

GETTING OUR STORY STRAIGHT

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You do not need to play a bit part in the movie of your own life. Some of you have to stop being an extra. You have a story and if you do not like the chapter you are in right now then let's think what the next chapter could look like. Let's make sure that you get out of this chapter in a way that means you do not have to repeat it.

We are all on this journey, and we need to know, what is the next stage of the road that we are walking in, and who we are walking with, and how does God want to walk with us, and how does He see us, and who does He want to be for us. There are so many great questions that He wants to ask us, and we get to ask Him. There are so many things that He has granted us for this story and this journey.

Here is the thing with the passion of God. If He grants you something, He expects you to take Him for granted. So do not disappoint Him. If you do not know where you are on your story, your journey, talk to us, because we will help you figure something out.

My message this morning is taken from probably one of the best events I have ever done. It was called *The Art of Thinking Brilliantly*.

STORY AND JOURNEY

I want to talk to you this morning in the context of story and journey. I feel like my assignment at this event is threefold.

- First of all it is really important for each one of us that we get closure, on the old stuff in our story. Jesus came to give us closure on the old nature.
- Then He came to upgrade us in terms of our capacity to enter into the fullness of His love.
- Finally the third part of my assignment is a conversion, because each one of us needs to be converted to our real, true identity.

MOVING FROM CLOSURE TO CONVERSION

So, we are moving from closure to conversion because we need to be converted to a whole new way of seeing, thinking, and being, so that our story can affect the stories of countless thousands and millions of people all around us.

I want to talk about how you are known in Heaven. Story and journey; two great metaphors for life, two great contexts that God uses to develop us and to upgrade us in our story. Jesus came to develop us, to upgrade us and to pursue us, because His story is a brilliant one and you get to be part of His story, and He loves to be part of yours.

Romans 6:3-16 *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

For if we have become with Him united in death, so we should, also, be in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him in order that our body of sin might be done away with so that we would no longer be slaves to sin. For He who has died is freed from sin.

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe we shall also live with Him. Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves who you obey, whether of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

GETTING OUR STORY STRAIGHT

It is time for us to get our stories straight about who we really are in this world. We are in the world but we are not of it. We are in this world, but we belong to a completely different dimension. This world has nothing to say to us about our spirituality. We cannot draw our thinking, our behavior, our practices from the world around us. We must draw them from the Kingdom that is already within us.

There is a higher way of thinking, a higher way of seeing, and a higher way of being that compels us to know God in the heights and the depths of His own nature. We are citizens of Heaven living here on earth and we draw all of our capacity for spirituality from the high place of Heaven and not the low place in the world around us.

It is time for us to get our stories straight and it is time for us to stop being earthbound in our spirituality. We are learning to grow up into Christ in all things. We are getting our stories straight as individuals, as families, as an organization, as an army, as a force to be reckoned with. We are getting

our stories straight. We can no longer afford to be double minded about the glad tidings of great joy. And if we are going to get our stories straight, we need to engage on a battlefield that has two fronts.

One is, we are fighting on the victory side to regain control of what is going on in the world. But we cannot get on that battlefield effectively unless we deal with the religious devil that is actually living in our midst. We cannot afford to be double minded about the gospel. We have to get our stories straight. Either it is the glad tidings of great joy or it was the biggest con that was ever perpetrated on mankind. It is time to get our stories straight. And if we're getting our stories straight then that means that we that we have to live from the place of God's nature. He happens to be the most loving, peaceful and joyful person ever. He is the absolute personification of love and peace and joy. He is the happiest person I know. There is only one way you can represent someone who is that joyful. It means you have to live with a smile on your face. You have to live peacefully and you have to be amongst the most loving people on this planet because we are learning how to experience – how to be set free in the love, the peace and joy that is in the Holy Spirit.

We are getting our stories straight.

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and it's no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God for if righteousness comes through the law then Christ died needlessly. You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. This is the only thing I want to find out from you, did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish having begun by the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*

Paul does not mix his words here. In our language, he is saying; dude what's going on ... have you got the spirit of stupid on you or something? It's foolish to believe that we are perfected in a manner different from the one that God has decreed. **It is foolish to believe that salvation is a gift but that sanctification is earned by our performance. That, ladies and gentlemen, is a religious spirit, and we need to kill that sucker stone dead.**

Paul said, "Who bewitched you?" This is really strong language. Who demonize your thinking is what he is saying. Who lied to you? Who tricked you into believing this religious nonsense? **The flesh cannot ever produce the level of righteousness that God requires to be in union with Him. Legalism and religion always appeal to the flesh** and we have to resist both. How do we do that? Consider yourself dead to that stuff and let's just love being alive to God.

