

Where are we from? Where are we going? Meant to be asked often in community/ conversations with spouse, friends, bible study.

We become the ones with God who are writing our life rather than letting world write on our behalf along its own conventions.

We need to be people who have a framework that we can have conversations. We have had deaths that open up the conversation about Jesus' death. We have been rescued. We need to be able to talk about death, resurrection & life, and the ascension of Jesus, sitting right now at the right hand of God, who has given us a story, and called us to live out a story in power that reveals the kingdom of God.

3. Shalom Sought: imagination

The plot of our story always thickens. It comes because we attempt to make life work on our own. When we know trauma, our body and our brain begins to fragment. Left side of our brain monitors executive functioning. (thinking, reasoning, decision-making). Right side controls more sensation, emotion, images. Trauma causes left side to go off-line. Thinking goes off-line. In the right side, brain percolates images, sensations. We feel out of control. We resort to what has worked for us in the past. When we do the same thing that brings about the same consequences as before=insanity. So, we get angry, which makes us feel in-control, but we cause more complications in the world around us. Or we shut down, we hyper-focus on one problem. Or we tune everything else out by (watching tv.) We have ways of escaping what feels out of control to have to face. We have ways of managing our worlds so when we experience trauma, we find levels of solace if we have done what we did in the past.

Isaiah 30: seeking shalom with a commitment to some level of control

When we are in trouble, we often turn to Egypt to find solace, help. But scripture says this always results in more humiliation. v. 12 *Where have i brought more heartache into my life as I've tried to escape my lack of control? We trust that which is not worthy of our trust. How did I take the world I was given and make it survivable for me and those I cared about?*

We find people whose story makes ours easier to live. (marriage, friendship, job, church) *Do we have people that make us ignore, deny or engage our story? No matter how troubled or beautiful your home was, you had a role in your family. Were you the sin-eater, who became the blame for everything broken in your family, the black sheep? Were you required to be a parent's surrogate spouse? We go back to our roles when we are in trouble.*

v. 15 In your return to Egypt, God's consequences are faster than any of your escapes. But he is slow to anger and waits for us to return.

4. Shalom restored: Denouement

God is inviting us to Shalom, restored. Denouement (to untie, to loosen) Redemption is a loosening of the bind resulting from our own efforts to resolve our own traumas.

You make alliances with gods who are not God. In going back to Egypt you will be humiliated. We compound tragedy with humiliation of our own failure. But God intends to rescue. Not in every story, not in the time and season we wish, always. His intention is to wait for us to return, and in our return we begin to see some of the glory of what redemption brings. It's redemption we remember.

What is the way, if you could put it in one phrase, that you make alliances with Egypt, how you make your life work and find control? How did you do it in your own family?

Think about one time where you were caught, humbled, and brought back to a taste of goodness. Where your foolishness was exposed, but instead of being shamed, you found in that moment of being humbled a taste of something you did not expect: The opportunity to be restored, returned, reconciled.

II. The Enemy of Story

A. We are in a Story War

Redemption stories can feel like fantasies, and the heartache we are enduring now feels more real. Worry & regret are generally how we approach most of our stories.

Worry is a future stance of trying to figure out all the options and try to pick best, but not being sure, so having anxiety. Worry is anticipation of a story that might go ill.

Regret is worry about the past. About decisions we made that don't seem to be going well for us.

Regret and worry are treasonous to the gospel. They keep your heart from the deepest level of imagination of how god can work in the midst of this. Regret denies the crucifixion. (Christ's sacrifice covers all my sin.) Worry denies the resurrection. (God brings new life and redemption to everything.)

I believe, help my unbelief. Even though I have no right to unbelieve, I do. Even though i have stories of redemption, i still unbelieve. Can we cry out for help?

We have an enemy to our story. That enemy can be called the kingdom of darkness. It wants me to have my life be bound to another story other than Christ's death and resurrection. It wants the "true" story I put my life on to be anything other than the gospel. *What is the story that is the foundation of my life?* If i trust in that story instead of the gospel, evil wins. John 10:10 Evil Steals, kills & destroys. Contrasted with Good Shepherd whose sheep know his voice.

