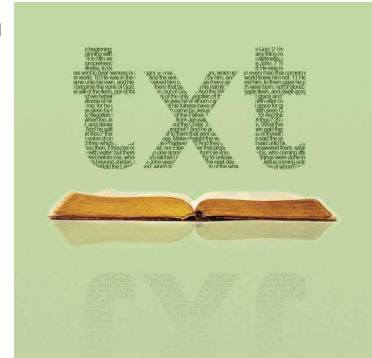


Graphics, Audio and Video - Media Notes are highlighted with this background color

- There is a sermon starter video.
- There is a video sermon illustration in the middle of the sermon.
- Props - Bible, owner's manual, rock



Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about the Bible and some of the basics of what it is and is not.

Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because it addresses some of misconceptions about the Bible and gives an overview of the story found in the book which is the essential guide to our Christian faith.

What is the context of this sermon?

This is the first sermon in our back to school kickoff series for 2014. It is Promotion Sunday, which means that children will move to their new classrooms in Sunday School and third graders will receive a Bible.

Some of the key resources for this sermon and series include: Wrestling with the Bible sermon series at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection (<http://j.mp/1kl57IS>); txt sermon series at LifeChurch.tv (<http://j.mp/1t5aqv7>) and the book Making Sense of the Bible by Adam Hamilton.

What are the next action steps?

- Live a life defined by the story of the Bible, especially the story of Jesus.
- Let the Bible capture your deepest hopes and greatest aspirations.
- Allow the person you hope to be and who you are today to be shaped by what is in the Bible
- Seek to understand and be able to wrestle with the difficult places in the Bible
- Find a deep longing to open up the Bible and read it.

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that we can be part of God's story that we read about in the Bible.

Metadata

- Topic(s)

- Bible
- Sermon Books of the Bible
 - Matthew
- Series
 - txt: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture
 - The Bible is much more than a book of stories and rules from the past. It's rich with a relevant message God has for us today. Join us as we discover how to engage with the Bible like never before and how to apply it to our lives each and every day.
- Speaker
 - Andrew Conard
- Tags
 - bible, story, narrative, hope, faith, love, difficult, challenging

Outline

[Graphics, Audio and Video - Media Notes are highlighted with this background color](#)
[Key Questions, Metadata and Outline](#)
[What is this sermon about?](#)
[Why is this sermon important?](#)
[What is the context of this sermon?](#)
[What are the next action steps?](#)
[What is the good news \(bottom line\)?](#)
[Metadata](#)
[Outline](#)
[Matthew 3:13-4:4, CEB](#)
[Response to Scripture](#)
[Sermon Starter Video](#)
[Introduction](#)
[Sermon Notes and Scripture Study](#)
[Opening Prayer](#)
[Making Sense of the Bible](#)
[I Wrestle with the Bible](#)
[Questions about the Bible](#)
[Hope for the Series](#)
[Transition](#)
[What the Bible is Not](#)
[Owner's Manual](#)
[Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth](#)

[Decision Maker](#)

[Transition](#)

[What is the Bible?](#)

[Etymology - A Word Study](#)

[Bible Sermon Video Illustration](#)

[Perspectives on the Bible](#)

[Transition](#)

[The Story](#)

[In the Beginning](#)

[Human Beings](#)

[A Particular People](#)

[Covenant](#)

[Wander Away](#)

[Take us Back](#)

[Wander Away Again](#)

[Our Story](#)

[Incarnation](#)

[Jesus Christ](#)

[Crucifixion](#)

[Resurrection](#)

[The Church](#)

[Letters](#)

[The End](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Good News](#)

[Temptation of Jesus](#)

[Transition](#)

[Call to Action](#)

[Invitation](#)

[Closing Prayer](#)

Matthew 3:13-4:4, CEB

13 At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River so that John would baptize him. 14 John tried to stop him and said, "I need to be baptized by you, yet you come to me?"

15 Jesus answered, "Allow me to be baptized now. This is necessary to fulfill all righteousness."

So John agreed to baptize Jesus. 16 When Jesus was baptized, he immediately came up out of the water. Heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting on him. 17 A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him."

4:1 Then the Spirit led Jesus up into the wilderness so that the devil might tempt him. 2 After Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, he was starving. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "Since you are God's Son, command these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus replied, "It's written, People won't live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God."

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Starter Video

- Play sermon starter video.
-

Introduction

Today, we begin a new sermon series, txt: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture.

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

Opening Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Making Sense of the Bible

I love the Bible. I read it every single day, usually with an app on my phone. I have read it through twice over the last five years and plan to finish it through a third time by the end of the year. I look closely at it each week as I prepare to preach on a particular passage or theme. I have memorized some verses and hope to memorize more.