This whole notion that you are saved by grace but perfected by the flesh, that's the devils strategy for Christians. To get you looking at yourself and what you're not; to get you looking at your own behavior to get you looking at what you can't do and then bringing you into condemnation because there is no way that you can ever perform your way into the bigness of all that God has got for you.

Beloved we are killing this thing. This is a snake in the house of God and we need to kill it. We need to nail its head to a stick and then lift it high and say, 'This is what we do to religious devils in our company.'

GOD'S FOCUS IS NOT ON SIN

Here's the truth. **God is not dealing with your sin; He's already dealt with it.** He's not focused on sin, because He's not an evangelical. And I am speaking as an evangelical who's absolutely proud to be an evangelical. God isn't focused on your sin. **He's dealt with it once and for all.**

Here's the thing about you. Your flesh was too bad to be cleansed, it had to be crucified. Come on beloved let's think this through together. **Most religion, most teaching on religion in our churches is geared to behavior modification.**

If God is only doing behavior modification, there was no need for Jesus to die. You don't become a new person by changing your behavior. **You discover the person you already are in Christ, and you behave accordingly.** We are a new creation. All the old things have passed away. All your old thinking, all your old habits everything that was against you, everything that was written or spoken against you, God nailed it to a tree. Everything that you could never do for yourself, everything you could never become by your own efforts, everything in your life that was negative or against you in any possible way has been crucified with Christ on the cross. And you are free!

And you have always been free! **What we are learning is the depth of our freedom; the height of our freedom and the length and the breadth of it.** And the length that God went to, to make sure that you were set free - that you would never have to deal with all that stuff. He's not dealing with your sin, He's dealt with it. He didn't ask your permission. He did it before you even met Him. He dealt with it in His own heart, in His own way. And the gospel message that came to you said you are already free from sin because Jesus has died. You now need to translate your freedom into redemption so that you can enjoy the fullness of God while you are here on earth.

The old you cannot be conformed to the image of God. There is no behavior modification here. God didn't like the old you so He killed it. Nudge your neighbor and say, "You are so dead". The old you cannot be *conformed* to the image of God. It had to be *transformed* by being put into Christ.

SALVATION'S REALITY

What is salvation? Some people say it's getting me out of earth and into Heaven. I think salvation is getting God out of Heaven into us. He came to give us a fully realized presence that we could abide in forever. We are a temple of the Holy Spirit, we are a habitation of God, we're in union with Christ, and we are a child of God, learning to become a son of God. We're growing up into all things in Christ. It's a brilliant story. It's a fabulous journey and you're on it, and you're in it, and you're of it.

God created something new and we are walking in newness of life. We're a new creation, everything is new. That means your thinking has to be new. How you see yourself has to be new. How you speak has

to be new. How you stand has to be new. How you walk has to be new. Everything about you has to become new. Cause there isn't any room for the old.

Here's the wonderful thing about your story. You don't have a sin nature. You have a new nature in God and you're walking in newness of life. You don't have a sin nature; you may have a sin habit because there are some things that we have not got clear through on yet. You may have a sin habit, but habits are easily broken.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

And anyway we are up against one of the most powerful people in the universe - The Holy Spirit who is just about the most exciting, exhilarating, enthusiastic person I have ever known in my entire life.

This whole idea of the Holy Spirit is a dove that can be easily offended. What a crock! He is the most robust individual I have ever met in my entire life. If He was easily offended, He'd be in therapy for a millennium. He'd be constantly in and out of counseling. He's a dove because He's peaceful and He's at peace with every single one of us. Funny thing about the Holy Spirit is that He believes everything that's true about Jesus. And He's come to take all the things that belong to Jesus and make sure that we actually come into possession of them. He is not easily offended. He's too peaceful for that. He's too restful for that. He loves His job. Privately I think He thinks He has the best job in the Godhead. 'Cause He gets to talk about Jesus, who He adores, all day long. He gets to show us everything that belongs to Jesus. He's happy. He's also very funny. I think it's because He has a lot of material to work with. He's exciting, He's exhilarating, and He's robust.

He always reminds me of... you know when you watch these basketball games and you see the guys warming up. Holy Spirit reminds me of a seven foot two, black basketball player. You know you see these guys and they always have this big smile on their face and their trying to do 3 pointers from half a mile away. That's the Holy Spirit. He's always up on His toes, He's always thinking, okay I know the wind is a cross wind right now, the lights are in My eyes but I can make this 3 pointer.

