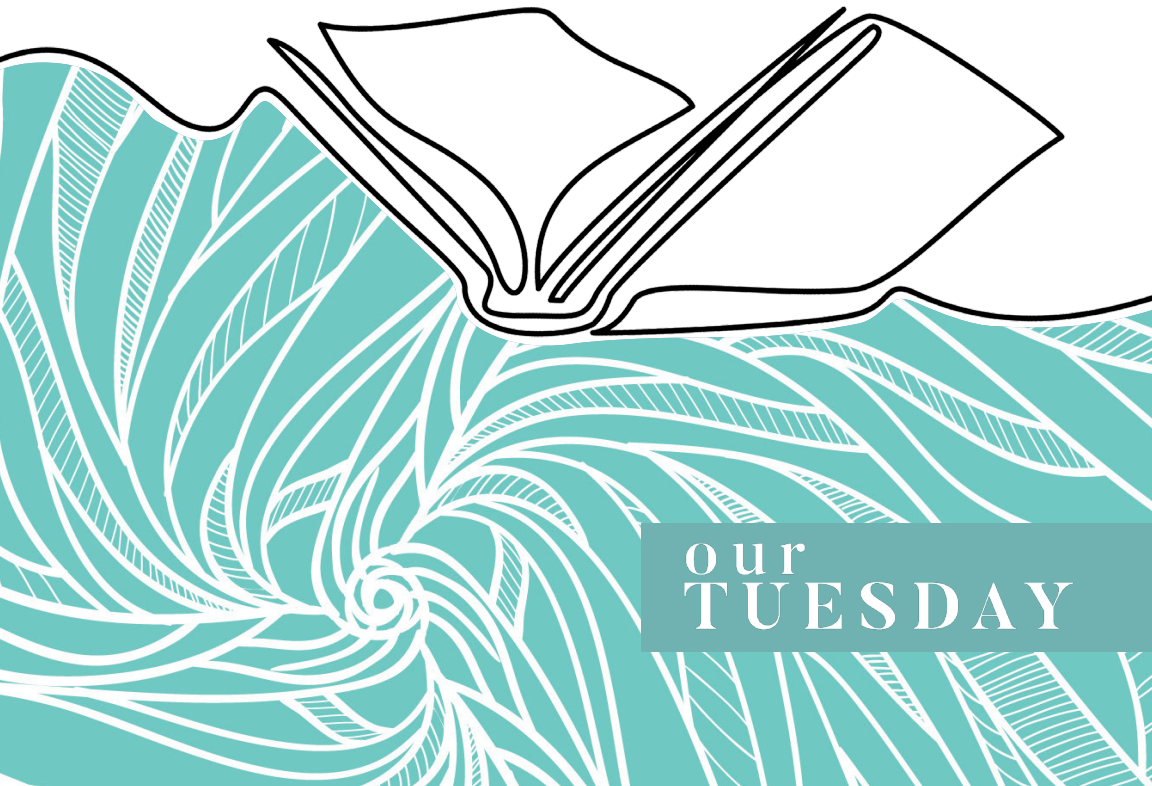


The Story of
Scripture



our
TUESDAY

introduction

Hey there sister,

I hope this email finds you well! November was such an awesome month at Our Tuesday. If you were there, then you know we walked through the entire Bible in one night.

Sounds preposterous doesn't it? Let me explain.

As you know, I'm currently in Seminary and for one of my classes, The Story of Scripture, taught by Dr. Yarbrough at Dallas Theological Seminary we've been walking through the entire narrative of scripture. We've talked about how there are categories of types of literature and how there are 4 major covenants between God and his people. There are books known as Epistles or Letters that were written by specific authors to a specific congregation yet hold much wisdom and insight into even our own faith communities centuries later. And we concluded with the amazing news that the final book of the Bible, Revelation, actually connects believers back to the Garden from Genesis.

I know! How cool!?

The following document is a labor of love project and something that so many of you have asked me to give you....my notes from our talk on The Story of Scripture. After talking with my professors at school, we came up with a way to give you a bird's eye view of scripture but broken down into about 2 weeks worth of devotional content. I'm personally so excited about this idea because it aligns with our purpose for Our Tuesday.

Our goal is to have a great time learning together but it's really so that in learning about scripture together, you can know where to read on your own. So many times we want to read the Bible and see the value in the discipline yet we simply don't know where to start. I pray that this is a simple resource to help jump-start you into better understanding the story of scripture.

This document is not meant to be all encompassing. I pray that you use it to lead you to read the passages and discover on a personal level a God who created you, formed you and desires a relationship with you.

Thank you for letting me serve you in this way,

Lanie Beth Sinclair

Day One.

Overview. The Story of Scripture

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:14-17



NOTES

Good morning! Or evening if you're a night owl! I'm so excited you're starting this journey to better understanding the framework of the story of scripture with us. I hope you've taken time to watch the video of the entire talk so that you can see the roadmap to where we are heading. This document is meant to be paired together with the video for better understanding.

In 'How to Study the Bible like a Seminary Professor' Dr. Mark Yarbrough breaks down the categories of scripture into a very learnable format. In the video you can see that there is a catchy cheer to remember the numerical breakdown. (The cheer is a bit like the 'Baby Shark' song my kids sing, so beware that it will get stuck in your head!)

The overall structure of our English Bible is as follows:

39 books in the Old Testament
27 Books in the New Testament

Take a look at the Table of Contents in your Bible. If you write in your Bible, this would be a great place to delineate the various categories. Writing always helps me learn, so I'm all for this!

Old Testament:

5	12	5	5	12
Law	(Theological) History	Poetry	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets

New Testament:

4	1	21	1
Gospels	(Theological) History	Letters	Prophecy

Old Testament

5 Books of Law	12 (Theological) History	5 Poetry	5 Major Prophets	12 Minor Prophets
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Dueteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah
	2 Kings			Nahum
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Ester			Malachi

New Testament

4 Books of Law	1 History	21 (Theological) History		1 Prophecy
Matthew	Acts	Romans	Titus	Revelation
Mark		1 Corinthians	Philemon	
Luke		2 Corinthians	Hebrews	
John		Galatians	James	
		Ephesians	1 Peter	
		Phillipians	2 Peter	
		Colossians	1 John	
		1 Thessalonians	2 John	
		2 Thessalonians	3 John	
		1 Timothy	Jude	
		2 Timothy		

A few fast facts:

1. Books of the Law (first 5 books) are commonly referred to as the Pentateuch, the Torah (Jewish traditions) or the Books of Moses. Take your pick, they're all correct!
2. Since the Bible isn't in chronological order, a good way to mentally form a time line is to take the books of History, Major Prophet and Minor Prophets and drop them throughout the books of History. This is chronologically where they would have taken place.
3. There is no difference between the Major and Minor Prophets. The only difference is the amount of real estate they take up. All prophets are communicating the same message so don't worry if you get confused on who is on the Varsity Team and who is on the JV Team.

Lastly, This chart has been incredibly eye opening for me personally. We know that there are varying literature genres and purposes for ordering the English Bible in the format that we do, however feeling confident in the structure helps to feel like you can wrap your arms around the content accurately. When my Pastor begins teaching on a Sunday out of a book of Poetry, I immediately understand the time period, the placement and the genre. Those are huge steps toward grasping what the author is trying to communicate.

Although in life there are no tests on things like knowing all of the books of the Bible, if you like a challenge, try to memorize them. There are lots of songs and catchy ways to learn them all out there. No gold stars are given out for knowing the books but it changes the way we read scripture when we understand the order of how it all fits together. When we allow the Lord to speak to our hearts AND minds, we begin to see his purpose and plan woven throughout every detail.

I pray that this is encouraging to you today!

Father, Thank you that you took time and care to speak to each of the Biblical writers. And that because you took such time and care to speak to them, we know that you speak through the Holy Spirit to us as well. You are so kind to care about our hearts and minds at the same time. We love you. Amen

Day Two:

The Problem - Creation in Crisis

Genesis 1-11

"God blessed them [Adam and Eve] and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

Genesis 1:28



As we open up to Genesis 1 we see two things: (1) In the beginning God was there. (2) He spoke things into being. The first 11 chapters in Genesis are divided into three categories. The sad part is that peace and perfection only last for the first two chapters of Genesis and the crisis portion, where sin takes over, is the rest of the entire Bible. Kinda crazy when you think about it that way, isn't it?

Dr. Yarbrough breaks down Genesis into the following categories.

