

SERIES GRAPHIC

Masters of the Air image/graphic

https://www.nationalww2museum.org/sites/default/files/styles/wide_medium/public/2023-11/342-FH_000218_1.png?h=1dd79b8b

{one slide}

We are all part of a story.

We are story-shaped people.

Luke 1:1-2

Many have undertaken to compile a **narrative** about the events that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word **handed them down to us**.

God Himself is **authoring (telling) a story.**

Luke 1:3-4

So it also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an **orderly sequence**, most honorable **Theophilus**, ⁴ so that you may **know the certainty** of the things about which you have been **instructed**.

Acts 1:1-4

I wrote the **first narrative**, Theophilus, about all that Jesus **began to do and teach** ² until the day He was taken up, after He had given **instructions** through the **Holy Spirit to the apostles** He had chosen. ³ After He had suffered, He also presented himself alive to them by many **convincing proofs**, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

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God's Story:

True

Better

Unfolding

Theophilus (like us) is in a story and telling himself a story.

{bullet points come up one at a time; keep formatting}

We choose the story we tell ourselves: be careful.

- The **“world”** offers us a story.
- Our **fears & anxieties** offer us a story.
- Our **“pleasures”** offer us a story.
- Our **“past”** gives us a story.

God offers us an invitation: join His better story as it unfolds ...

1) We have a new point of reference: **Jesus**

The story **includes us** but is not primarily **about us**.

God has not been commissioned to manage our agenda, but rather, He's chosen us to be part of His.

Surrender leads to **significance** ...

and the better Story invites surrender to the Person of Jesus full of love, truth, grace, power and authority!

Lost? Dazed? Confused? Uncertain? Look (again and again) to **Jesus**.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ²We do this by **keeping our eyes on Jesus**, the champion Who initiates and perfects our faith.

2) We must learn to **reframe**: our story into His better story.

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this age, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may **discern** what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

{all together; one slide}

Five Elements of God's Story:

- **Salvation/Rescue**
- **Identity**
- **Understanding**
- **Comfort**
- **Hope**

{all together; one slide}

Big Question:

- What is your “every day,” “on the ground” understanding of God’s involvement in your life?
 - Unexpected? Unwelcomed? Unplanned?
 - Surprises? Blessings? Coincidences?

Philippians 1:12a

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that **what has happened to me** has ...

Philippians 1:12-14

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually **advanced the gospel**,¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is **because I am in Christ**.¹⁴ Most of the brothers have **gained confidence in the Lord** from my imprisonment and dare even more to **speak the word fearlessly**.

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Lesser Story

Victim
Controlling
Hopeless
Bitter
Blaming

Better Story

Participant
Submitted
Hopeful
Better
Trusting

{all one slide if possible}

Welcoming Prayer

Welcome, welcome welcome everything that comes to me today because I know God is with me. I welcome all emotions, persons, situations and conditions.

I let go of my desire for power and control; affection and approval; esteem and exaltation.

Instead, I am open to the love and presence of God and surrendered to faithfully be part of His better and unfolding story.

3) Realize that every day is an opportunity to **begin** (again)!

Psalm 118:24

This is **the day** the Lord has made; let’s rejoice and be glad **in it**.

Lamentations 3:22-24

The Lord's loving kindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail.

²³ They are new **every morning**; Great is Your faithfulness.

²⁴ "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "**Therefore** I have hope in Him."

- a) It always depends on how **you look at it** □ What story am I telling myself?
- b) This is only the beginning; therefore, **stuck** is a choice, not a condition.
- c) Learn to **disrupt the devil** with a "But ..."

Ephesians 2:4-5

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!

- d) Next steps come from the story I most **believe** AND most **tell myself**.

STEP AWAY ...

STEP INTO ...

STEP TOWARD ...