Everything is doable with Him. You noticed that about Him, right? Everything is doable. He's a genius to everything and doesn't mind telling you. He is the resident genius of Heaven here on earth. Jesus is in Heaven, He's Lord over the church. The Holy Spirit is here on earth. He's Lord inside the church. And He loves His job. He loves what He has to do. He loves changing us into this world beating supernatural power that doesn't take stuff from anyone.

You know that when Jesus comes back, the Holy Spirit will have done such a brilliant job that when Jesus comes back He's going to come back to rescue the world from us! Because we're not going out with a whimper; we're going out with a bang. If anyone causes World War 3, it's probably going to be us. We have to get our stories straight.

You know when God looks at you He doesn't see anything wrong with you. **He only sees what's missing from your experience of Him and He's totally committed to giving you that experience. When the**

Holy Spirit puts His finger on a part of your life that's not working, He is inviting you to look at the site of your next miracle.

God has not come to change us. He's come to totally renew us. He's come to make us into completely different people. Not by dealing with the old stuff because He's already dealt with it. So He's not focused on that, He's not fixed on that.

GIVE ME BACK MY STUFF

I have lots of dreams. And the Lord often speaks to me in many ways in dreams. And usually my dreams start in one of two ways. Either I'm in the throne room and God's sat on the throne and I'm sat on His lap and we've got our heads together and we're talking. And those dreams are always usually prophetic and revelatory and usually open something up.

And there's another dream where there is like a pergola on a hill like a wooden structure with curtains all around it and cushions, food and drink. And usually when I have that dream I'm waiting for Jesus to come up the hill and normally He's surrounded by people and He's laughing and joking and everyone is dancing around Him. He usually looks up and sees me and waves, big smile and I know that we're going to have a conversation that's absolutely going to open up my story.

This particular dream, none of that is happening. I sat there waiting for Him but He comes up the hill by Himself and He has no smile on His face. He's not walking up the hill; He's marching up the hill. I'm looking at His face and it's like really set - like He's annoyed about something. And the closer He gets my heart starts to flutter in trepidation. I've never seen Him like this.

And He walks straight up to me and He stands a foot in front of me and He puts His finger in my face and He says, "Graham giving back My stuff!"

And I'm like, "Excuse me? Give me back my stuff! I don't know what you mean."

"Graham, give Me back My stuff!"

"All the stuff I've got You gave me."

"No, I didn't give you that stuff. Give Me back My stuff!"

And I'm starting to cry and I am saying, "Lord, I don't understand."

He said, "Graham, give Me back My stuff!"

"I don't know what You are talking about."

"That anxiety, that fear, that worry, that resentment, that anger, that low self-esteem, that poverty mindset, that victim thinking, that bitterness, that unbelief, I died for it, I paid a price for it. It belongs to Me! Give Me back My stuff! Give Me back My stuff!"

I sank to my knees and I'm crying and I'm absolutely appalled at myself. I'm suddenly realizing situation after situation, person after person, rolling through my mind and I am having an OMG moment. I'm so sorry. Lord, I'm so sorry. Sorry, I'm sorry; I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.

And He smiled at me which is like getting saved all over again. And He smiled at me and I am completely undone and I am just this blubbering wreck on the floor. And He reaches out His hand and He pulls me to my feet and He wraps His arm around me and I can feel His breath on my ear and He says to me, "That's My stuff. You can't have that stuff. It's killing you. I died that you would never have to deal with that stuff every again. Graham, all the time you're stealing My stuff, you can't receive the things that I want to give you. It is time for your emotions to grow up - time for your thinking to go to the right level. Your story has to change. Give Me back My stuff, it's not yours, it's Mine. I died for it, I paid a price for it, it belongs to Me now and you can't have it anymore. You understand, son?"

"Give Me back My stuff because I have things to give you that will absolutely turn you into a completely different man. I have a mindset that I want to give you. I have a heart full of affection that I want to be in your body, that I want to be for you. I have things to say to you. I have things that you need to say to the world around you because of who you're becoming in Me. Give Me back My stuff."

You cannot trust the Lord and be anxious. Those two things cannot inhabit the same space at the same time. One of them doesn't belong to you. You have to choose Beloved.

It's time that we stop choosing worry, anxiety, and fear. It's time that we started choosing trust and faith and joy and peace. It's time we got closure on low self-esteem. It's time you killed off that poverty mindset and that victim thinking.