*Name stories where you have known **innocence stolen**.* Nothing brings evil more delight than violating our gender, our sexuality. Evil is brilliant to do so, through sexual abuse, or where our body is used, mocked, or violated. We try to write it off, and say, it's in the past. We have to have courage to go back.

Evil wants to kill hope. To rob you of innocence, so its virtually impossible to trust. Then you are ruining the gift of faith. Stories in your life that make it seem foolish to trust anyone ever again.

Marriages that become distant, adequate, but where spouses have lost trust in one another. Who took the anticipation of the pleasure of the unknown? Who took Hope? So you do what the average American does every day: watches 4.6 hours tv/day. Add to that facebook, iPhone, (checked 100x/day), sports. Evil wants to create distractions in your life. Takes beautiful and good things & turn them into idols. We have more "joy" & "life" with our idols than in our relationships or calling.

WE are called to love but Evil wants our story to be bound to shame. We have no response but to hide, and then to turn our hatred against ourselves and others. We cannot love when our hearts are bound by shame.

WE are called to be more human through redemption. We are more human to the degree we grow in faith, hope and love. Our story is centrally about faith, hope, and love. We live the gospel story as we live faith, hope, and love on the behalf of others.

B. Faith, Betrayal, Orphan:

Faith: trust. to surrender to goodness. Trust in the goodness of God's heart to rescue. Trust is the ability to have a foundation to know who we are, what we are doing where we are going. Evil ruins that through experience of betrayal. *What are my stories of betrayal?* Something in our hearts responds: Never again will I desire, and have my heart broken like this.

Sexual Abuse is a common type of betrayal.

In sexual abuse, grooming is seduction for the goal of getting you to do what I want. Most first experiences of pornography were a form of grooming. Nothing brings evil greater joy, nothing sears the heart more powerfully than sexual violation.

Strategies of grooming

1. I read you well, I see that you are hurt, angry, concerned, and I name it to create intimacy. Abuser gives you something of what your heart was missing, usually in the context in the family of origin.

2. I touch you, but touch appears to be legitimate and kind, not a violation.

3. Some kind of interaction that violates the boundaries of dignity. Hug that lasts a little too long, touch of face, touch primary/secondary sexual body parts. A test to see response. We experience a moment of trauma. And are speechless as left side of brain goes off-line. Then we start blaming ourselves for not having a voice. Then we feel we become complicit because we don't know what to do. We freeze. Then we feel responsible. Parts of our bodies are touched, and our bodies respond the way they were created to. Even if it's a small amount, we feel pleasure, even though it's not wanted. Then we feel like something is wrong with us—how can we feel arousal in context of harm? Our bodies betray us.

4. Abuser silences us through threats or privileges.

Our sense of being able to trust ourselves, our body, others, God is shattered.

We feel like we are alone. An Orphan. Being without a name. Without having someone who can provide and protect us. We feel like we are the only ones who can make our world work. We've lost our fathers. As an orphan I will eat all the food I can possibly get to find satisfaction because I never know where my next meal is coming from. We become hyper-vigilant.

What do I need as a human being to live well. Attachment Theory: What a child needs in order to thrive. Romanian Orphanage stories. (children weren't touched, and then ended up with failure-to-thrive and died.) Insecure attachment 40% of population. Even as children, and then adults, becomes harder and harder to live out our humanity as God intended.

1) attunement: I see you. We make connection through our eyes. I feel you. I have a sense of what is happening outside and inside. But we get busy & have distractions, and lose eye contact and lose ability to read others well.

2) Containment: I have big arms, & these provide space for you to know how to live in the midst of the world we create together. There are boundaries for living well.

Commitment of a parent to provide structure for goodness to be able to grow.

Parameters for clarity and care for one another. (Groomer provides containment—I will provide you with safety during your emotion.)

3) Commitment to repair rupture: we can own failures and want to be reconciled.

(Groomers pretend as if this is true. but this ends as person feeling an orphan, never able to rest.)

What are your stories that shape your ability to know who you are? Stories of joy or stories of harm?