I Struggle with the Bible

I love the Bible and I also struggle with it. There are parts of the Bible that I question, passages that I don't really understand and I wonder how it is possible that some passages are part of our holy book. I would guess that many of you also have questions about the Bible. You are not alone. As a pastor, I hear from people on a regular basis who are confused or disturbed by something have read or heard about the Bible.

Questions about the Bible

There are many questions which people may have with the Bible:

- Violence - Stories in the Old Testament in which God commands the people of Israel to kill every living thing in a town
- Science - How can the creation stories of Genesis be reconciled with modern science?
- Consistency - There are stories in both the Old and New Testaments in which it seems that different things are happening at the same time - depending on who is telling the story. Does this make the story unreliable?

There is no shortage of questions which could be asked about the Bible.

Hope for the Series

My hope is that during the weeks of this series, we will have the opportunity to explore the Bible as much more than a book of stories and rules from the past. It's rich with a relevant message God has for us today. We will discover how to engage with the Bible in new ways and how to apply it to our lives each and every day. We will also consider some serious questions about the Bible. By no means will we be able to cover everything, however I pray that all of us will grow in our faith and rediscover the power of scripture.

Transition

We first ask the question, What is the Bible?

To begin to answer with that, let's consider what the Bible is not.

What the Bible is Not

Owner's Manual

One of the ways the people talk about the Bible is as an owner's manual. Here is the owner's manual from our vehicle. It has a table of contents, safety features, how to do routine maintenance and a guide for troubleshooting. It is pretty straightforward.

The Bible is not very much like this owner's manual. One of my colleagues in the Great Plains describes it like this: "I wish it were written like my [owners] manual. Instead, its table of contents begins with stories of people who lived in the ancient Near East thousands of years ago. Next come books of poetry, followed by books written by fiery prophets warning about the wrath of the Assyrian and Babylonian armies. Next are the New Testament Gospels telling stories about what Jesus said and did, about his Crucifixion and resurrection. These are followed by twenty-one letters, called the Epistles, written by people called apostles, to Christians living in the Roman Empire two thousand years ago. Finally, about where the troubleshooting guide should be, there's the Book of Revelation with stories of multiheaded beasts and dragons. This is definitely not written like an owner's manual."¹

Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth

B - I - B - L - E.

This is a pretty fun acronym, but the guidance in the Bible is not basic and it is not just what to do before you die.

Decision Maker

When I was growing up, my grandparents had a little device called the Decision Maker. It was a couple inch square battery powered device. It had 6 lights on it and a single button. You would ask a question, push the button and then it would beep, the lights would light up in order—fast at first, but then slowing down until you finally received an answer to your question - Maybe, Definitely, No way.

Sometimes we treat like a decision maker, "Should I quit my job to find something better?" and then we flip open to a page and read.

[Flip open and read]

So, it doesn't really work like that either

Transition

So what is the Bible?

¹ Excerpt From: Adam Hamilton. "Making Sense of the Bible." iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/M9PxN.I>

What is the Bible?

Scripture - A Word Study

The word “scripture” is a Middle English word that comes from the Latin, “scriptura” which means “writings.” It has come to mean the sacred writings or religious texts and can be used for the holy book of a variety of faiths.

Etymology - A Word Study

The word, “Bible” comes from the Latin Biblia, which in turn found its root in the same Greek word, τὰ βιβλία. The Greek word literally means “paper” or “scroll” and it was used as the common word for book.

“Christian use of the term can be traced to c. 223 CE. The biblical scholar F.F. Bruce notes that Chrysostom appears to be the first writer (in his Homilies on Matthew, delivered between 386 and 388) to use the Greek phrase ta biblia (“the books”) to describe both the Old and New Testaments together.”²

Bible Sermon Video Illustration

A friend of mine, put together a video summing up some of the ways which you can think about the Bible. Let’s take a look.

[Play Bible Sermon Video Illustration]

Perspectives on the Bible

First, some basic statistics. The Bible is:

- The Best selling book ever
- Translated into over 1200 languages
- 66 different books
- 1,189 chapters
- 31,173 verses
- 777,692 words
- Written over 1400 years

On the one hand, it is a best selling book. If you work at a bookstore, you want to make sure and have a copy on hand to sell.

The Bible consists of 66 different books written over 1,400 years. So perhaps less like a single book, it is a library—a collection of books.

Transition

² Wikipedia contributors, “Bible,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bible&oldid=62028193> (accessed August 17, 2014).

Most importantly, it is one story.
One story that sweeps over history that changes the world.
This is where we begin to get to the essence of the Bible.
On the one hand it is pages and ink, yet it is more than that - a story that gives life. That story goes something like this.

The Story³

In the Beginning

In the beginning God.
In the beginning God spoke and created all that exists in the entire cosmos.
In the beginning, on the third planet from the sun, in a tiny little solar system on the outskirts of the Milky Way galaxy, God brought forth life.