The cross means that you can no longer be present past. That means you cannot allow anything from the past to affect you in the present adversely, negatively. The cross kills off that part of your story. We have to get our stories straight.

You are present future. That means that you enjoy who you are right now and you're going to enjoy who you're going to become next.

Philippians 3 *Forget what lies behind and reach out to what lies ahead.*

You are no longer present past, you are present future in your spirituality and its time that we got out on that road, it's time we stop taking two steps forward, three steps back.

Your flesh was too bad to be cleansed, it had to be crucified.

I was talking to a guy a while back and he said, "Well Graham, if you're going to get to know me, get to know everything about me..." Alarm bells started to jiggle. So I said, "Go on." "I don't like myself; I cannot think anything good about myself and there are times when I really hate myself."

Graham: I have a question. Which self is talking? Which self is talking? Is this your old self or is this your new self?

Sometimes you want to say to people, do you ever listen to yourself when you talk? Here's the thing, when I am talking to people and they are talking to me about their negative stuff, I have absolutely no need to know. Why would I want to have a conversation with a corpse?

NO PROBLEMS, ONLY POSSIBILITIES

Here is the thing about us, this is where our spirituality gets earthbound and it's tied to the world around us. The world only deals with problems. The world is always trying to fix problems. Jesus came praying "on earth as it is in Heaven". So my question is, are there any problems in heaven? So you're a new creation. **What if there are no problems, what if there are only possibilities?**

Jesus came saying, "All things are possible." He never came to deal with a problem; He came to face us up with the possibilities that now exist because we're living in Him. You understand where a new way of thinking is pretty important. God isn't dealing with your sin or your old nature. He's already dealt with it once and for all. Thank you, but no.

You go to God about a problem with your old nature; He's not going to have a conversation with you. He has no interest in counseling you. You're dead, shut up! You're dead. He's just going to tell you who you are. He's not going to talk to you about your behavior. **He's going to talk to you about your identity.** Which self is talking? You're much too beautiful and much too bright. You're not going to fall for that thing any longer. That's religion. Your old self is dead. Don't play dead, stay dead.

I was talking to another guy and it was the same kind of deal where we're trying to get to know each other. He said, "I just want you to know and I want to be really up front with you, tell you a struggle that I have got. I have an anger problem."

Graham: I have some questions: how long have you had this anger problem? He said since I was about three.

Graham: How old are you now, dude?

He said, "I am forty two."

Graham: How long have you been a believer?

He said, "I got saved when I was twenty one."

This is the way that I see it and I think that the Holy Spirit agrees with me or am I agreeing with Him? Whatever! For half your life you had an anger problem and then you got saved and you became a new creation. Now you don't have one.

He said, "No, I have an anger problem."

"Trust me dude, you don't."

He said, "No, I have an anger problem and I am in counseling for it."

I said, "What are you doing?"

He said, "I am going to anger management classes."

"You're doing what?"

This is the difficult thing about being British in the modern world, all of our thinking is tied into Monty Python. As soon as I get presented with something slightly weird, I go all Pythonisk. So I am thinking, you've got an anger management problem, so what does that mean? You're getting your anger under control so you can give it to God who killed it off anyway. Then the spirit of Monty just took over me and I am thinking, so what are you going to do with this anger management? Are you going to take it on tour? Is it going to be a stand-up routine? Do you have an agent?

I can feel myself, everything is coming loose in my head and I looked at him and I said, "Dude, honestly you don't have an anger problem, it's dead. You were crucified with Christ. So was your anger problem." Here's the thing, for twenty one year's God has not been dealing with an anger problem; He's been trying to teach him patience.

WE ARE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN, LIVING ON EARTH

Here's the thing with us, **our biggest problem on our story and our journey is that we forget that we are now citizens of Heaven, living here on earth and we take all of our language, our thinking and our emotions from the Heavenly realm, not from the world around us. Heaven is not dealing with problems, Heaven is dealing with possibilities.**

God isn't dealing with sin; He's establishing your righteousness. He's not dealing with your old nature. He's only dealing with the new you, the true you, the real you. And you are learning to walk in newness of life which means you can't have an anger problem cause it's dead so what is God replacing it with? What if every time God is trying to teach you patience, and you keep defaulting to anger? I'm just saying.

So you're talking to somebody who is fearful and what we do is try to minister to the fear. A spirit of fear loves all that attention. Honestly, it loves all that. It is saying, yes, pray for me. Nothing is going to change because you're praying for me. We don't deal with fear.