C. Hope, Powerlessness, Stranger

Evil is working to destroy hope: Faith is past (remembrance), Remember the Lord Your God. Don't forget the Lord your God. I am meant to go back to the stories that call us to remember his goodness. Ps. 27:13 Faith helps us have more hope. Faith & Hope are identical twins. Faith is hope with regards to our past. Past isn't used to justify the present. We grow faith by remembrance.

Hope is a memory of the future. (Gabriel Marcel) If your hope can be achieved in this lifetime, your hope is too small. There is an elusiveness to hope. All hope realized creates greater hope for what cannot yet come. Hope is a dream of redemption. Jesus has come once and will come again. We are live with a sense of "It's not far." Luther when asked what he would do if he knew God was coming tomorrow: I would plant an apple tree today. Because that was my plan today. I will live today well in anticipation of his coming back tomorrow.

Hope opens us to:

1. **Profound Risk:** the more you hope, the more you have to lose. We've learned to be practical, have reasonable expectations.
2. **Creates within you a defiance.** Creates a warrior. Lots of time we think Hope for heaven will give us a complacency towards problems today. "Hell NO!" Literally. **Romans 16:21** Benedictions is always word of hope for future. Hope articulates what you most hunger for. It allows us to stand against injustice. You operate believing redemption will come, so you defy what is, in hope of what will be.
3. **A willingness to persist:** let the days pass without losing your desire for what will come. Are you disciplined enough to *continue* to do what you believe will bring goodness to this earth?

Evil uses powerlessness to kill hope. Nothing seems to change, no matter what or how long I do it. Evil makes it feel foolish to continue to dream redemption. "You're a fool for wanting more." I can't do anything about my world, so why bother. 25% of men have low level of depression. Just functioning, but not truly alive. We live lives of quiet, conventional despair. "But what did you expect?" Evil wants for you to know you're a stranger. You don't fit. If people really knew who you were you would be isolated and probably humiliated. So you do your job to fit in.

Faith grounds us: I know who I am, my name, my Father. With my Father's love, I don't fear the absence of your care and respect. Hope invites us to be ready to die.

D. Love, Shame, & Widow

Love is giving and receiving pleasure for the Glory of God. To let your heart to be open to someone giving to you the bread and wine you need to be able to have the feast of God. I need worship, more than anything else in life. I am meant to worship, in this body or not.

Worship: to be caught up in awe. Romans 1:18... they were not in awe. and they did not give thanks. Worship involves awe and gratitude. *Are you in awe of your friends? your spouse? when did you lose awe?* Where that happened is a story where evil was working to take your heart away from worship. *Are you grateful?*

If you invest in the story of others, there is a social responsibility of others to be curious about yours.

Today I will either stand before my creator or have another day of putting my foot on evil's neck and say "HELL NO!".

The kingdom of God is not your church or political party. *The kingdom of God stands against all injustice, builds beauty to create hunger for the beauty that will one day come.* Are you having fun? If not, it's your fault. What you choose to do with this life sets parameters of what you will do in eternity. Are you growing in awe and gratitude for (your rebellious son)?

1. The nature of love often does not look loving. Because sometimes we have to give what the other doesn't want to receive. Love has courage to stand for the other when the other doesn't know what they need stood for.

2. Love always changes our hearts. Never comes back void. Either softer or harder hearts in response. If no change, then we have not loved.

How do we make use of this material?

a. simulcast: ToBeToldsimulcast.com

b. Story workshop: small group experience where you're taught to write a story and share it with a group. Chicago April 20-22, 2018 theallendercenter.org

c. Tribe experience: Wounded Heart and Healing the Wounded Heart. Online experience but live interactions online. discount TBT2017 theallendercenter.org

Nature of worship is core of what love is about. Byproduct of love is always awe and gratitude. When we have awe for one another, I love being in your presence because there is something about how you that brings the light of god into the world and takes my breath away. Do you taste the WOW in the lives of those you love and who love you? If not, am I loving or being loved? Not every minute, but as a core, you should have that sense. Is there that taste of THANK YOU for how you have loved me? (No, thank you...no thank you!) I thank God for you! The one who made you & carved into you the very weave of the gospel itself. Love is made to create a gratitude ultimately to God.