Genesis 1 - Creation (*Wide-view lens*)

1. God is creator.
2. What God creates is good.
3. Humanity, created by God is very good.

Genesis 2 - Caretakers. (*A detailed view at exactly what happened in Chapter 1*)

1. A picture of perfection.
2. A picture of peace- Shalom.

Genesis 3-11- Crisis. (*Wide-view lens again*)

1. Sin has devastated everything.
2. Sin has brought death.

We cannot read through Genesis and not touch on Genesis 3:15. Scholars call this set of verses the Protevangelium. Although this comes at the conclusion to Adam and Eve's disciplining of their sin it's actually as Kidner describes, "the first glimmer of the gospel."

There are consequences for our sin, yet God already had a way to restore peace. Jesus was always God's plan. I pray that you see this today and can give fresh thanks for a God who doesn't use back-up plans but has all of time mapped out from the start.

Take some time to read through these other main story lines in the First part of Genesis. We are covering a lot of chronological ground but also a lot of characters. Even though there a mostly faithful life for Noah, he lived to be 950 (!) and there were still moments of disobedience. Sin brings death to everything, including our relationships and reputation. May you see sin and it's redemption through fresh eyes today.

Cain and Abel: Genesis 4:1-26

Noah: Genesis 6:9-9:28

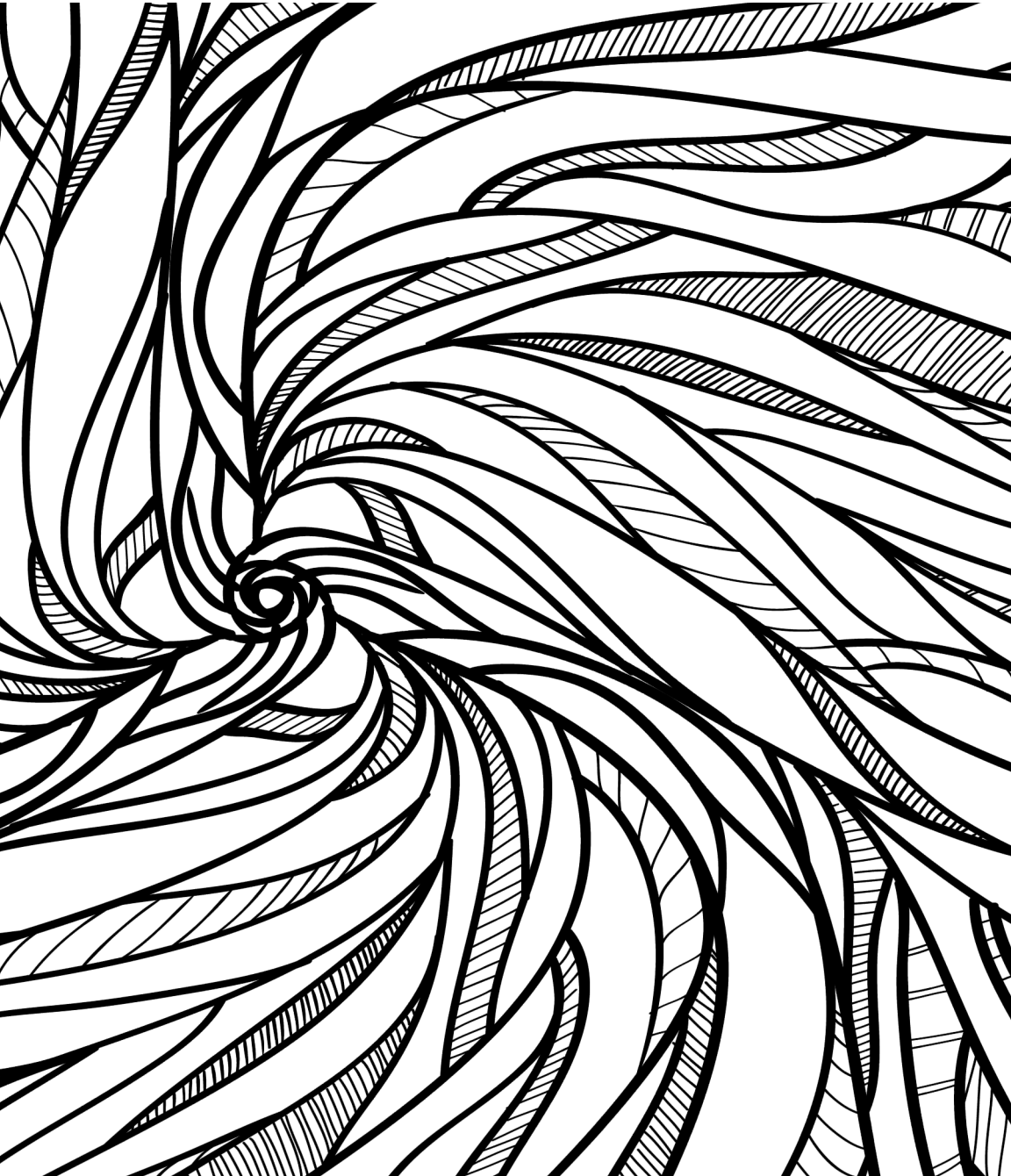
Tower of Babel: Genesis 11:1-9

*Father, Thank you that you took time and care to speak to each of the Biblical writers. And that because you took such time and care to speak to them, we know that you speak through the Holy Spirit to us as well. You are so kind to care about our hearts and minds at the same time.
We love you. Amen*

Day Three:

The Solution- A Covenant God

Genesis 12-50



Well hello! I'm so glad you came back to learn with us today. Yesterday's lesson was hard to wrap our mind around. Almost like spiritual whip lash to go from peace and perfection in the garden to Cain and Abel to the Flood and then the Tower of Babel. Sin really does devastate everything, doesn't it? Today's passage is a bit more hopeful.

Along with reading about Abraham, our first patriarch, we are going to focus on the covenant that God made with Abraham.

Abraham had quite a few defining moments in his life. Here's a few to get you started:

God's promise to Abraham about offspring: Genesis 15

Abraham and Sarai in Egypt: Genesis 12:10-20

Sarai offers Hagar and Ishmael is born: Genesis 16

Sodom and Gomorrah: Genesis 19

Isaac is born: Genesis 21

Isaac is nearly sacrificed: Genesis 22

These passages are just the highlight reel, if you will. When you have time, take a walk through Genesis 12-50. There are incredible stories with incredible people that are littered with God's promises. There are 4 major covenants that fill the Old Testament. Some would even say that these covenants guide and direct the flow of our theological history. Our first major covenant serves as the biggest promise in the story of Abraham and is known as the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Abrahamic Covenant found in Genesis 12:1-3 is a binding agreement between God and Abraham. It is an unconditional covenant meaning that God holding up his end of the deal isn't predicated upon Abraham's obedience.

The passage reads:

*The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go from your country,
your people and your father's household to
the land I will show you.
"I will make you into a great nation,
And I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
And you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And whoever curses you I will curse;
And all peoples on earth
Will be blessed through you."
Genesis 12:1-3*

The Abrahamic Covenant is easily remembered for three things: People, Land and World Wide Blessing. This Covenant is unconditional meaning that it wasn't based on Abraham's obedience, rather it was based on God's word that he would bless his people, land and give a world wide blessing.

Isn't that incredible?

A few other texts to read when you get a chance are the stories of Isaac and Jacob. These three generations are commonly referred to as the Patriarchs of our faith.

Abraham: Genesis 12-22

Isaac (Abraham's son): Genesis 21:12; 26:3-4

Jacob (Isaac's son): Genesis 28:3-4; 28:13-15

Another detail we talked about during our time together were the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob had two wives Rachel and Leah and two concubines named Bilhah and Zilpah. These 4 women gave birth to 12 sons. These 12 sons are commonly referred to as the 12 Tribes of Jacob. (*Jacob's name was later changed to Israel after his wrestle with God in Genesis 32:22-32.*)

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Even though it sounds like a really complicated family tree, the 12 tribes of Israel would go onto be the dividing categories for most of God's people. Each tribe had it's own role among as well as it's own land allotment in various ways. As we come to the close in Genesis, we have covered much ground and multiple generations.

The Abrahamic Covenant (People, Land, World Wide Blessing) all comes into focus. The stories of Isaac, Jacob, Esau and Joseph are all accounted for in these pages. Reading all of Genesis really is a must do to better appreciate the framework for the rest of the Old Testament, and quite frankly the New Testament as well. Think of Genesis as the foundation to which everything else is built.