The reason a person is fearful is because they're not made perfect in love and the Bible says, perfect love casts out fear. We're not dealing with fear; we're going to pray for you that the perfect love of God will take a stronger hold on your life. Because we're not dealing with the old nature, because God has

already dealt with it. We're only dealing with the new man because everything has become new because you are a brand new creation and you are a creation that knows no fear. You are a creation that is being made perfect in the love of God and you are learning how to be loved by God and you're learning how to become the Beloved.

We're not dealing with sin or the effects of sin. We're dealing with righteousness and the benefits thereof.

You meet somebody who's anxious - **the only reason they are anxious is because they have no peace.** If all you do is minister to their anxiety you will strengthen it and establish it. But if you speak to their peace, something new can happen. You're only anxious because you're not peaceful. Do you understand what I am saying here? We are not dealing with the old stuff; it has already been dealt with.

We're dealing with new you, the true you, the real you, and the real you is not stressed. The real you is not stressed! How many times do we take our language from the world around us? Oh my job is really stressing me out. No, it is not.

Stress is not caused by anything external. It's caused by your perception of something.

You can't say, she makes me really angry. No she doesn't. You chose to get angry all by yourself. You had so many things to choose from. You could be loving, gracious, merciful, kind, patient, peaceful. But you chose to be angry? What a pelican! Really? That was your choice? You chose to be bitter? All the stuff you could have chosen and you chose resentment? What's that about? Sounds like somebody needs to change their story.

Nobody makes you angry or bitter. You choose those things. And **you choose those things because you don't know who you really are yet.** That's where our story has to change.

This is so vital for us because this is really the baby end of life in the Spirit. **If you get this thing sorted out your whole journey will quicken.** You will come into an acceleration you wouldn't believe. But we need to partner with God in newness of life and stop **moaning and whining and complaining which is the worship language of hell.** Ouch!

You are so much better than this. You are so much more beautiful than you know - so much more powerful than you realize. But we're waking up and our story's changing.

The problem is not sin, the problem is that we have not yet replaced some bad habits with something wonderful in Jesus. And that's the work of the Holy Spirit. To take the things that belong to Jesus and disclose them to us. So that we can step into that and embrace that.

Isn't it beautiful that God absolutely, doesn't want to deal with your old man? He only wants to deal with the new one because he killed off the old one. Killed it and FedEx'd it somewhere. You should enjoy being dead to all that stuff.

The enemy wants you to consider that the flesh is still alive and that you've got to do something about it. That's a religious, legalistic spirit. That's the snake in our house that we have to kill. This is the whole thing of performance – that salvation is a gift but you have to earn your way into the grace and favor of God? It is a lie straight from the pit. That is part of the doctrine of devils. Why? Because there is only one person who prospers from that... and it is not the Lord Jesus and it's definitely not you.

The only person who prospers from a powerless Christianity is the devil. We're getting our stories straight.

We are learning to rejoice in the so great salvation. We're learning to embrace the glad tidings of great joy. You're a whole new creation. All the old things have passed away everything has become new. And all things are of God.

When God looks at you, He doesn't see anything wrong with you. He just sees what's missing from our experience of Him and He is absolutely committed to giving you that encounter. You will grow up into Christ in all things. We're in Christ, learning to be Christ like. God doesn't want us working on the old stuff. This is what He says to us.

Ephesians 4:20 *But you did not learn Christ in this way. If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him just as truth is in Jesus that in reference to your former manner of life you laid aside the old self which is being corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit. That you be renewed in the spirit of your mind and you put on the new self which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

God isn't working on your old self; He's not focusing on that. This is what you do with your old stuff. You take it and you put it on one side because we're not dealing with that. I've already dealt with it, you're dead, so let's put that on one side and I want you to put on the new man because that's what I am dealing with.

He has never asked us to work on the old nature. *Because here's the thing, for God to work on your old nature, He would have to tread underfoot the cross of Jesus Christ. He would have to be saying in His heart, 'Well the cross was a great idea when We thought of it before the foundations of the world, but just in case it doesn't work I'll be counseling you on all your behavioral stuff.'* Does that seem likely to you?

Lay it aside, its dead. Stop resurrecting that corpse.

It is amazing in this room right now we have raised someone from the dead so many times we could all be apostles. How many times have you resurrected that corpse? It's dead, it's buried, and it has a nice little headstone, RIP with your name on it. Stay dead. Stop grave robbing.