More often we instead feel a sense of shame. Shame is where you have felt naked in front of someone or a group, and in that exposure you have felt scorn & disdain in regard to who you are. People don't want to be in your presence, they turn away. Everyone has known shame. We cover ourselves, but instead of covering with what God gives us, we cover ourselves with our own clothing: contempt. We find relief from shame with contempt. Either I turn against myself (I am such an idiot), or you.

1. exposure

2. invitation to turn from contempt and enter into humility needed to be human

Love has the courage to enter shame knowing that we will often be bitten by those who feel shame. We are usually polite to keep from exposing people so we don't feel affect of their shame. This is not loving, courageous, or kind. We choose instead to be convenient and conventional.

III. The Redemption of Our Stories:

A. Listening to the Yes and speaking the NO

How do our stories change?

Contempt covers us so that we don't have to feel our own story. It keeps us guarded and it leaves us widowed. Widowed is when death has taken away our love. Divorce is ongoing death daily. Or we live with sufficient distance between each other. Never invested in each other's story. We've never joined one another in tears. Grief bonds us. If not tears, then not the gift of anger, which also binds us. Tears without anger will lead to personal & corporate self-indulgence. If only sad, it's sweet but not enough. If angry without grief, you will replicate same kind of abuse that was done. We are meant to hold both grief & anger together. That lives out the premise of Christ's death & resurrection. Anger is the defiance...injustice is to be stood against, Hell NO. On behalf of the kingdom of God..

Love says where you've been widowed I will weep with you and stand against all the harm you have endured in that process.

What does the redemption of our story require?

We need people who offer us attachment. People who are attuned to you. Look you in the eye and say "I am your witness. Your life will not be one that is alone." *Who sees you? Who has time for you? Is that person willing to take their shoes off?* When you see one another in your stories you are on Holy ground because you meet God there. Invite them to take their shoes off. Name the beauty of what they truly desire. You have the privilege to wash the feet of another. Profound humility to care for the most stained part of the body. Are we willing to have our story read in the light of our idolatry and angry? "I believe you are a better man than who you are showing yourself to be right now." It's hard to help someone read their sin. It's even harder to help someone read their beauty they were created with. You were made for delight. A relationship of gratitude creates delight. We delight in one another and in the God who made us. You are made for honor. An acknowledgement that we are willing to engage difficult things for the glory of God.

How much story do you really want? When there are people who oppose your politics or what we think is honorable activity, can we have the courage and humility to ask what has brought them to this gesture?

You have to have eyes willing to see the stories that brought you to where you are for change to happen.

Do you want this? Are you willing to hear the truth and face the truth? Not blame parents, but be truthful. Do you want your story to be engaged well? Then you will need to find guides. You can take no one any further than you have gone in your life. You can't take your shoes off and deal with my life until you deal with your life first. Writing accesses a different part of your brain than speaking. It accesses a part that is closer to your emotional center of brain. How can I write what I don't remember? Start with what you do know. We can't join one another until we have engaged in our own story. First have a conversation: what will it cost you to step into your story, and what will it cost you to then step into mine?

Whatever breaks your heart has something to do with your story. Whatever causes you fury, has something to do with your story. Passion is not identical to enthusiastic. Passion comes from root that means suffering. I need to read your scars to be able to understand your calling.

Come with curiosity, not condemnation.

Romans 2:4...It's kindness of God that leads us to repentance. Why do you treat the kindness of God with contempt? Will you see what my passions are, be curious about what has brought them to be, then join me to disrupt my brokenness, self-absorption, but also presume that there is something beautiful in my lust which is actually my desire for God. Call me to be the man/woman i was meant to be.

1. Will we step into our story?
2. Will we Read the themes and gaps that exist in community.

B. Reading the themes and gaps in community

My brokenness has been organized into a theme or character. Speaking of *how* I do life rather than *what* I do. We need to see how the themes of our lives play out to find our calling. Themes remain consistent over a lifetime of stories. You cannot have the themes of your stories read by you alone. You must submit your story to others.