May you read this book and allow yourself to feel the full gamut of emotions: peace, awe, sadness, frustration, laughter and an understanding that we are no different from our forefathers. We have a God who has called us and loves us despite all of our missteps and failures.

*God, I'm thankful and nervous that you see me for who I really am. Please help me to see myself the way you see me. Not perfect but forgiven because of Jesus and the cross- a plan you've had in place since the beginning of time. Remind me today that I'm not an afterthought to you.
Love you, Lord.*

Day Four:

Covenant Promises

Exodus - Deuteronomy

"When Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the Lord has said we will do." Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said."

Exodus 24:3-4



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If there's one thing I think that religious and non-religious people know about the Bible is that Moses delivered the 10 commandments. Today, we are going to unpack exactly what 10 commandments represent and what the Mosaic Covenant really means. Let's take a minute to demystify exactly what the commandments given to Moses represent.

Take a minute to write out the 10 commandments from Exodus 20 as a refresher:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

The Mosaic Covenant is our second major covenant in scripture and detailed in **Exodus 24:1-7**. The Mosaic Covenant is different from our 3 other major covenants because this is the only one that is conditional. Let's talk though what that means exactly. A conditional covenant with God means that there is something required of his people. God requires obedience from the Israelites, not for his love, but for his favor.

Think of it from a parent/child point of view. Imagine you have a 16 year old child that is learning to drive. You love your child unconditionally. There is nothing they can do to make you not love them. However, with this newfound privilege and responsibility of driving, there are some house rules. Obey the speed limit! Wear your seatbelt! Don't have too many friends in the car! Don't text and drive! Should your sweet and amazing 16 year old break one of these rules, there would be a consequence I would imagine. More than likely, no more driving for a while?

This is the best way to understand the differences between the conditional and unconditional covenants. The Abrahamic is unconditional and therefore represents the love of a parents. However, the Mosaic is like the conditional driving rules. Breaking them means that there are consequences to disobedience.

We truly have a Father in God. One who loves his children unconditionally and because he loves us so much, he sets up boundaries and guidelines for us to thrive. Switching our mindset on this topic can actually be incredibly freeing and chain breaking. I pray that you can let this truth settle into your heart.

The following is a speed of light overview of the last 3 books of the Pentateuch.

Leviticus:

Laws for the Priests (*the tribe of Levi*)

The sacrificial system

1. A Holy God cannot tolerate sin
2. God stipulates that the penalty for sin is death.
3. God is willing to accept a temporary sacrifice for the life of the sinner.
4. God's grace allows judgement to be postponed until sin is dealt with in totality.

Numbers:

Generational records out of Egypt

Generation #1: Numbers 13-14

Generation #2: Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy:

Blessings (*Chapter 28*): Crops and kids

Curses (*Chapter 28*): Confusion and calamity

I hope this overview, though brief, helped to tie the mental bow around the books of the Law. Their vastness would require a lifetime, so at your leisure, Take a minute to go back and read through these books at length. They sometimes get a bad reputation for being hard to read and understand, but I know that you are a budding Biblical Scholar so no amount of family trees or rules for living shall stand in your way!

Father, thank you that you do give us boundaries to live and thrive. Without them we would be lost. In your kindness you've shown us how to live but also given us grace for our mistakes. Thank you that we can trust that in you, there is way to understand the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. You are our desire, Lord. Love you. Amen.

Day Five:

Covenant King

“David said to Michal, “It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord’s people Israel—I will celebrate before the Lord. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes.””

2 Samuel 6:21-22



Anyone else an love to follow British Royalty? I think Harry and Meghan are the cutest couple and that sweet baby is just as great! Kate and Will have really come into their own lately and you can tell that he is preparing to be the King one day and she the Queen. I'm a little younger than they are but I still cannot imagine dealing with the mantle of pressure they carry. Although our Covenant King David had slightly more humble beginnings than the Royal family as we know it, it's clear that his life was one big preparation lesson. Some lessons he passed with perfects marks and a few he stumbled till the end but still saw them to the end.

But before we dig into King David, lets breeze through a few other major players. As we round our way out of the Pentateuch, we step into our 'Theological History' section. 12 books, remember? And throughout these 12 books we've sprinkled in Poetry, Major and Minor Prophets. So let's take a look at a few characters we need to know.

Joshua (*Joshua 1*)- Torchbearer for the Israelites wandering in the desert. He is also in charge of promised land distribution.

Details about Joshua:

(Hint: Read about the spy Rahab in Joshua 2)

The book of Judges reads like a Bravo TV show. It's hard to watch but man is it interesting. The book of Judges is commonly broken down into 7 cycles of Judges, if that is fascinating to you, then I would suggest reading and charting it out so that you can see how the rotations flow from one to the next. However, if that's not how you like to learn, read as you can. Samson was probably the most famous judge, start there in (*Judges 13-16*). (*Again, TV show!*).

Here are the 4 basic stages of each Judge.

Judges Cycles (7 main cycles):

S- Sin

O- Oppression

R- Repentance

D- Deliverer (*Judge*)

The Israelites cried out for a King, because all of the other nations had Kings but God agrees to let them have a Judge who was powerful but not completely. This S-O-R-D cycle is probably familiar to us because it's similar to our lives. The only difference is that now, God doesn't send a Judge, he points us to Jesus!

Ruth - An incredible narrative that happens in the center of historical information. A heart story that reminds us that God provides a kinsman redeemer for his people. That we are never without him or his presence and that we no longer need to be known as bitter people (*Mara-Ruth 1:20*) but that we can become 'full' in the Lord; lacking nothing. The book of Ruth ends with Ruth and Boaz becoming the parents to Obed. Obed becomes the father to Jesse and Jesse is the father of David. A shepherd boy that forever changed the way God's people looked at leadership and Kingship.

Enter to the stage, King David. David was a King known for many things but the thing that he's best known for is being a 'man after God's own heart'. (ref). This simple fact encapsulates David's life. While certainly not perfect, David truly had a heart that longed to obey, worship and serve God. There is a beautiful moment in **2 Samuel 7:4-16** that is commonly referred to as the (unconditional) Davidic Covenant and presents our third major covenant.

Please take a minute to read **The Davidic Covenant** for yourself.

NOTES

David wants to build God a 'house' or a temple for the Ark of the Covenant to stay permanently. And God's response is that he wants to build David a 'house'. Except God doesn't want to build David a temple or even a kingdom. God wants to build David a heritage. God wants to produce, through David's generational line, a Messiah. Through the line of David, Jesus would one day come to earth to save and redeem all people from their sins.

In Isaiah 58 we see the prophet refer to Jesus as a 'suffering servant' and in Isaiah 61 he is called 'the Righteous Ruler'. Both descriptions are Jesus!

Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 contains beautiful descriptions of the kingdom of God. Be sure to read them when you get a chance.