Just in case you don't believe that particular scripture, because you know as evangelicals one scripture is never enough, right? I mean, here we are talking about Almighty God and He has to confirm everything.

The Spirit of Truth can't say one time, using one verse, and that will be enough. But no we're evangelicals and He has to confirm it a dozen different ways.

What are you hearing there? You are hearing the voice of religion. You are hearing the voice of somebody who doesn't have a relationship with the Spirit of Truth. So we need 14 verses and a visit from Arch Angel Gabriel just to get us to believe something that God wants us to know in scripture. I'm just saying.

Colossians 3:9 *Don't lie to one another. Since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created Him.*

Your old man's dead. Let it rest in peace. God's only dealing with the new you, the true you, the real you. He's not dealing with your sin habit. He's establishing in you His own nature. **So the antidote to your behavioral problem is the nature of God.** Because He is making you in His image since He has an aversion to being made in yours.

It is what religious people do. They make God in their own image. So, if their angry, they're going to make God angry. If you ever hear a person judging another, you're listening to a person who has no idea of the love of God for themselves.

We don't have a sin problem, we have a sin habit. When we have a sin habit, we have a problem with beauty and majesty. We don't realize how beautiful we are to God or how majestic His love is towards us.

Jesus didn't die for your sin; He died for all the effects of it. He died for all the negativity that it brought into your life. He died for all the poverty thinking. He died to resurrect your opinion of yourself in line with His. Truth is, He thinks you're beautiful. He thinks you're wonderful. Why? How do I know that? Because He put you into Christ. If one of His names is Wonderful, what does that make you?

At some point you are going to have to own up to your new nature. You're going to have to look somebody in the eye and just say, "It is not my nature to worry any more. It is my nature to be peaceful. It is not my nature to be worried. It is my nature to be joyful."

I spend more time rejoicing and giving thanks than I do complaining. It's my new nature. It keeps rising up inside of me. Do you know my new nature absolutely condemns me to victory? I'm a winner because I can't think any other way. Because the old way of thinking that said I was a loser, well I lost it. In fact, Jesus took that stuff because it now belongs to Him, and He gave me His stuff which means I am not a loser anymore. I'm a winner. I don't think like a wimp, I think like a warrior. I'm not a victim anymore, I'm victorious. I have a whole different mindset; I have a whole different language. I have a whole different opinion of myself. I have a great opinion of myself. It is not 'too highly than I ought' to have, but then God never tells you what that's supposed to look like. You notice that? It says don't have an opinion higher than it should be. But it doesn't tell you what the parameters are because He

doesn't want you to know. Just in case you stay half a mile inside the line. He just says no, if you get too big headed, I'll just tell you.

Fat chance, we are never going to have that conversation. Because it is going to take you a while to really realize how wonderful and how beautiful I want to make you. I want you to have this great opinion of yourself because I have a great opinion of Me. He likes being God! We're getting our stories straight.

OUR STARTING POINT

The starting point for everything in your life is your new nature. Every single day, God is going to face you up with how He sees you. He is not out for a conversation about your old stuff, thanks for trying, but no. We're not doing that around here. We already did that. He already dealt with that. I am only talking to you about how I see you. If you see yourself differently than Me, well, you can talk about it, but I am not listening. You need to agree with Me and be at peace. We are getting our story straight.

We have a shot at being the happiest, most loved, most peaceful, most powerful, most triumphant people on the face of this earth. We are a visual aid to humanity. This is what it means to be a Christian. Honestly, frankly, that makes me brilliant. I have a majestic lifestyle. I'm learning how to be more powerful. I'm learning how to be astonished and amazed which sometimes mean I'm going to be astonishing. None of this religious nonsense that means Jesus is wonderful and I am rubbish. That is legalistic claptrap. God loves who you are.

Here is the brilliant thing about God is when He put Christ into you, it is not that Jesus becomes your fullness and you diminish into nothing. **God likes the fact that it's a paradox. He doesn't mind you being a hundred percent you and having a hundred percent of Jesus. He likes all of that. You can be yourself as long as your trusting God to be Himself to you.**

We are going to learn the joy of being with God. The pleasure in walking with a happy God Who's restful, peaceful and joyful. Knows everything about you. Absolutely committed to your journey. Absolutely delights in your story. Knows what the next chapters going to be about. Knows how to train you to think in brilliant ways. Who's always going to say to you, "Well if all your thinking has brought you to a place you don't like, have another thought."

