

## Don't Miss the Point of it All

*a narrative hermeneutic amidst the story of the king*

*Read: "The Pirate Who Tried to Capture the Moon" (stop @ page 15)*

In the western world, we like to dissect things. Cut them open, see how they work, and then throw them away. I used to love to do this as a boy. I would find some kind of old electronic gadget and then take it apart to see how it worked. It was usually already dead for someone to let me take it apart, and even if it did work before it did not work after I had dissected it!

We do this in high school biology class with worms and frogs and sometimes cats. In order to understand things we take them apart, see their insides, then declare that we "know" them; have knowledge. Knowledge is gained by death. Interesting. No wonder the eastern world looks at us westerners very strange sometimes.

I know, some of you are thinking: "but good things have come out of dissecting... medical research, understanding our universe, knowing our world, etc. It can't be really bad can it?" Sure good things have come out of the last hundred years of medical discovery, I'm not going that far with this dissecting. Although, we must be careful how much ethical license we give researchers in the field of medical discovery. We could step over the line every now and then.

I know this though... My wife would really like me to "know" her by not dissecting her. "Honey, I want to 'know' you. And I can only do this by cutting into your chest and taking a good look at your heart!!" She would probably take offense to that!

No. I "know" my wife, Amanda, by embracing her, listening to her, loving her, holding her, spending time with her... not by dissecting her.

You see, if I was all about dissecting in order to "know", then I would be missing the point, wouldn't I? The Point of it All isn't "knowing" how the parts of my wife work, but maybe the inner workings of her spirit, her soul. Maybe embracing my wife, Amanda, is the Point of it All.

Maybe we should tell Jesus this though. I don't know if He knows this:

Hebrews 4:12-13 NIV

*"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of his to whom we must give an account."*

Interesting.

Remember the Pirate story we just read? Let's imagine this story as a play w/ Acts and Scenes:

*Act I – a fierce pirate who loved nothing*  
*Act II – capturing ships*  
    *Scene 1 – capture ship of flowers*  
    *Scene 2 – capture ship of horses*  
    *Scene 3 – capture ship of birds*  
    *Scene 4 – captured every ship there was to catch*  
*Act III – Capturing the Moon*  
    *Scene 1 – get the Moon to follow...*  
    *Scene 2 – fire cannonballs @ the moon*  
    *Scene 3 – get birds to carry you to the moon*  
*and so on...*

Stories, plays and movies are almost all universally written with a "five-act-code" in the background. Some stories are simple, and some are complex. But almost all stories are written with this unseen "five-act-code."

*Act I – intro of characters and their background*  
*Act II – conflict of some kind-problem*  
*Act III – plot of how characters deal with conflict-problem*  
*Act IV – climax*  
*Act V – resolution*

For example, the story of the "Three Little Pigs." Have you heard this story before? Three pigs with different kinds of houses. And the big, bad wolf comes a knockin' to blow the houses down? The "five-act-code":

*Act I – intro of characters and their background*  
    Three little pigs, three little nice pigs  
*Act II – conflict of some kind-problem*  
    The big, bad wolf comes a knockin'  
*Act III – plot of how characters deal with conflict-problem*  
    Pigs hide in their houses. First one gets his blown away. And the second gets his blown away. The two then run to the house of the third.  
*Act IV – climax*  
    The wolf blows and he blows at the third house just like the first two. But because this house is made of bricks the wolf cannot take it down. The problem is conquered.  
*Act V – resolution*  
    The pigs live happily ever after in brick houses.

Well the Word of God, the Bible is sort of written with this "five-act-code" in the background... On your handout in the bulletin you have space to write this down.

*Act I – Creation (Gen 1-2)*

*Scene 1 – day 1*

*Scene 2 – day 2*

*etc.*

*Act II – The Fall (Gen 3)*

*(eating tree, killing brother, rampant evil, trying to reach heaven)*

*Act III – The Story of God's People Israel (Gen 12 – Mal 4)*

*Many Scenes...*

*Act IV – The Story of Jesus (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)*

*Many Scenes...*

*Act V – The Story of God's People New Israel (the church) (Acts – Rev)*

*Scene 1 – Acts*

*us. today. we are in this story.*

*Scene ? – Second Coming of Jesus*

The Bible actually has a very simple storyline, doesn't it?

- God and people
- People mess up
- God works to fix (redeem) messed-up people
- People still mess up
- God sends son, Jesus to complete the fix
- People live through the fixer, Jesus, to go back to – God and people.

The stories that fill out this main storyline teach and instruct and inform us of the holy character of God and how humanity is really, really messed up. But that God continues, even in spite of our wretched disobedience, to try and rescue us from ourselves.

Maybe that is the Point of it All: We are really messed up and because that is what we really need... salvation from ourselves...

Remember the Pirate story?

Who is the pirate anyway? This fierce pirate who loves nothing?

- Some would say that the pirate is the Great Enemy – Satan

Mark 4:15

*"Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them."*

1 Peter 5:8

*"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*

1 John 3:8

*"He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning."*

I mean, isn't this the one who tempted Eve in the Garden? Isn't Satan that wicked serpent who deceived and doomed all of mankind to sin and destruction? For sure Satan is the fierce pirate who loves absolutely nothing but himself.