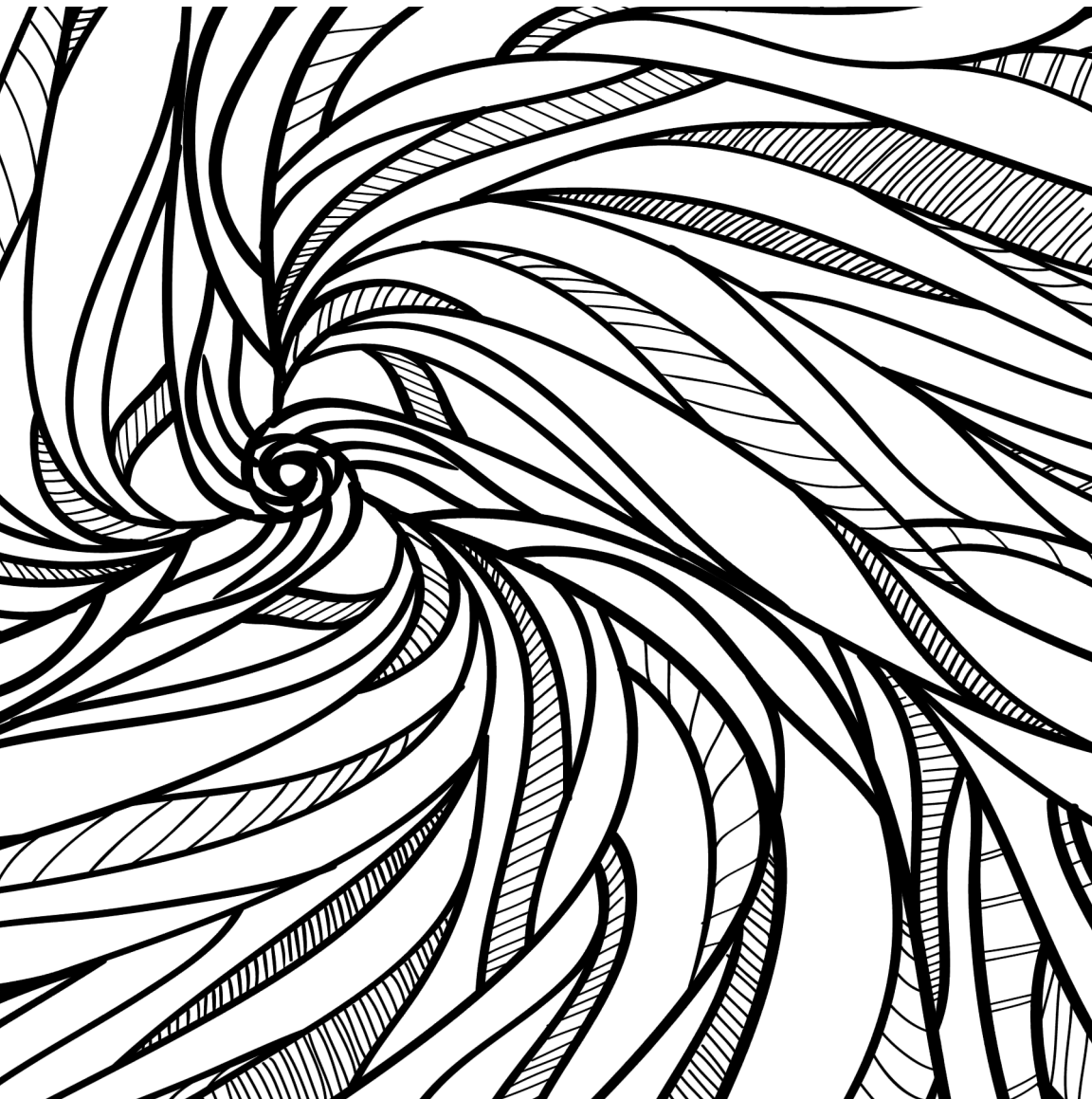
Father, you don't just give us life but you give us a heritage in your faith. May we have a heart after you just like David had. Remind me today that you've created me for a specific purpose in the time period which I live in. The city and the people I live around. Let me lean into the life you've laid before so that I can make your name great. You're the One I want, Jesus. Amen.

Day Six:

Covenant Worship

*"I meditate on your precepts
And consider your ways.
I delight in your decrees;
I will not neglect your word."*

Psalm 119:15-16



In the homeschool program my children attend, they focus on how each child learns in different ways. Some connect to nature, some like to be still and quiet so that they can focus. My kids personally like to do things like jump on the trampoline as they spell out their vocabulary words for the week. Or one prefers to paint me a picture of the characters in a story versus just verbally walking me through the plot.

The Bible authors were a bit like we are today. Each of them related to God in a different way. We consider the books of Poetry, well, poetry. But that doesn't mean that there isn't lament, praise, non-proverbial wisdom scattered throughout. Worship comes in many forms through the books of Job, Psalm, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon but one thing is certain: God always responds to repentance.

Job - The books of poetry start with a bang in Job. The premise of Job sounds simple enough yet it can become difficult to wrap your mind around it's contents without a heart focused on a God that loves and wants the best for you. Job is found faithful and yet the Lord allows him to be 'sifted' and tested. Job maintains his faith through the book but it's not without heart aching difficult moments.

*"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
may the name of the Lord be praised."*

Job 1:21

Psalms - Psalm is one of the most widely known and quoted books of the Bible. The book is broken down into 150 chapters. The majority author here is David, although there are a few chapters with unknown authorship and some actually written by Moses.

"For the Lord is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless."

Psalm 84:11

Proverbs - The book of Proverbs is known for its short pithy statements usually relating some biblical principal to the earthly realm of how to live well. There are also longer poetic units that lead the reader to emot about topics that most everyone can relate.

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*

Proverbs 9:10

Ecclesiastes - Traditionally assumed to be written by King Solomon. We are not exactly sure of the time period but I'm praying this was written at the end of his life. This entry reads a bit like a journal entry that contains wisdom sprinkled throughout but it's also a bit heartbreaking to stomach. The author is clearly searching for meaning in his days.

*"There is a time for everything, and a season
for every activity under the heavens."*

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Song of Solomon - Written by, you guessed it, King Solomon (*David's Son*). This book is romantic and lyrically written in a way that can surprise you if you thought the Bible was all boring and only listed out the generational docketts. The book is rated PG-13 and contains beautiful discourse of a bride and groom.

*"Let him lead me to the banquet hall,
and let his banner over me be love."*

Song of Solomon 2:4

My personal favorite section of Psalms is chapter 119. It's the longest chapter in the Bible at 176 verses crafted into 22 stanzas with 8 verse each. I love that it's written in first person. They short phrasing makes it easy to use in my personal prayer life. This chapter has given me words to pray and sing when I felt like I was so sad and had no words of my own.

What a gift scripture truly is!

As you read through the books of Poetry, perhaps you'd like to try your hand at writing a sonnet or a couple of phrases that come from the depth of your heart. The great news about poetry, is that there are no rules! Feel freedom in that. Writing from a place of honesty takes vulnerability and quite frankly, bravery. Asking the Lord to install both in you today.

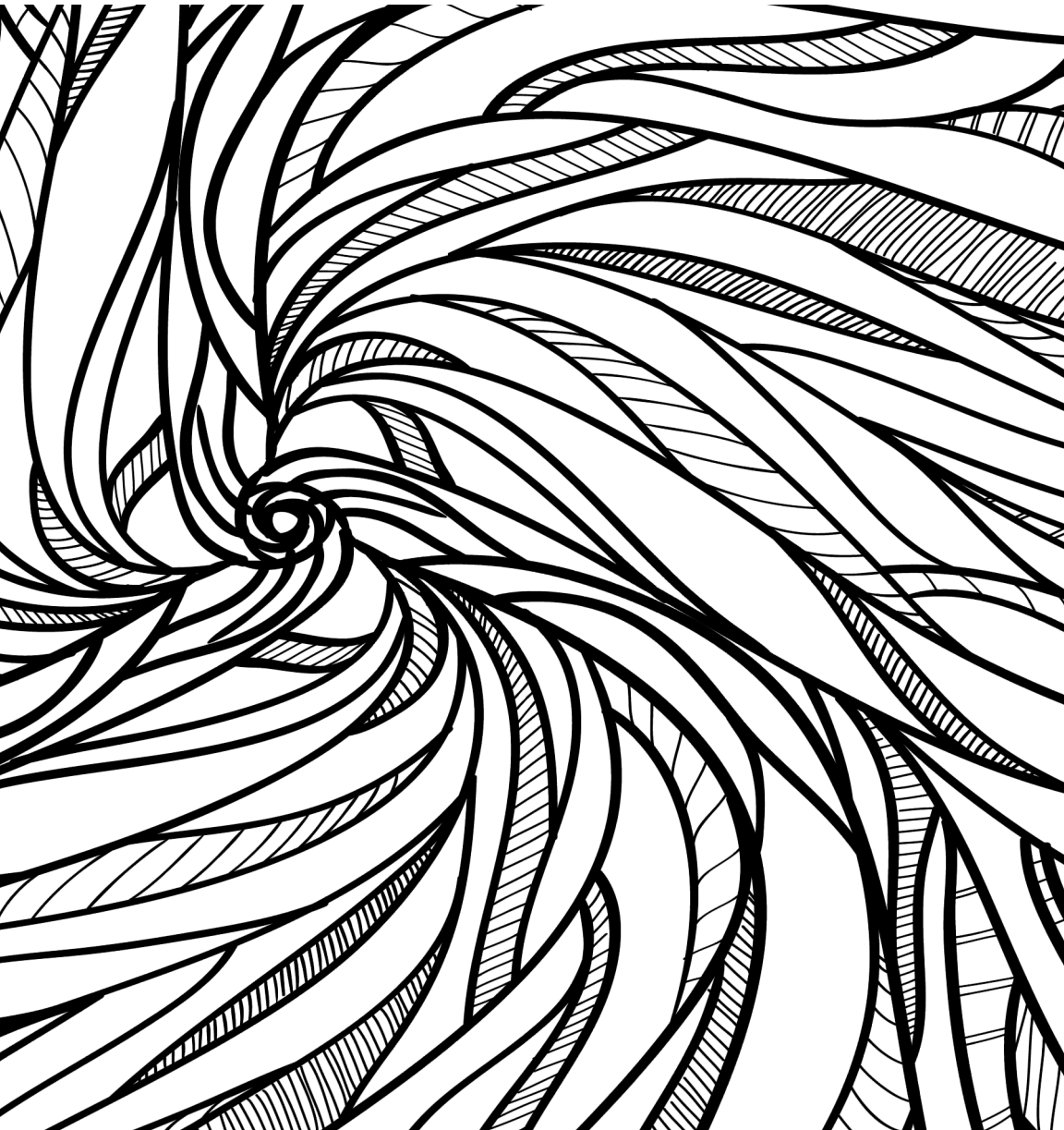
*Lord, We don't always know why it's so hard to tap into our emotions deep down. Sometimes it feels scary because we are afraid that if we begin to feel, that the wall of bravery and protection will come crumbling down. Please remind me today that you will be with me through all of it. The good and the hard. You're so kind to walk us home, Father.
I love you, Lord. Amen.*