He's not going to deal with a negative thought you have, He's just going to give you a better one. **He doesn't want you dealing with negativity. He wants you dealing with a possibility. He doesn't want you dealing with a problem, He want you dealing with a promise.** There are no problems in Heaven. If it doesn't exist in Heaven, it can't exist in your life. Come on.... You have to think about this stuff!

REFRAMING OUR THINKING

What's happen is every time you get more in tune with Jesus, everything about you expands. Everything opens up. Each one of you has at least a million OMG moments to spend. When you go

OMG, that's amazing. Really, I can think like that, really? Oh, that's brilliant. You mean I don't have to deal with this negative emotion; I can just change it for a better one? You mean I never have to work on this stuff; I can just lay it aside and I get to put on this stuff and just work on this? You mean I really am a new creation? Really all the old things have passed away? I thought that was just a concept. You mean it is a reality? I am a new creation, all the old things have passed away, everything has become new and all things are from You? I am totally free? I don't have to deal with the old me, I can just deal with the new me? And how the new me thinks and sees. That's all You're dealing with and I am partnering with You on the new man. The old man is still dead. Just checking that.

I am walking in newness of life. So I am a child of God learning to be a son of God and I don't have an old nature anymore. You mean You really did put it on Jesus on the cross. That was Your plan? So not ever going to change me and tidy me up. You just killed me right? You killed me, I'm dead, You FedEx'd me somewhere You are not telling me, and now I am this new person walking in newness of life and You give me permission to consider myself dead. So that I can be alive to You? OMG! So that's it then!

My story then is – what about all those people who have stuff against me? How do I answer all that? I don't. I just let them get on with that and I get on with my stuff with You. They only have those thoughts about me because they are struggling with stuff themselves. They haven't given You back Your stuff! Oh, I get it. So I should bless them then, because that's a poverty spirit, the old man, that's the flesh. That's religious flesh. I feel sorry for them already. So all those people who have things against me, who try and keep me pegged back to something I was years ago, they are doing that because they haven't given You back Your stuff. I get it.

I don't want to be like that, right? So I don't want to have anything against anybody. That makes me a lover of God and a lover of people. This could be pretty cool. So what that means then, is that really I only have one enemy and that's the one that You have. So no human being is my enemy. I don't take enemies, I love them.

You know what Lord, that makes things a lot simpler. I just get to be a lover of God, peaceful, restful, go through life with a smile. I love problems because I can turn them into possibilities. OMG! Are You sure about this? You wrote it all down?

So can I get a copy of that book? You are the book? OMG! You're the Word of the Lord, and the Bible is scripture. Brilliant! You pretty much thought of everything and You've given me a Helper.

What does He do? He helps me with everything? You're kidding me. He's going to help me read the book and all that stuff? He is the Spirit of Truth and He leads me into all truth? OMG! What happens if I screw up some days? He is my Comforter? You mean like I get a double portion on the day when I am being really stupid? Really?

I am a little bit anxious right now because it sounds too good to be true. In the world, if it is too good to be true, someone is being conned. If it is not too good to be true, it is not You? OH! It really is like, the

glad tidings of great joy and all of that is like not just advertising, right? That's.... whew. I think I am having a hot flash!

So what You are saying is I can just get on with being new all the time. If I come up against anything old, I can just exchange it for something new. Wow. And if You put Your finger on something old, it is because You're giving me a miracle. OMG! I think I am going to faint.

That makes everything astonishing. I am supposed to be astonished? You want me to be astonished? I can tell You right now that I think that it is working. I am astonished. I am amazed. You know nothing this good has ever happen to me before. If You carry on like this I could become a whole new person. Honestly, Lord, I am in danger of being seriously gorgeous. And so if You change my story and I walk down that road on this journey with You then I get to be a visual aid of what being in Christ really, really means. I think I need a nap.

I have another thought, **I am in Christ, right, and I can't be separated from the love of God in any way, shape or form. Nothing can separate me; not even my own stupidity can separate me from the love of God.** Nothing separates me from love. So does that mean there is nothing I can do that would make You love me more, and there is nothing I can do that would make You love me less? You love me the same all the time; on my best day and on my worst day. You don't change. I am always going to have a high place in Your affection because you don't change. Even when I am being dumb? So basically my old man is screwed then. I mean in New King Graham English.

Because I am going to be a king, a warrior, a champion, I mean honestly I would have to be something big right because of all that You're doing. So I can't be small and insignificant. I have to be somebody in the Kingdom. That is what You are saying. You're going to make me a warrior, a champion, a game changer, in the Kingdom because of who You are, because of what You've done, because of where You've put me and because of what You want me to enjoy about being a citizen of Heaven here on earth. I get to be somebody amazing? I get to be a game changer for a people group. Sign me up!

