

**REWRITTEN**  
**WEEK 3 DISCUSSION GUIDE**  
**“CAST OF CHARACTERS”**

**READ**

This week we continued our Christmas series, titled “Rewritten”, looking at the gospel of John, one of the four accounts of the life of Jesus. We have been talking about how in Jesus God came to earth and is rewriting history. This is happening on both a cosmic and a personal level.

Last week we talked about how God can redeem your past and give your story new meaning. Your scars can become a source of healing, which is amazing, but rewriting your story will be uncomfortable. We took a look at the stories of Abraham and Sarah as well as Mary and Joseph to better understand this.

The Bible is the history of God and his people. It is divided into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament the people of God are the nation of Israel, in the New Testament they are the church. These two groups have very different origin stories.

The story of Israel begins in Genesis 12 when God calls Abraham and Sarah. They were an old barren couple who were promised a miracle child. God didn’t choose Israel he created them, he called one family out of the world to be different. Israel’s story is about belonging to and being part of this family that became a nation, with all of its laws and customs.

Looking at Matthew’s account of the life of Jesus, in the New Testament, he starts with a reference back to Abraham...

**Matthew 1:1-2**

*This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:*

Abraham is the father of Israel and David is their most famous king. Jesus came from Abraham’s family, the people of Israel. Interesting to note that both Israel’s story and the story of the church start with a couple who are promised a child.

**Matthew 1:18**

*This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.*

For Abraham and Sarah, the promised child was an answer to their prayers. For Joseph and Mary their child was an answer to everyone else’s prayers. Their life was thrown into chaos, they were engaged but not married. Controversy would surround this pregnancy, which was potentially a capitol offense. Joseph planned to divorce Mary quietly but an Angel of the Lord was sent to talk him out of it.

Two groups of people were part of Jesus birth story, shepherds and wise men. *“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them... (Luke 2:8-9).*

Shepherds were the first people told about Jesus birth and invited to go see him. They were looked down upon, it was not a noble profession. They were considered physically and spiritually dirty. Religion was about purity, and handling animals violated some of these laws. They would have to be cleansed to have anything to do with God.

The Wise men, “Magi from the east” were likely Persian priests who specialized in astrology, dreams and magic. They were called wise men because they would try to interpret signs and give advice. Astrology was practiced all over the ancient world but was condemned in the Old Testament. These magi were familiar with Jewish faith and culture, their study of the stars and faith led them to Old Testament prophecies and when they saw this star they went to see the baby. *“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” (Matthew 2:1-2).*

The two groups involved in Jesus birth are outsiders and pagan foreigners. The whole situation around Jesus birth was messy, awkward, uncomfortable, and difficult. And that is exactly what has to happen for a story to be rewritten. But as difficult as all of this was for everyone involved, as hard as the rewriting process was, do you know the name Jesus friends gave to describe his life?

Gospel, which means good news. *“... “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11).*

Jesus is good news for all people. Jesus was born into a divided world that was defined by who was in and who was out. But Jesus came and invited everyone. Beginning with his birth he rewrites the whole idea of who can connect with God and how you could do it. Before Jesus people thought you had to earn a right standing with God. But the problem is no one can really ever be good enough. That’s why his followers called it good news. Because in Jesus they could do something they could never do before. Live in connection and relationship with God.

If we want to rewrite our story it is going to be difficult. The only way that Jesus becomes good news is that we first admit that we are in a desperate situation. First, we have to own it. The New Testament word is repent. Repent means to turn around. A rewritten story begins with acknowledging and turning, and that isn’t easy. Because it requires some difficult choices. People who took part in Jesus story made some tough choices, which led them into uncomfortable situations, but all of that led to something brand new. A new life, new future, a rewritten story. If you want to experience a rewritten story it starts with repentance.

## **DISCUSS**

Just for fun, share about a favorite Christmas present. Why was it your favorite?

In his message this week Scott shared a quote from Tim Keller *“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.”*

What are your thoughts on this?

How have you felt more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than you every dared hope?

Experiencing the rewriting of our stories by Jesus begins with acknowledging that our current story is messed up, owning it, and turning from it.

In this week’s message we were challenged to answer two questions:

1. What do I need to own up to?
2. What do I need to turn from?

Discuss this with your group.

## **PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP**

Pray that God would search our hearts and bring to mind anything that we need to own up to and turn from. Pray that we would repent and follow Jesus as he rewrites our stories.

## **PRAY FOR FCC**

Pray that we would share with others how Jesus is rewriting our stories that people may know about the transforming nature of a relationship with Jesus revealed through our lives.

## **PRAY FOR OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS**

Pray that our Global partners would live rewritten stories as they surrender all areas of their lives to Jesus. Pray that those who do not know Jesus will see something different in our Global partners, that they would see Jesus reflected in the way they live their lives.