Day Seven:

Covenant Judgement

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

Ezekiel 36:26



Today's reading is a bit more historical in nature but can be impactful if we allow it to land on us in a way where we don't push it away as simply facts but rather put ourselves in the position of the Israelites. The truth is that we are all fallen people. Every single one of us has been in a real life position where we knew what we were supposed to do, the right thing, and instead we chose to do the wrong thing, disobedience.

Even as I'm writing this I can think of a laundry list of situations in my own life that I desperately wish I would have handled differently. Some of them are monumental and others are so tiny that to an outsider, they looked like a perfectly fine choice. The difficult truth is that no matter what it looked like from the outside, I knew what I was supposed to do and instead I chose disobedience in exchange for immediate self gratification. Hard sentence to type, in case you were wondering. I'm sure we could compare stories for days and we could compete to see who had the 'best stories'. Sadly, that's not a productive use of our time. The best use of our time is to become supremely comfortable talking openly about the grace and goodness of God.

To be willing to not speak with detailed specifics but rather to be able to say, without hesitation, that I have been disobedient yet God still calls me his own. I was lost in my own selfishness, pride and self-consumption yet his words beckoned me out and away from my self. This is the gospel and through a long period of time, this is what the Israelites came to know as well.

This straightforward statement for today's topic of Covenant Judgment:

Israel faced major consequences for covenant unfaithfulness.

Take a minute to read about where the 12 tribes of Israel found themselves:

A divided Kingdom:

Cause: 1 Kings 10:14-29; 11:1-7

Effect: 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 25

- Northern Kingdom: Israel (*10 tribes*) Capitol city is Samaria
- Southern Kingdom: Judah (*2 tribes*) Capitol is Jerusalem

Remember - There was no difference between the major and minor prophets other than the amount of real estate they take up. Their messages were the same: **REPENT!**

This divided kingdom eventually lead to Captivity and destruction:

Israel- North: Conquered in 722 B.C. by the Assyrians

Judah- South: Conquered in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians

At the close of the Old Testament, around 430 B.C., we see a divided kingdom yet a kingdom that realized the error of their ways. Though divided, they began to turn their hearts back to God. Even in times of political and religious division, God's people can still focus their hearts on the One who unites and stands in the gap of division.

God, Thank you that you are still worthy of our devotion. In times of political peace or strife, you are the One we turn to as our true King. We worship you and choose to believe you when you speak boundaries and rules for a full life. Strengthen our will to obey. Embolden our voices to remind others of your Gospel that speaks of a Righteous Ruler coming again. Make paths before us to follow in your will and compel others to do the same.

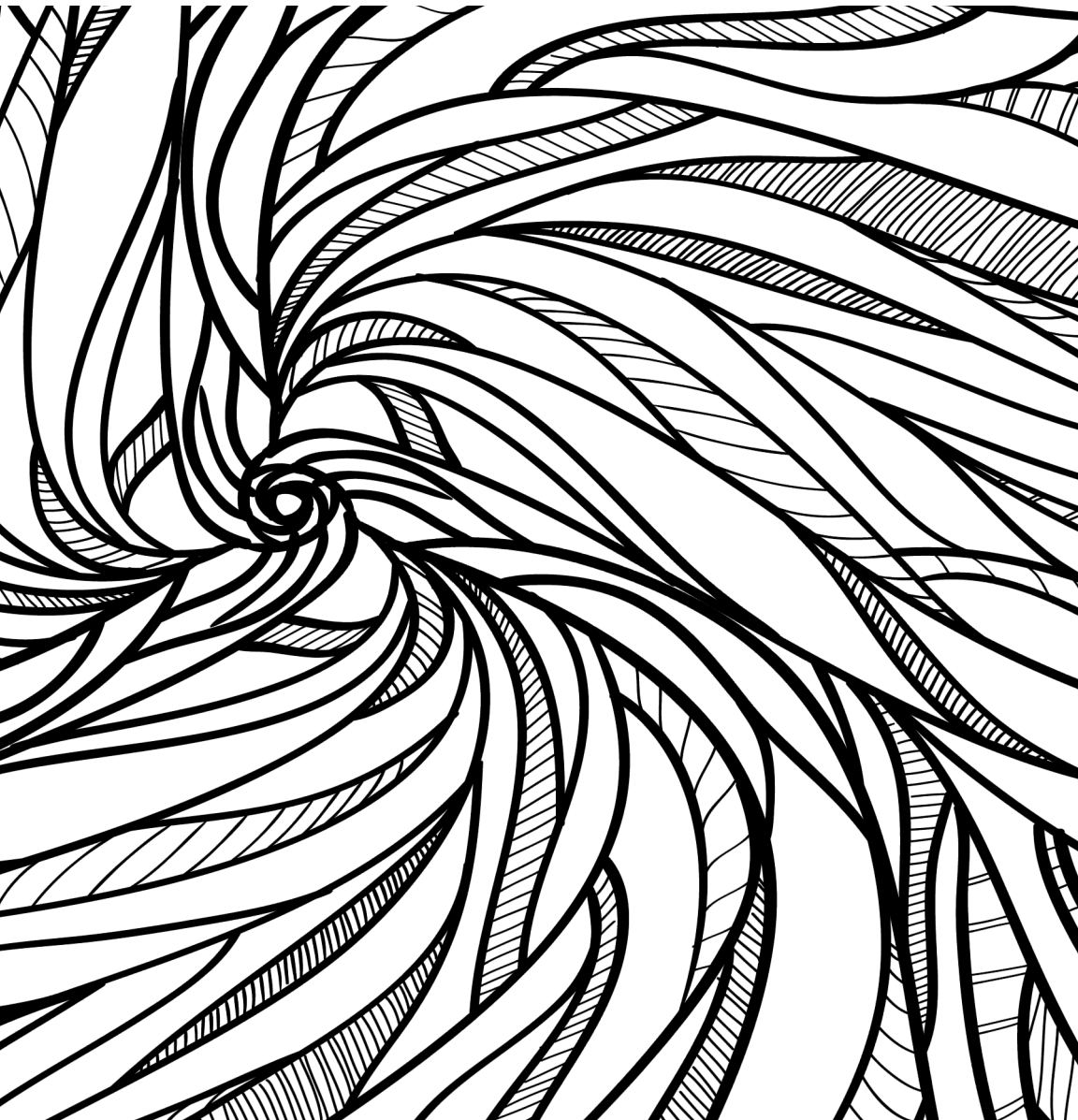
You are worth it, Jesus. Amen.

Day Eight:

Covenant Love

"This is the Covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law on their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people."

Jeremiah 31:33



You know, the beautiful thing about love is that love can be possessed and given away at the same time. The giving doesn't diminish the love that's ours one single iota. And in fact, it increases our love in ways that defy everything the world teaches. Love is meant to be shared. Before we step into our last major covenant, let's review the first three.