- Some would say that the pirate is this evil world we live in – the Empires

Bible Nations:

*Canaanites, Philistines, Babylon, Rome*

Our culture teaches us this doesn't it? We don't need God. Really. In America, we have removed almost any need (any daily, real tangible need) for God in our lives. We don't really need God to "save" us from anything.

- Most of the world lives not knowing where their next meal is going to come from
- Or live in war-ravaged areas where death is just around the corner
- They rely desperately on rain & good weather to grow food
- Most live on less than \$100 US dollars. That's average! Most is less.
- Many are dying of diseases that the West cured years ago... and many are dying of HIV and AIDS

I was touring through Eastern Europe a little over 3 years ago observing youth ministries and youth movements as part of a class when I was in college. Actually, the day we left Portland bound for Frankfurt, Germany, America was not at war with Iraq. But when we landed in Germany, we were. I'll never forget that day—March 19. It was weird. Not just being at war, but being in a foreign land during that time. Maybe you don't remember, but the president's decision to "liberate" Iraq was not well supported by the European countries. So the people our American group encountered definitely wanted to talk with us about it. But even more than the political climate of the day, being in a foreign culture is alien, uncomfortable, strange. Language differences, basic structures, etc are just unnerving.

During those two weeks, we really depended on God. Not just token prayers, or semi-meaningless religious hype... but real, tangible, and complete dependence because we really needed God. It was a couple of weeks that are unlike any I have ever experienced.

In America, we don't really need God... In our culture we can take care of things ourselves. We forget to pray often, don't we? Why? Because we don't really need God for anything!! We can take care of things ourselves. For sure this world is the fierce pirate who loved nothing but itself.

- Still others would say that the fierce pirate who loves nothing is us – Me & You

Jeremiah 17:9

*"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"*

Countless Bible Characters:

*Cain, Lot, Jacob, Pharaoh, Samson, King Saul, King Solomon, Pharisees*

Wanting to capture everything for ourselves. Our focus is inward not outward. Recent studies show that the people are focused more and more on themselves. We are not good neighbors, most of the time we don't even know who they are. We are losing friends because we don't have time for them. We are not involved in the community because we are too busy with something else. Busy-ness has become an answer for removing ourselves of any responsibility – "I'm just too busy!" Our lives are more and more centered on what we can get out of something, not what we can give, or serve, or bleed for. Maybe we are that fierce pirate who loves nothing but himself and we want to capture everything for ourselves.

Maybe this is the Point of it All. Everything around us is against us—Satan (the enemy), the world (empires), and ourselves. And we are totally surrounded by ourselves. Is there any hope?

*Read: "The Pirate Who Tried to Capture the Moon" (page 16-42)*

Are you captured by the Moon?

Are you captured by Jesus?

Colossians 1:15-20

*"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church, he is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."*

Colossians 2:9-10

*"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority."*

Jesus is the head and we are his body.

During the time of the Romans, do you know what they called Caesar?

The head

Do you know what they called the Roman Empire?

His body

Paul's statement: Jesus is the head... the church is his body  
directly confronts

Caesar is the head... the empire is his body

Jesus replaces the empire with the church

If you are a follower of Jesus (a Christian) you are a citizen of heaven  
a member of Jesus' body

We are his body, we are his church.

Jesus is the climax of the Bible – Act IV!!

Jesus is the Point of it All!!

And we, the church, his body, is the resolution – Act V!!

We live the Point of it All!! Jesus. We are captured by the Point! We are captured by Jesus.

We have been reading and preaching through the Bible this past year. And sometimes we can miss the forest amidst the trees. Up to this point we have read to almost Isaiah. That's over half the Bible. We wanted to make sure you "know" the Point of it All.

Speaking of "knowing"... what about that dissecting thing left hanging at the beginning? Well, perhaps, it's okay for Jesus to dissect us, because he was dissected. If you have ever sat through a viewing of the Passion of the Christ movie, you have seen firsthand what being dissected at the hands of Roman crucifiers meant. If you haven't, imagine a most brutal way to die, with cutting and bruising and torture and excessive torture and then an agonizing death by suffocation.

Jesus was dissected at the hands of humanity. We did not understand him, we did not recognize him. We were so caught up with ourselves, with our world, and being in bed with the enemy, Satan. Blinded by our own selves that we missed the Climax of history, and the Point of it All.

Jesus was broken for humanity.

2 Corinthians 5:21

*"God made him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

Jesus was dissected for humanity so that we could be brought into the family of God.

God's Dream:

...is a loving relationship with a group of people who love each other and reflect his image for the sake of the world.

God is restoring that relationship that was broken at the Fall and is redeeming with a special group of people, the church, who live out the Point – love and being God-like, Christ-like.

In order to be like Jesus (the Point) and be like Jesus (live out the Point), we must be dissected:

Galatians 2:20

*"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

Bow your heads with me. Reflect with Jesus, reflect with your heart:

Have you been dissected by Jesus... by the Point?

