

## **STUDY GUIDE:**

### **Are We There Yet | Week #1: You Are Here**

The writer of Ecclesiastes says there is nothing new under the sun; while this is true, sometimes we uncover something that was there all along, but feels new. This winter we will focus on the big story of what God has been, is currently, and will be doing in our world; how our *salvation* and *redemption* fits into God's larger plan to *restore* His *good creation*.

## **INTRODUCTION**

On any journey two bits of information are absolutely crucial: 1. where you are 2. where you're going. This information is necessary on any journey, including our journey of faith. Over the past century some Christians have gotten off course because they didn't know their place in God's larger story. If we Christians assume that we live in the time between the fall and redemption then our whole journey of faith is about our sin and Jesus' saving grace. The story quickly becomes about us: we are messed up, Jesus forgives us, we try really hard to be good people. In this scenario the most we can hope for in this life is to love Jesus, try to be good people and basically wait around for heaven. But what if there's more to the story? What if we are actually in a different place on the journey?

These next few weeks we are going to explore the BIGGER story of what God has been up to in this world. In her sermon last weekend Dawn explained that the story of what God is up to can be understood in four chapters:

Creation: the way things ought to be

Fall: the way things are

Redemption: the way things can be

Restoration: the way things will be

## **CHAT**

How have you previously understood the story of God's work in our world? How is the four chapter version different from or similar to the way you previously understood God's story?

How have you previously understood your place on the journey?

In the 2 chapter story (fall and redemption) what's the end result that we as Christians should be working towards or waiting for? How does this change in a four chapter understanding?

## **READ & DISCUSS**

Read Psalm 107: 1-9

- What story have Christians been telling over the last century? What story have you heard?
- How has this impacted what you believe about yourself and your role in God's plan?
- How has this impacted the way that we interact with the world around us?

- How has this impacted the way that we are perceived by non-Christians?
- How would our “story” change if we started living out a 4 chapter version of the gospel?

Read Matthew 10: 1-8

Now Read:

“Little by little, the gospel that Jesus gave the disciples to share, recorded in Matthew 10, has been replaced by a disembodied, abstract gospel about going to heaven after you die. But notice in Matthew 10 that Jesus doesn’t commission the disciples with anything like a gospel of ‘going to heaven.’ He says, ‘proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near” (Mat. 10:7). If anything, this is a gospel about heaven coming to earth, not us going to heaven.” *Kingdom Calling p. 84*

- What stands out to you from this passage?
  - Who, in today’s world, would you consider to be “called” or “sent”?
  - What seems to be missing from Jesus’ instructions? To put it another way, how are his instructions to his disciples different from how we are supposed to “lead people to Christ”?
- How might our lives look different if we believed in a Gospel about heaven coming to earth in lieu of the gospel of going to heaven some day?

### **APPLY**

“The story told of the Christian’s life in the [2 chapter story] does not capture the awesome reality and privilege that we - saved sinners - are part of God’s plan to heal the world. The [2 chapter story] tells us everything we’ve been saved *from*: sin, hell and death. And that is very good news indeed. But the gospel of the Kingdom, [the 4 chapter story] tells us not only what we’ve been saved from, but also what we’re saved *for*. We have a purpose, we have a sacred calling, we have a God-given vocation: to partner with God in his work of restoring all things. What could be more exhilarating than that?” *Kingdom Calling p. 87*

We are saved FOR something! What exciting news. As we begin to understand God’s bigger story and our place in it, what might you be saved *for*? How has God uniquely designed you? What skills and talents do you possess? Who has he put you in contact with? What excites you and gives you life? Might it be possible that those are the very things that He wants you to use as you partner with Him to restore his world?

### **CLOSE IN PRAYER**