1. Abrahamic Covenant: *Genesis 12:1-3*

2. Mosaic Covenant: *Exodus 20; 24:1-7*

3. Davidic Covenant: *2 Samuel 7:2-16*

Following the three other covenants, we arrive in the book of Jeremiah (major Prophet) and we see this beautiful new unconditional covenant that is introduced. It's called the 'New' Covenant because it covers these three main points and introduces the idea of God living with his people. Remember, this hasn't happening since the garden. So that one fact is game changing. This covenant speaks directly to the Son of God coming to live among his people.

New Covenant: *Jeremiah 31:31-34*

1. **I will be your God.**
2. **You will be my people.**
3. **I will live among you.**

This New Covenant is Jesus Christ coming to earth as Messiah to live among his people! Hallelujah! Please don't miss the magnitude of this moment in history. No longer would God speak through prophets or animal sacrifices or specific people but each of us, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit would have access to God ourselves!

I pray that falls fresh on you today!

At this point we are rounding out our time in the Old Testament and heading into the New Testament. There is a break between the Old and New Testaments that spans about 400 years. The Old Testament ends at about 430 B.C. and the book of Matthew doesn't pick back up until around 30 B.C. Many teachers refer to this as '400 years of silence' because God didn't speak through any prophets at this time but that doesn't mean he wasn't moving.

During these 400 years, many Israelites began to meet in congregations across Rome so that they could return to reading the Law (Mosaic) together. They knew that the last time there was relative peace, outside of the garden, was when they were obedient to God's laws. Pair this newfound obedience with the New Covenant and the promise of a Messiah and there was a great rumble within these small faith communities scattered across the Roman countryside.

Remember what the books of Poetry taught us? God always responds to repentance. I pray that this both inspires and emboldens you to trust God in the silence and to know that he is always, always working.

Lord, Thank you that I can bring all of my feelings to you. Whether I feel seen and valued or I feel as though you are silent, you hear me say it all. Thank you for your new covenant and your son named Jesus. He really did change everything. Thank you for loving me through life. Amen.

Day Nine:

The King Has Come

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Matthew 9:35-38



When I was growing up in the church, the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were seemingly referred to as one big book. Isn't that funny? Almost like they were one book with several different nicknames. While they are very similar, they each carry their own flavor. Their own view point and desire to paint Jesus in a certain light. Luke, for instance, the doctor has a bend toward the physical body of God come down to earth. This is how he writes and interprets many stories of Jesus. Mark on the other hand, pens his stories of Jesus as the suffering servant. Jesus put everyone else's needs above his own and Mark deeply connected to that aspect of Jesus' personality.

As we pick up in the beginning of the New Testament, there has been 400 years of silence, but we know now that it was not really silent. There were grassroots efforts all over Rome that gathered God's people together to read his law together.

The birth of Jesus in Matthew 1, we see Mary and Joseph giving birth to a son whom the angel told them would be called 'Immanuel' meaning 'God with us'. Take a minute to flip back to the New Covenant we talked about yesterday? (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Remember the three main points of the New Covenant?

Now think about Jesus' name being Immanuel....I KNOW. It really is so cool, huh?

The birth of Jesus as detailed in Luke is the one that gets the most air time at Christmas. Leave it to the Doctor to pen the best birth story, huh?

Read Luke 1-2:21

At the birth of Jesus we see that the Messiah foretold of for generations upon generations was among his people. Except he came as a baby? Not a political figure like most people thought he would. Yes, this Messiah came as baby and didn't begin his ministry until he was 30 years old and he started by making wine out of water? Not exactly what I think the people had in mind.

But Jesus was tradition breaking and tradition fulfilling all at the same time. He was everything the people needed and nothing like they wanted. He was, the Son of God come to earth in flesh and bone to sacrifice himself on a cross for the sins of the world. To atone for every sin that was ever committed or would be committed.

He is Jesus.

Although each gospel gives different viewpoints, here are a few stories that I think you need to read to see how Jesus exemplified he was Immanuel.

1. Jesus' Baptism: *Luke 3:1-23*
2. The Parable of the Sower: *Matthew 13:1-23*
3. Jesus feed the 5,000: *Mark 6:30-44*
4. The Good Shepherd and His Sheep: *John 10:1-21*

You'll quickly see how each writer phrases things uniquely. It's almost as if you need to read all four to get an accurate picture of the event. Let's give that a try below. Jesus' earthly tenure ended in sacrifice. And then resurrection. It's a story that is more important than just Easter. The resurrection colors everything and fulfills many Old Testament prophecies. Take notes on how each of the 4 authors bring out new details. This is a great way to better understand how each author brings a different viewpoint to the story.

The Resurrection of Jesus as told in each Gospel:

Matthew 26:47-28:15

Mark 15-16

Luke 22:39-24:53

John 18-20

NOTES

“Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John 20:30-31

I pray that today reminds you all of history was leading up to the moment where a Messiah would come to earth and save us all. God chose to send a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and laying in a manger. Not quite the way everyone thought it would go. If today, your life isn't quite the way you thought it would look, I pray that you can rest in the fact that God works differently than our human minds can comprehend. And it's always, always more beautiful than you can imagine.

*Lord, You really do overwhelm me with your ability to weave a story. Your story. My story. Their story. Thank for all you did to pull together details that matter to people like me. You know my heart is prone to wander, question and need to know everything. You didn't start with a simple story and add details over time. The details have been here since the dawn of creation. Thank you for going before me and walking with me through my days.
Love you. Amen.*

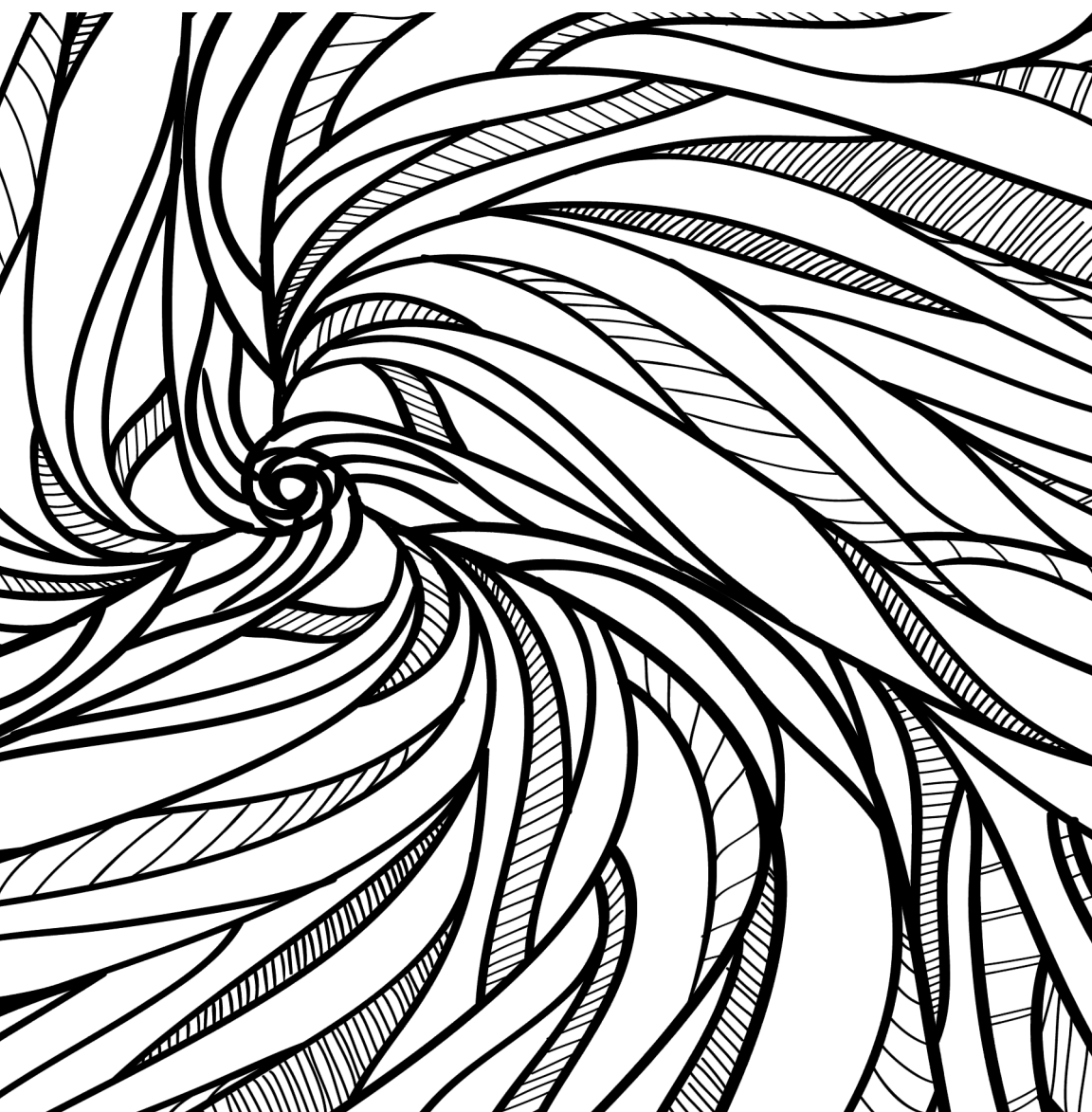
Day Ten:

All the Kings Men

Acts

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8



If you were going to read one book to help you wrap your brain around how the church of today should function, it's the book of Acts. We know that Acts is history, but not just any history: Theological History. Let me assure you, that this book lives up to its name. It has all the makings of a great fictional story yet every bit of really happened. As an avid reader, I can assure you that this kind of material is hard to find! I pray that you get lost in the pages of this incredible gospel story spreading like wildfire throughout the world.