Human Beings

In the end, created human beings in the image of God
To love and be loved.
To know and understand.
To be known and to be understood.
God walks with them in the cool of the afternoon in the Garden of Eden.

The Human Condition

While humans were created in God's image, we see that they quickly used their freedom to make bad choices. They were created in God's image and had everything they could ever need, but that was not enough. They wanted to be like God and broke the one rule God had given them.

This is something that we all share. It is the human condition. When left to ourselves, we turn away from God's desire for our life. We tend to break relationships with God and other people. But God did not abandon people.

A Particular People

Years later, God calls to himself a people, an interesting people. Of all the people in the world, wouldn't you think that God would call a powerful people, a strong people, a wealthy people to be his own people? But he chooses slaves in Egypt and says you will be my people and I will be your God.

Covenant

³ This section is adapted from Adam Hamilton's sermon, "Making Sense of the Bible" found online at <http://www.cor.org/worship/sermon-archives/show/sermons/Making-Sense-of-the-Bible/>

He makes a covenant with them and he sets them free. He delivers them from slavery in Egypt and gives them a promised land.

He says, so long as you do these things, I will be your God.

I will be your Father and you will be my children.

I will be your lover and you will be the beloved.

I will be king and you will be my subjects.

If you just do these things, we will walk together.

Wander Away

The story really heats up from there. The people struggle.

They find themselves wandering away from God and chasing after the Canaanite gods. When they do, God's heart breaks and he stands back and says, "I have to let you go."

They walk away from God's protection. Then the empires on the north and on the south - Egypt, Babylonians, Persians, Assyrians - they begin to attack this tiny land bridge of a country.

Take us Back

When the people of Israel are subdued they cry out to God and say, "God we are so sorry. We have come back to you. Please forgive us. Take us back. God takes them back and he loves them. He cleans them up again and they promise to walk with God forever.

Wander Away Again

Then a few years later they begin to walk away. They chase after the God's of the Canaanites and the empires around begin to attack them and God withholds God's protection. They are subdued and cry out to God once more, "God we are so sorry, please take us back!" God takes them back and he cleans them up. They promise to walk with him and love him forever.

After a few years, they begin to walk away. He withholds his protection, the empires attack... Are you getting the story? This is the whole biblical story.

Our Story

Of course, it is our story, isn't it? Every one of us is prone to wander, Lord we feel it, prone to leave the God we love.

Incarnation

Then God finally says, maybe I will just show you. I have been speaking to you through prophets, priests, lawgivers. I will walk among you and show you how much I love you. I will show you what I meant for you. I will be your God and you will be my people.

Jesus Christ

So Jesus Christ is born. Emmanuel, God with us. God takes on flesh. There is

something powerful about showing up. I know what it is like to be sick. I am walking among you so you can see and understand. I hurt and I bleed just like you.

Crucifixion

In the most beautiful and epic portion of the entire scripture, Jesus hangs on the cross and prays Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

Resurrection

Then he is raised to life to give us hope. What an amazing story spread over these 1400 years!

The Church

Then the church is born by the power of the Holy Spirit to change the world and make disciples of all people.

Letters

Then finally you get to these wonderful letters in the New Testament and you find statements like this: Faith, hope and love these abide, but the greatest of these is love.

The End

You come to the end and you find that Christ returns and the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. And he shall reign forever and ever.

There is no more sorrow, no more pain and no more suffering for the old has passed away.

That is the biblical story.

It is a story that gives life and changes the world.

Conclusion

Good News

The good news is that we can be part of God's story that we read about in the Bible. We can walk with God every day of our lives, one day live with God forever and today be part of God's kingdom right here in El Dorado and Butler County — living a life that really is life.

This brings us to the story of scripture that was read today.

Temptation of Jesus

Jesus is in the wilderness, led there by the spirit to meet the devil. Jesus is there for forty days and forty nights not eating anything. He is starving.

This is when the tempter shows up.

He says, "Jesus, I know you are hungry. Why don't you command these stones to

become bread?"

Jesus said, "People won't live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God."

Transition

God can speak to us in a lot of ways, yet we hear God's word for us most often and most consistently in the Bible.

Call to Action

My invitation for you is to live a life defined by the story of the Bible, especially the story of Jesus. Let the Bible capture your deepest hopes and greatest aspirations. Allow the person you hope to be and who you are today to be shaped by what is in this book.

I want you understand and be able to wrestle with the difficult places and I want you to have a deep longing to open up this book and read it.

Invitation

You can have all the Wonder Bread, sourdough and French Bread and still be starving to death, if you haven't heard God's word.

Inside this book are the words of life.

Closing Prayer

Let's pray.