Do you think evil exists? Do you think evil attends to people? Do you think evil attends to people in the midst of their darkest heartache? Do you think evil speaks? Do you think evil was whispering to a 4 year old boy, "You are alone, and there is no one going to protect you. If you want life to work you will have to live on the edge of danger. You need to take control of your life. Need to fight everyone." It wants you. To ruin your capacity to trust, dream. It doesn't want you to love most of all. It wants you bound to shame. Did the 4 year old find some solace in what death was saying? Peace in knowledge of his life ending someday? Better to die than to live. Better to threaten others than to ask. Better to not care than to dream.

Story of God: You are an orphan? Who else was? Christ—My God why have you forsaken me? so we would never have to be orphaned again. He was also a stranger. He bore the contempt of creation, who turned against him (his own disciples, his church community) so that none of us would have to suffer being that strange. And he bore the loss of love of his father who turned his face from him. He bore the shame of the cross so we would always have a shield between us and every accuser. No condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

What are the accusations you have in our own heart regarding yourself? Romans 12 ends... nothing can separate us from love of God in Jesus. We are meant to be the freest people on earth—free to weep, free to rejoice. What are the themes of your life? He chooses to use our weaknesses to reveal his Glory. He takes the themes & weaves them into a tapestry of aesthetic glory. Themes show your brokenness. The bond to evil needs to be broken. Kindness of God that leads us to repentance.

What changes our story? Come home to who you were meant to be. That's where all safety, satisfaction, joy and honor will be. Luke 15 The Older brother in the prodigal. Story is being told to pharisees. Asking for inheritance is saying to parent in that culture "I Wish You Dead." Then went into a violent degrading place. Murder & Rape. Ends up eating food fed to pigs. Complete humiliation. Father is waiting without rage or impatience. Father runs to us, shaming himself by girding his loins. He weeps, holding his son. Son breaks away to give his repentance. Father never asks a question (why have you done this). What does it mean to repent? Joining the party God intends to throw in your honor. Are you ready to party? But usually we need harm to be paid to ourselves for our sin. Story is also about those who fulfill their duty and have no heart. (older brother) He is the antithesis of the prodigal. Faithful son. But older brother is envious. Who envies me? Envy opens the doors to the bowels of hell. The son says to the father, "I've been with you and you never gave me a fatted calf." Father says "you never

asked.” Where did you stop asking the father to celebrate you and your friends with a fatted calf? When did it become dutiful religion? When will it be that you come home to the father? bring your anger against him to him? God can contain your fury at him without withdrawing from you—called the Psalms. More psalms of lament than praise or thanksgiving. Are you in a community where you can lament without being told to trust Jesus? Where can our stories be told where we have attunement and containment?

C. Blessing Your Name

You choose to bless or you choose to curse. There is no middle ground. You are either blessing or cursing your story. Are you ready to start blessing the stories of your heartache? They bring us to the point of realization of our need of rescue.

What’s your kingdom? For you to be prophet, priest & king. All are called to be like Jesus, called to live out those offices like him. Primarily one.

1. Priest: tender offerer of the story of God though the promise that the story is the last word and death is not. Sings the psalms. Tells us what we are to believe. Tells us how we don’t believe. Invites us to believe again. Laments & celebrates in front of us and on our behalf.

2. Prophet: poet. doesn’t just tell the truth, but invites and invokes the truth. uses metaphor. invites us to enter the desire of our heart. exposes our hearts. allures & names

3. King: creates infrastructure, stability, grounding, lands the plane. dreamers & administrators.

Our strengths get us into the fight. Our weaknesses are what he uses for our redemption.

Do you know your name?

revelation 3:17

Truth in story is mesmerizing. Otherwise story is tedious.

Evil meant my story for death, God means it for good.

What are the themes consistent with my life story? Where am I a prophet, priest, & king? You have a name and you will have a new name. It is your task before you leave this earth to have a sense of what that name is so you can live out your calling on this earth.