Take a minute to skim through the book of Acts making notes of any subjects you want to be sure to go back and read in depth.

A few major events in Acts:

1. Ascension of Jesus into heaven: *Acts 1:1-11*
2. Pentecost: *Acts 2:1-13*
3. Expansion of the Gospel *Acts 4 & 5*
4. Stephen is stoned to death yet has a vision of God before he dies. (Yes, really!) *Acts 6:8-7:60*
5. Peter has his moment: *Acts 2:14-40*
6. The church is persecuted and scattered: *Acts 8:1-3*
7. We are introduced to a man named Saul who later become Paul: *Acts 9*
8. Paul gains his footing in Christianity and becomes a force to be dealt with. Kind of his life story.

The new Christian church faces much opposition yet is not lacking in motivation or desire to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. May our churches be this way as well! A verse that many people love to focus on is in Acts 2. In fact, many congregations desire to be an Acts 2 type of church- an honorable desire!

As we close today, remember these words the next time someone comes into your home for a meal. It's not about it being a showstopper of a meal. I generally just try to not burn everything? Just me? Burnt dinner aside, it's really about your attention being on your guests. And when that happens, it's possible to turn their attention to Jesus. When that happens, I can assure you that no one is thinking that the chicken was a little too dry. They will walk away with faces glowing knowing that they communed with friends who's hearts are aligned with theirs as well and they saw the most basic form of the Gospel acted out. This passage in Acts perfectly sums up the manifesto of the Church but also the heart of the letters. As we close today, is there a way you can better enact these community conditions in your own life and ministry?

'The Fellowship of the Believers:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.'

Acts 2:42-47

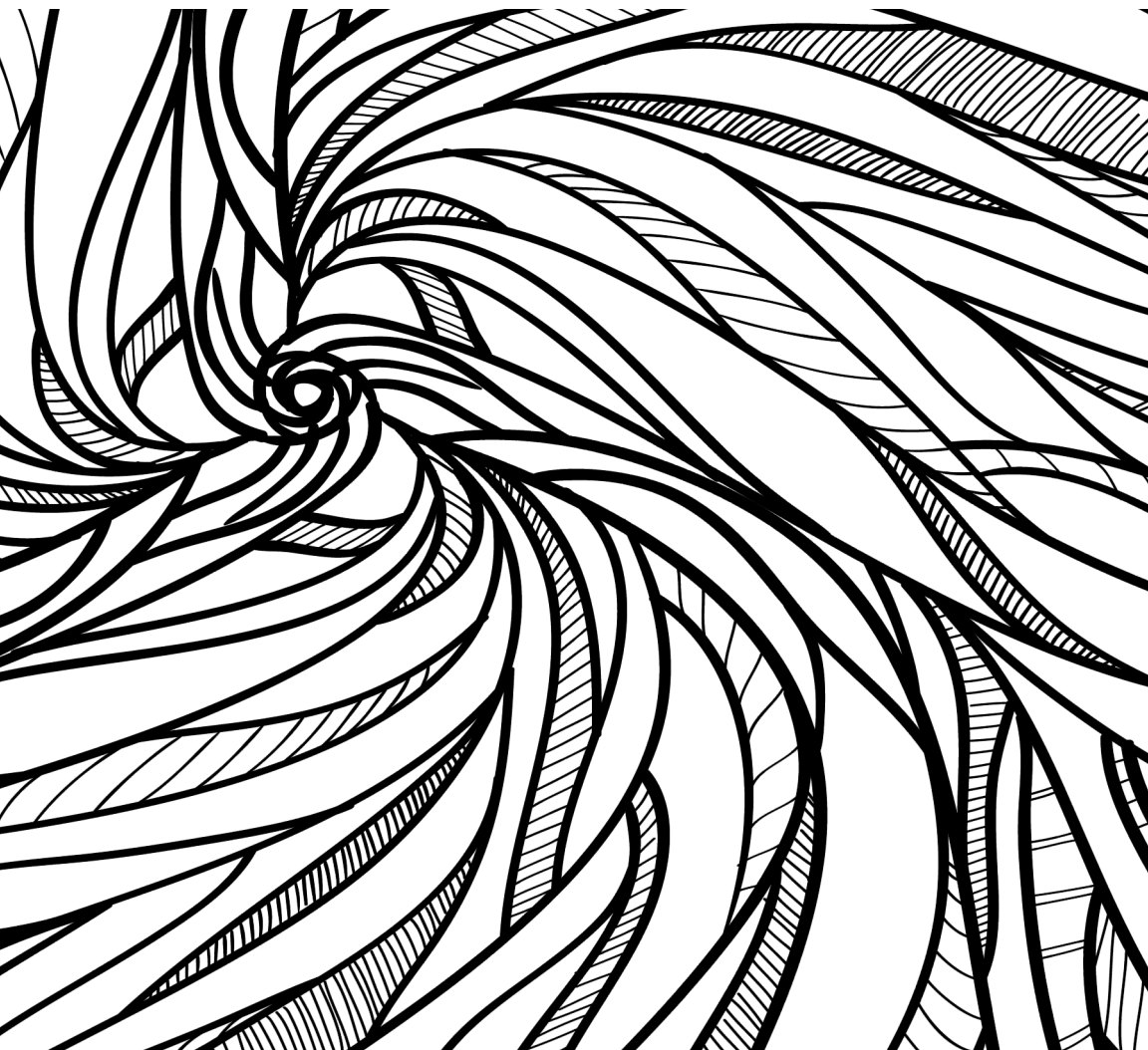
Father, thank you that the breaking of bread has little to do with the actual bread and everything to do with how we make others feel around us. Through your holy spirit, I pray that others will feel you when they walk into our home or when we are simply socializing. That they will know something is different about us. Not perfect, but set apart. Please pair our desire to influence others with a willing and genuine heart. Only you can, Jesus. Amen.

Day Eleven:

Living For The King- Orthodoxy/Orthopraxy

“Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 1-3



I don't know about you, but I've always loved words. Real words. True words. The inflection in the tone of the words. How a specific word choice communicates a story in a way that is palatable versus a poor word choice that is offensive. Words really do matter. Two words that I have absolutely loved learning about are Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy. Coming from a denomination that didn't use these types of words, they scared me originally yet have come to carry such weight and meaning to me. They have genuinely become two of my favorite things to talk about. Almost as if I've known their truth my entire life but never had the words tot all about their meaning.

Orthodoxy: Generally accepted Beliefs and Convictions

Orthopraxy: Call to discipleship. How we live out our beliefs and convictions.

There are 21 epistles or letters in the New Testament. An epistle is a poem or literary work in the form of a letter or a series of letters. We call them 'The Letters' because Epistles just doesn't really roll off the tongue. These letters seem to be where the bulk of our sermons tend to be sourced and that's simply because that's exactly why they were written! These letters were written by various authors to congregations to be read aloud. A sermon in letter format if you will. They were written to teach in gathering during a certain time period to address current events happening during that day.

Take a minute to list all 21 books and write out the authors for each. What names do you hear more than once?

Paul is clearly the front runner in the letter writing department. This is seemingly a preferred way of communicating with his past groups of believers. His typical greeting of 'Grace and Peace' can become a a welcome rhythm if we allow it.

Isn't that a blessing we should extend to all we come in contact with anyway?