Has this thing called following Jesus hurt you yet? Or has it been entirely comfortable and not really real?

Has your life been radically altered where when people meet you on the street, at your work, or in your home, they walk away wondering if they had an encounter with the living God?

That is what God wants for you. That's what he wants for us... as a community of believers... as Jesus' body.

I am going to read you a story that I have been working on for quite some time. It is still a little raw and probably needs some work here or there, but it is entirely appropriate to tell right now.

## The Kingdom Story

*a come-from-behind-story of the King of the world*

Once upon a time, there was a King. Everything the King did was good. The people in his kingdom adored him and followed him as their King. The King found time to spend with each person in his kingdom. He loved everybody no matter what they were like. He had but one rule... This rule was put in place so that his people would have life. If they violated this rule, they would suffer the consequences—death. The choice was theirs.

One day, an enemy of the King snuck into the kingdom. He deceived the people of the kingdom by saying that they would not die if they disobeyed the one rule. They believed this cleverly disguised enemy of the King. The people broke the one rule. They chose death, not life.

How do you think the King felt when he found out that the people he loved disobeyed the one rule?

Probably sad.

Maybe angry.

Perhaps bummed.

He loved his people and did not want them to experience death. But the King was true to his word. The people violated the one rule and so they must suffer the consequences of their actions. They were banished from the King's kingdom and died.

It may sound like the King was harsh on his people, but in fact he was quite gracious. He could have just abandoned the people who betrayed his love, left them to fend for themselves outside his beautiful and loving kingdom. But he didn't "leave" them. He stuck by them. In fact, the King began working on a master plan to bring his banished people back into his loving and beautiful kingdom.

It looked like this: choose one person, who would make more chosen persons, who would in turn make even more chosen persons, and later on down the line would have lots of chosen persons; the King then promised himself to these "chosen persons"; the King said: 'Chosen Persons! I am going to be with you. I will be your King and you will be my beloved chosen persons! I am going to use you to show all the persons of the entire world what my kingdom is like. And when you show all the persons of the world my kingdom, you will be actually bringing back the banished people to the beautiful and loving kingdom'.

However, the more the King tried to convince the chosen persons he chose to show the world his kingdom, the more the chosen persons messed up and chose death, not life. Over and over again, the King used messengers and special people he sent to tell his chosen persons of his wonderful kingdom and to warn them of the consequences of their continued bad living. And each and every time, the chosen persons chose not to listen to the King, but to the cleverly disguised enemy of the King. It got so bad that the King had no choice but to banish the chosen persons from the kingdom that was supposed to like the beautiful and loving kingdom. Double banishment!

How do you think the King felt when he had to banish his chosen persons?

Probably sad.

Maybe angry.

Perhaps bummed.

He loved his chosen persons and did not want them to experience death. But the King was true to this word. The chosen persons were not showing the people of the world what the real, beautiful and loving kingdom of the King was like.

It may sound like the King was harsh on his chosen persons, but in fact he was quite gracious. He could have abandoned the chosen persons who betrayed his love, left them to fend for themselves outside of his beautiful and loving kingdom. But he didn't "leave" them. He stuck by them. In fact, the King had already been working on a master plan to bring back his banished chosen people into his loving and beautiful kingdom.

The King's master plan was unlike anything that anyone expected. The King sent a very, very special messenger to tell his banished chosen persons about what the King really wanted and how the King really wanted his chosen persons to be. The King thought that his chosen persons would graciously accept and heed the message that this very, very special messenger brought. Sadly, the chosen persons did not. In fact, the chosen persons, along with the cleverly disguised enemy of the King, took this very, very special messenger and had him killed.

How do you think the King felt when his banished chosen persons killed his very, very special messenger?

Extremely sad.

Maybe a little angry.

Perhaps totally bummed.

He loved his very, very special messenger and did not want him to experience death. You see, this very, very special messenger was the King's only son—the Prince. And the chosen persons took the life of the Prince of the King. The chosen persons gave to the Prince what they experienced in being outside of the beautiful and loving kingdom—death.

It would seem that the loving and gracious intentions of the King were continually thwarted by the people he loved so dearly. But things are not always as they seem. You see, the King had not been thwarted by the people he loved. He actually thwarted them. He turned them. He captured them from death... and created a highway to life in the original beautiful and loving kingdom. This highway was paved by the King's very, very special messenger—the Prince. The Prince paved the way to the beautiful and loving kingdom because although he did really die... the Prince did not stay dead. In fact, the Prince came back to life. The Prince paved the way from death to life, undoing the banishment of the people of the king from the beautiful and loving kingdom.

How do you think the King felt when his only son came back to life?

Extremely happy.

Maybe a little dancing.

Perhaps totally joyfully throwing a party!

The King loved his son. And the King loved his people. A highway from death to life in the name of the King's son, the Prince, was made for the people he loved to enter back into the beautiful and loving kingdom. All the people have to do is walk the highway of the King – the King's Highway.

Let's pray...