



The Mission of God

An Orientation to Reading God's Word

LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Case Study

1. What is the person's objective in reading / hearing the Bible?
2. What is driving this objective?
3. Is there any danger in this kind of reading? If so, what?



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

The Bible as a Medicine Chest

Does God ever decide something and then change His mind?

Should I buy a new motorcycle?



How old is the earth?

Who should I marry?



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Topical: The “Natural” View of the Bible

1. The Bible’s parts may seem disjointed
 - o What does Acts have to do with Joshua?
 - o What does Leviticus have in common with John?
 - o What does Lamentations have to do with the rest of the Bible?
2. Different authors and books have distinct styles and subject matter
 - o Law versus gospel
 - o Love of God versus wrath of God
 - o Israel versus the nations
3. We have been taught “topically” (e.g. systematic theology)



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Medicine Chest: Pro's & Cons

PROs

- o Faith that the Bible speaks to every area of life
- o Synthesizes Biblical data

CONs

- o Focus on my concerns
- o Does not approach the Bible on its terms
- o Allows us bend the Bible to our biases and culture.



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Other Popular Approaches

- The Bible tells us what to do
 - A rulebook
 - A book of morals or virtuous actions
(problems with some characters such as David)
- The Bible tells us what to believe
 - A systematic theology
- Both involve us in re-forming the Bible to do what we need it to do for us



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

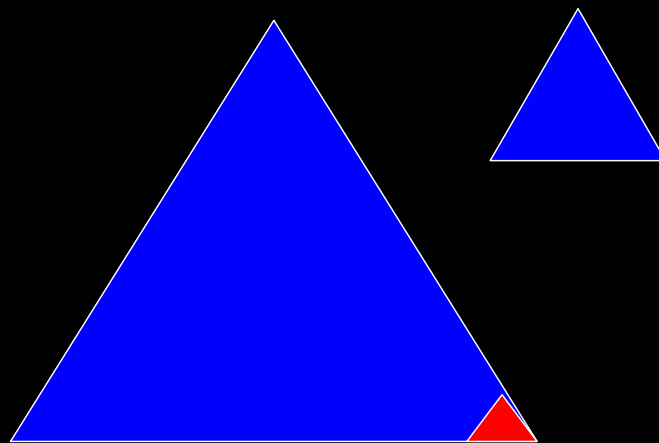
The Bible as Drama

- o A Shakespearean Play
- o Four acts are written...



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Integrating Our Life into the Story



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

One Story



Creation

Consummation



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

The Necessity of a Uniting Story

1. Lesslie Newbigin: “The way we understand human life depends on what conception we have of the human story.”
2. Alasdair MacIntyre: “I can only answer the question “What am I to do?” if I can answer the prior question, “of what story do I find myself a part?”
3. Attitudes towards
 1. Sexual promiscuity
 2. Divorce
 3. Aging
 4. Minorities



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

A Summary of the One Story

God loves human beings and the world. He lost it and them. He is getting it back.

Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Creation

Gen 1:31: “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good...”

The Creating God expresses his love for humanity and the creation by means of a perfectly designed home for those who bear his very image.

Other claimants:

“Genesis as myth”

Primordial soup

Materialism—survival of the fittest



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Fall

Gen 3:9: But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" Gen 3:17 Cursed is the ground because of you.

Humanity is profoundly and shamefully alienated from the God who loves. The creation as well as every human interaction is deeply fragmented.

Other claimants:

"Humanity seeks autonomy"

"A fictional apologetic for guilt"

"the religious institution secures its position as mediator"

there is no guilt, only "will to power"



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Redemption

Colossians 1:20: 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.

Other stories:

Islam: Man is not sinful, only wayward.
(Redemption is not needed, only guidance)

Infinite perfectibility of humanity

“eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.”



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Consummation

Revelation 5:9-10: Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.

Other Stories:

The universe's clock is winding down...
Humanity is on a course of self-destruction



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Implications: Our View of God

- Is God a vindictive tyrant or a benevolent father?
- God is zealous for his glory--vanquishing evil and establishing righteousness and beauty.
- He is redeeming the world, glorifying Christ.



*Why isn't the God of the
Old Testament like the God
of the New Testament?*



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Implications: Our view of the Gospel

- o The gospel is not merely a means to individual peace , but the culmination of history. The gospel is personal and cosmic.

When I got saved, God gave me a peace I had never known before!



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Implications: Our view of the world

- o The world is not a polluted place to flee, but a home to reclaim.
- o “Resident Aliens” (I Peter 2:11)

“I am a poor way-faring stranger, while traveling through this world below. There is no sickness, no toil or danger in that bright land to which I go.”

LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD



Implications: Our view of the Christian's Role in Society

- o The gospel has implications in the realms of art, science, politics, law, commerce, etc.

I see no point in all the frenzy about the environment. After all, God is going to end it all in a big fire. Don't the tree-huggers know that?!



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Implications: Our view of the Mission

- o Mission is holistic. It is all I do—finances, family, entertainment, etc. The gospel has world-wide implications.
- o The church is “salt and light” to the “global village.”