The letters follow a Greco-Roman model because Rome was the world power at the time. All start with a type of greeting and some form of salutation at the end. The 21 letters focused on the following 7 community convictions. They were either challenging their people to adhere to them, reprimanding the congregation for missteps along the way or thanking the recipients for all of their hard work and service.

Community convictions:

- 1. Scripture**
- 2. Trinity**
- 3. Jesus**
- 4. Humanity**
- 5. Substitutionary Atonement**
- 6. Salvation**
- 7. Return of Christ**

Once we understand that most other denominations aren't all that different from us, we actually become steadier in our faith. If we don't understand the basic conditions of our own Christian faith, then how are we to stand firm against other false religions?

When you think about these 21 letters, what comes to mind?

Is there one book/letter that stands out? One that you feel as though the author is speaking directly to you?

A few verses I personally love for many reasons, but not the least of which are due to the word choices:

“But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.”

Colossians 1:22-23

“Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you- guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”

2 Timothy 1:14

‘Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace.’

James 4:5-6

These letters are shockingly applicable in today’s world that we live in. It’s easy to say that the world is so much worse than it was even 50 years ago. And the truth is that the farther away we get from the garden, the more destruction and hardship we see. However, I hope that you take comfort in knowing that none of these event surprise our God. He has see them from he dawn of time and will continue to see us through to the very end. May these letters encourage and propel you to let your voice of grace be heard louder than the voices of discord.

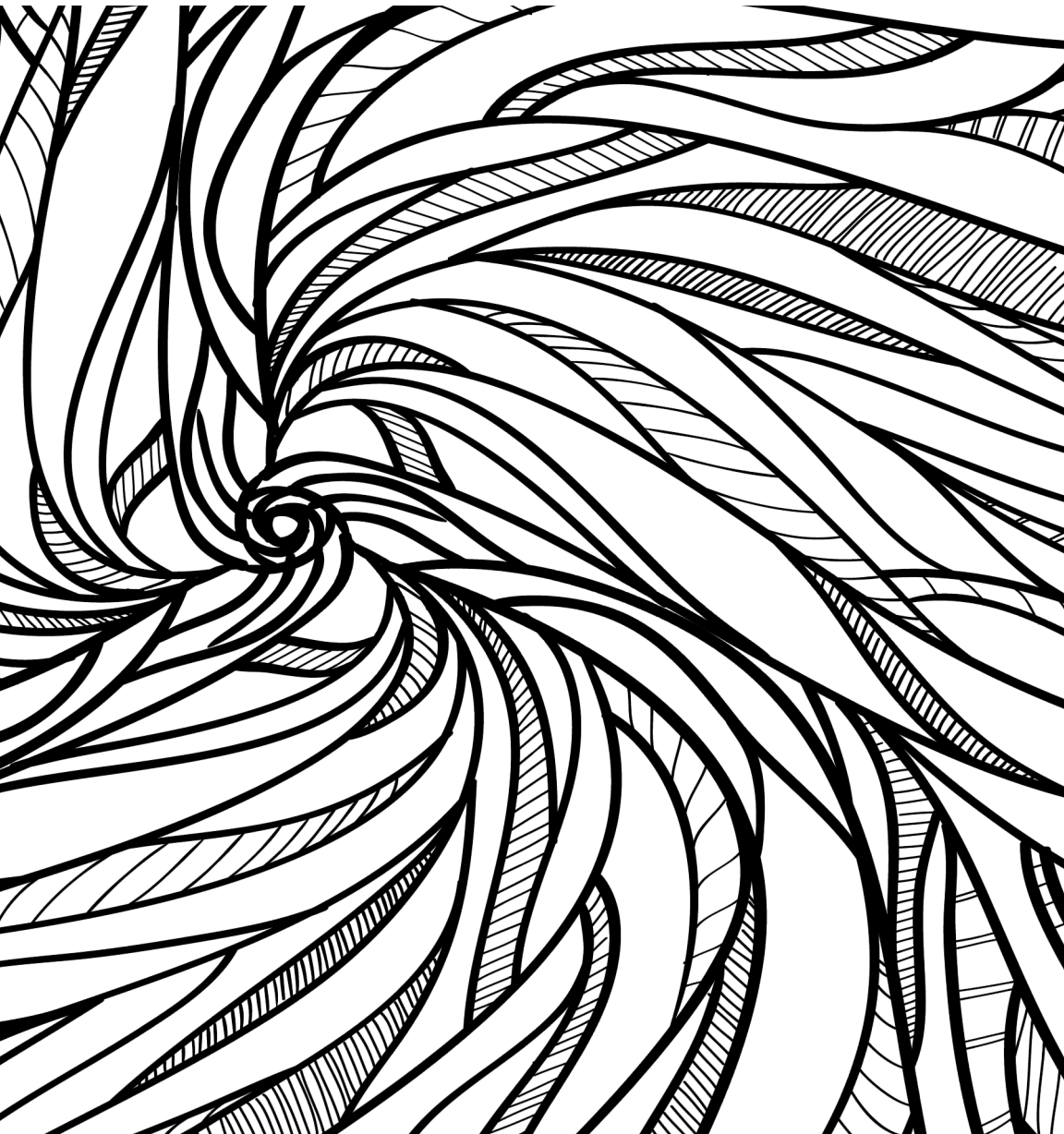
*Lord, thank you that you made it so clear, through the writing of your Word, what the important things really are. You know I get sidetracked by the minute details, song choices and event planning in ministry. Keep my eyes on the prize. That’s you, Jesus. You are our prize.
Amen.*

Day Twelve:

The King Is Coming

"Grace and peace to you from him who was, and who is, and who is to come"

Revelation 1:4



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Alright, I know some of you have been waiting to get to the end. Admittedly, I am not qualified to write this portion. The book of Revelation should not be something that we are afraid of however it is a book that should be handled delicately. Also, it's a tiny bit intimidating. Not to mention there are about 100 differing opinions, so we will try to stick with the basics for unity's sake.

Since we are doing an overview, there's no way to exegete every single verse but there are a few key points that I hope you'll see are pretty incredible. The book of Revelation begins with John's incredibly vivid description of Jesus and it sets the tone for the rest of the book. John is doing his best to convey that Jesus really is who he said he was.

The book of Revelation is considered a prophetic book. John was prophesying from the Isle of Patmos about this vision the Lord gave him. There are 7 letters written to the Churches and multiple different scenes around the throne of God. There are beasts and animals that the human eye has never seen before. There is a God who uses the enemy as his footstool and Jesus is at his right hand.

Talk about astounding!

Remember back in Isaiah 53 when it spoke of Jesus as a 'Suffering Servant'? And then remember how in Isaiah 61, just a couple of chapters later he calls him a 'Righteous Ruler'? Well, the Suffering Servant comes in the Gospels but the Righteous Ruler comes back in Revelation and he will rule for 1,000 years on earth.

As we near the end of Revelation, there are two scenes I want you to remember.

"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." [a] He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS"

Revelation 19:11-16

This is our Jesus. This is our God. This is our Righteous Ruler!
Literal chills up my back.

Personally, the most jaw dropping part of Revelation is surprisingly not all of the beasts and battles. Perhaps it's still so hard to wrap my mind around that portion of this book but there is one part that I can grasp a little better. After the final judgement, we see a picture of how earth is redeemed back to the garden of Eden.

One detail I mentioned in the video is the names of the tribes and disciples on the gate into the New Jerusalem. (*Revelation 21:10-14*) On each of the 12 gates were the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. And under each gate was a found nation and each of the 12 foundations had the name of one of the apostles written on it.

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These are small glimpses into a much larger narrative with enough meaning and connection to keep you busy for the rest of your days researching them all. My hope is that these glimpses have inspired you to dig further into scripture so that you might be encouraged by the completion of the story of scripture that we hold so dear.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

Revelation 22:12

There is victory over death for those on God's side. From creation and Garden to the Suffering Servant to Righteous Ruler in the end, God has the entire story of scripture penned. He truly loves you so much and invites you into His story. I pray you feel thought of, cared for and wanted as we conclude our study time together.

Father, your preeminence is more than we know how to handle. Thank you that we can trust you because we know that our own mind and bodies can do nothing apart from you. You are the one we worship. You are the one we adore. You are the one we bow down before as you reign from your immaculate throne with angels and all heavenly beings knelt before you. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace to those on whom his favor rests."

And all of God's people said: AMEN!

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