And the brilliant thing is I don't have to go back to that because it's dead and You're not telling me where You buried the body. You're just saying, "Abide in Me, and I'll abide in you." And on the days I forget stuff, I have this Helper who is going to bring all things to my remembrance. I mean, seriously, You couldn't have made this any easier, right? This is amazing. How come I haven't heard this stuff before? Who cares? It is a new day and I am a new person. I am a new creation. All the old has passed away, everything has become new, wow. I think I need to go away and feast. The Bridegroom is with me, right?

So, there you have it!

So let's do something humungous! Stand up... assume the position.

WE CROSSED THE LINE!

The Lord is saying to you, "Give Me back My stuff! Give Me back My stuff!" Guess you didn't realize that you crossed a line about a half an hour ago. There's no negativity, there's no sin to work with, it's dead. Negativity is dead. You're a new creation. All the stuff you're holding onto from the old, doesn't belong to you, give it up. Come on, give it up. You can't walk around with that stuff anymore and all your friends are going to remind you. You know when you have one of those hissy fits, they're all going to go, "Is that stuff yours or does it belong to somebody else?"

Next time you're complaining, and moaning and whining, your best friend is going to say, "Okay, I am just going to the good side where we worship differently." And when you are throwing that pity party, your best friend is going to say, "Which self is talking?"

NO MORE EXCUSES!

Do you know what this means? No more excuses. Do you know that in every Lighthouse, we're going to try on this new language for fun? New thinking, new way of speaking, new way of seeing, and all you are going to hear for the rest of your life is, "You are dead, shut up. Did you resurrect that corpse last night? Put it back!"

CLOSING PRAYER:

Father, I thank You that of all the places You could have lived, You chose to live in me. Dear God, of all the places You could have lived, You chose to live in me. You're freaking me out, You realize that? Of all the places You could have lived, You chose us. That is amazing to me... have Your stuff back. I want You to have it all back. And I want You to know Lord that we're all going to get violent about that stuff. And we're not going to carry it around and we are going to become new. We are new already. We're already made over in Christ. We're already a new creation. We are going to step into the reality of that so we are right now radically giving You back Your stuff.

And not only that Lord, we're going to go through this earth and we're going to train people to give Your stuff back to You. We're going to set people free. We're going to tell people who they really are and we're not dealing with people's behavior we're going to deal with their identity. And we are going to be a visual aid of what it really means to be a lover of God and to be the Beloved of God.

We're giving You back Your stuff and Lord we are determined we're not going to track with anxiety, or fear, or negativity, or unbelief, or low self-esteem, or worry, or anger, or bitterness, unforgiveness. We're not tracking with any of that stuff. It doesn't belong to us. We're dead to it.

We're tracking with the Fruit of the Spirit. We're tracking with the grace of God, the mercy of God; the goodness and the kindness of God that leads people to repentance. We're tracking with Your new nature because we're a new creation. All the old is passed away and we are not resurrecting it. And so I ask Lord in the name of Jesus for a powerful move of the Holy Spirit in our lives. That absolutely,

radically alters our thinking, our language, our perception of ourselves, so that we line up with who You are for us in Christ. And that we line up with who we are in Jesus, and we are enjoying our life.

We're enjoying saying 'no' to the old man. We're enjoying saying 'yes' to You. We're enjoying the days that are problematic and difficult because we are learning about possibilities all the time. And You are making all things new and everything is from You. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, Lord, thank you. This is me, I am thinking You.

And so our story has changed and our journey is going to change because of it. Father, we are getting our story straight. We are getting our story straight. And You know what, Lord? It feels great. It feels great. It feels like a weight has lifted off of my shoulders. I feel lighter, freer. I can see more clearly. I can feel Your heartbeat. I feel Your affection. I'm a new creation! I can feel all the stuff that You feel about me. Thank You.

Thank You, thank You, thank You. I have so much more to rejoice about than I imagined. Thank You. Thank You. (times 12)

This is me, Lord! I'm thanking You! Thank You! I am amazed, I am astonished. I'm thanking You. Thank You for opening up a way. Thank You. I have just left an old chapter and I'm in a new one and I'm on a different path. I'm discovering things, I'm exploring, and I'm excited. Thank You. Lord Jesus, from the bottom of my heart, thank You, thank You, thank You for making this life possible. My prayer is that I would live under Your smile and do the things that make You extraordinarily happy. Amen.