God bless the missionaries.
Some are to give and some
are to go, but we all have a
role to play

LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD



Implications: Our view of Mission

- o Mission is not a rescue operation so much as a radical readjustment of human civilisation. It involves our vocation, families, the social order and every aspect of human existence.



Implications: Our view of the Church

- o The Church is not a way-station for weary pilgrims but a miniature society of the future of the world when “money, sex and power is used in gospel-cleansed ways.” (Tim Keller)



Images of the People of God

Salt

Preserves
Flavors
Adds enjoyment

Light

Dispels darkness
Leads
Purifies



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Implications: Our view of ourselves

Rescued	→	Sent
Passive Recipients	→	Active participants
Focus	→	Means
Biding Time	→	Redeeming Time
Awaiting Heaven	→	Preparing earth for heaven
Vocation is income	→	Vocation is calling



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

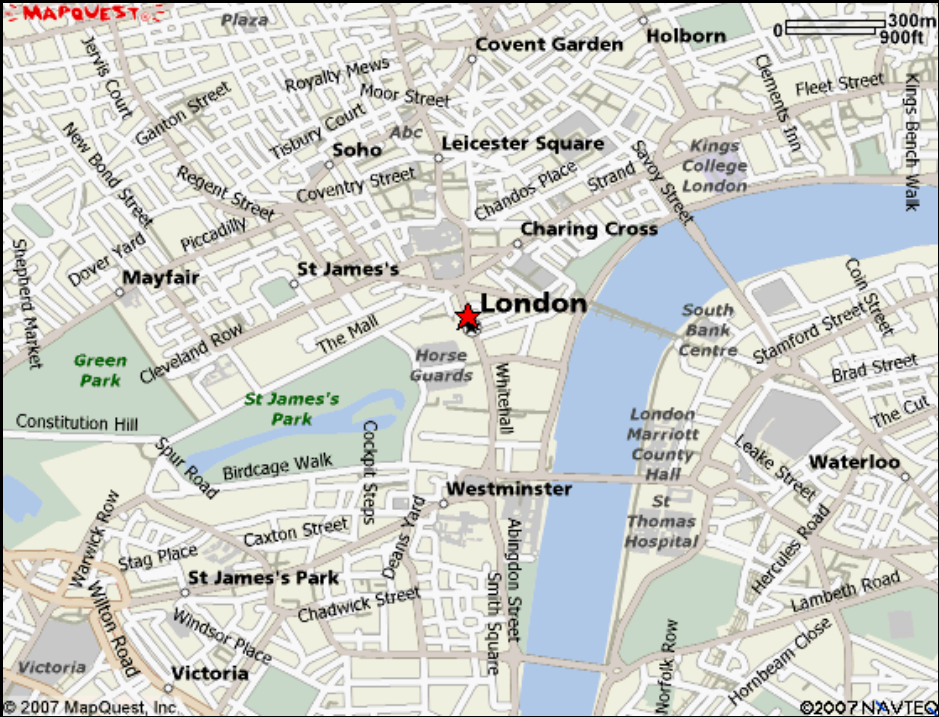
Luke 24:17-27; 44-48

- o Jesus saw the Bible *Messianically and missionally*.
- o *Messianically*: The Bible is about Jesus—his suffering and entering into glory (v.25-27);
- o *Missionally*: It is about God’s pursuit of humanity as “repentance and forgiveness is preached to all nations.” (v. 44-49)



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

A Hermeneutical Map



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD



“The Bible renders to us the story of God’s mission through God’s people in their engagement with God’s world for the sake of the whole of God’s creation. The Bible is the drama of this God of purpose engaged in the mission of achieving that purpose universally, embracing past, present and future, Israel and the nations, “life, the universe and everything,” and with its center, focus, climax and completion in Jesus Christ. Mission is not just one of a list of things that the Bible happens to talk about, only a bit more urgently than some. Mission is, in that much abused phrase, “what it’s all about.”” (Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God*, p. 22)



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

What Is Our Mission?

Fundamentally, our mission means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation... Our mission flows from and participates in the mission of God
(Wright, p. 22-23)



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Course Objectives

- To help participants read the Bible as the story of God's mission to reconcile the world to Himself.
- To bring light to difficult Old Testament passages and understand their purpose in the narrative flow of the Bible.
- To build a foundation for understanding the church's life as integrally related to the mission of God.
- To demonstrate that the believer's life purpose derives from God's over-arching purpose for the world—to redeem it and renew it.



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Class Plan

- Week 1: A Missional Reading of the Bible
- Week 2: The Beginning and the End (Gen 1-3; Rev 21-22)
- Week 3: Humanity in a Downward Spiral (Genesis 4-12)
- Week 4: God rescues and separates a people for Himself. (Abraham through the Exodus.)
- Week 5: A Place for Yahweh to Dwell



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD

Class Plan

- o Week 6: Why a king? (The Judges)
- o Week 7: A prophetic vision of Israel and the nations;
- o Week 8: The contours of Christ's mission
- o Week 9: The Incredible Acts of the Holy Spirit.
- o Week 10: Paradise Restored



LOVING GOD, LOVING OTHERS, SERVING THE WORLD