

## THE START OF THE STORY

### WONDER

Genesis 1:1-19 // Craig Smith

September 11, 2016

---

**CRAIG:** Good morning, Mission Hills.

**TOGETHER:** Good morning.

**CRAIG:** It is good to be here. And while I promised during cannonading weekend that if God confirmed our call through your vote and everything else that if I got here, I'd tell you the rest of the story that I started while I was in cannonading weekend. So I believe in keeping my promises, so if you got a Bible, I'll ask you to go ahead and jump with me to the Book of Genesis. We're gonna get started on the rest of the story.

Well, actually over the next few weeks, we're going to cover the entire Bible. It gonna be a little bit of a bird's eye view as you might imagine. But it's an important sort of starting point for me because I want you to understand that the story that runs from the first to the last page of God's Word is a story that gets me up in the morning. It's a story that causes me to move through the hard things and to continue on and just honestly living as one of Jesus's people but also certainly as a leader in God's church. And so it's important to me that we make sure we're on the same page when it comes to story. So we're gonna start this morning in Genesis 1.

Now, we're gonna avoid some things in Genesis that are often the subject of conversation. I know especially over the last century or so when we talk about Genesis 1, usually the conversation sort of revolves around evolution and creation. And it's a lot of controversy about, you know, when did God do this? How long ago was it? And how long did it take? And those are good questions, they are important questions. I certainly have thoughts about those questions, and I'm happy to talk with people about them, but that's not what we're gonna focus on today. Instead, what we're gonna focus on today is person and pattern. Because I think sometimes in the conversation about when did this take place and how long that it took place, we miss a really important part of what God wants to make sure that we understand here at the beginning of his word and that is it's a revelation of the kind of person that he is. And also beginning to help us understand the patterns of the ways that he operates and so we're gonna look at person and pattern.

Once a person in particular, I'm interested in the fact that the person of God is presented to us in the book of Genesis as a King. And that is not something I think that we easily grasp as Americans. I love being an American, no question about it, but we have certain deficiencies. We're not perfect in every way. And one of our deficiencies as Americans is that we don't get the whole idea of kings.

We had a king, right? We got rid of him. And there's a certain amount of pride that accompanies that. You know, we're democracy, we elect our highest government officials. So in effect, you know, our government officials kind of, they kind of work for us. We may not feel like they're doing a very good job for us, but they kind of work for us. That's sort of the way the system works, but that's not how kings work.

Kings don't work for his people. Now, a good king will bless his people, but he's not there working for the people. And that's a hard thing for us to grasp and we see it reflected in a lot of ways. One of the ways that I see it most reflected is on that there's a bumper sticker and maybe you've seen it. I hope I'm not stepping on any toes that you don't actually have this bumper sticker of so. You know, we're doing the last song, there's gonna be a prayer, head out of the parking lot a little quick, you can drive away before anybody sees it, or you can tear it off, whatever you wanna do.



But if the bumper sticker says this, “God is my copilot.” Anybody ever seen that one? Yeah, no. No, God is not your Copilot because a copilot is there to kind of help you get where you wanna go in the easiest way possible, and that’s not God’s job. God’s not your copilot. If God is anything associated with the airline industry, God is air traffic control.

Okay, God tells you where to go and when to go, and you will listen to him, or you will be grounded, okay? That’s, see that’s a King. It’s a King, and Kings are a little bit different. So as we read through Genesis, one of the things I wanna make sure we understand is that God begins from the very beginning to make sure that we understand that he is our King, which is what makes it all the more profound later on when Jesus says I’m also your friend. That truth’s gonna just kind of go in one way and out in the other if we don’t understand that it’s a King who says that he’s also our friend.

And God present himself as King in three ways this morning, and I want you to be looking for one. He presents himself as King by the way that he creates. He creates by speaking. And it is only people with great power who can make things happen by simply speaking. Everybody else has to work out, but a king can say, “Go get me a Twinkie,” and a Twinkie will appear, right? Only Kings can make things happen by speaking.

The other way that God reveals himself as King here is that as he creates, he also names. He gives the name, and that’s a sign of his authority over it. But it’s not just a sign of his authority over it, it’s also a statement that he’s taking possession of it. It’s his way of saying, “You’re mine.” And we’re gonna see that not only as a revelation of God as King but also a pattern that we see throughout Scripture though when He gives new names to things. He’s saying, “You’re mine.”

Third way that God reveals himself as King that I want to be looking for is that God sets boundaries. He sets limits, and he decides where those boundaries and those limitations are, and again that’s a sign of his kingship.

So if you’ll start with me, we’re gonna begin the story where it begins on page one. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now, to be honest, how many of you could have quoted that one without a Bible in front of you? Yeah, it’s a pretty familiar phrase, right? I mean even if you have not really read much of the Bible, chances are if you’ve ever had the experience, you’re like, “Well, should I maybe figure out what this whole Bible thing is about? I guess I’ll start on this, in the beginning, God created the heavens.” Yeah, you’ve probably read that before.

If you’re one of these people, who’s decided at some point you’re gonna read all the way through the Bible and didn’t quite make it? Anybody? Yeah, I definitely had several opportunities that didn’t quite find their full [inaudible 00:06:16]. But you know what, nobody that I’ve ever met like lost steam halfway through the first sentence, okay? So everybody has read these words, in the beginning, God created heavens and the earth. But I want us to stop for a moment and realize what a big statement that is. Because what God is really giving us there is this sort of massive overview and then he’s gonna kind of zoom in.

Now, I wanna let you give you two words that will maybe help us to get a handle of what God’s doing here. The first one is a lovely Latin term that if you can work it into conversation this afternoon, you gonna look brilliant to all your friends and family. And that word is Marasmus. Go and try it out. Marasmus is a way of talking about a whole package of things by mentioning the outside extremes.

But we’re not talking about just those extremes, we’re talking about the whole package. We do this in English all the time. We say things like, “I’ve been thinking about you night-end.” Which really means what? I’ve been thinking about you all the time, right? But we name the outside extremes a way of saying it’s the whole package. We even use this particular phrase in English conversation these days. We say, you know, “I would move heaven and earth for you” which means I would do what? I’ll do anything for you.



But if we're describing the whole package by mentioning the outside ins, and that's what God does here. So he kind of starts off by going, "Hey, you know, everything? I did that. I'm responsible for all of it." And then what he does, he begins to kind of zoom in. And I actually love the way that God patterns this. Because I think it not only plays out in Scripture, it plays out in our lives. So I'm gonna give you another word, it's not Latin, and it's not Greek or Hebrew. It's not really a Bible term at all, it's a knick-knack term. I think that's your category and that word is Russian. It's matryoshka. You may have even seen these dolls before. It is a matryoshka, you know. You look at one, it looks like a kind of a cool, interesting doll but then you pop it off, and it's like, "Oh, there is another one right inside it." And then you pop that head off, and there's another one. And that's kind of a cool thing. How many have you seen those.? They're kind of fun, right?

Well, the book of Genesis and really a lot of places in Scripture, we see that same pattern going on. You start with something big, but then God is like, "Yeah, okay, but let's look inside, let's look one level deeper." And so here we begin with this big statement, in the beginning, God made it all. And then he's like, "Yeah, but you'd probably like some more detail, so let's take that, open that and let's go inside," and it begins to give us the details of the creation.

Now, we're gonna see it happen again. Even here in the first chapter on the sixth day, he's gonna make something that we're all fairly fond of which is, yeah it's us. On the sixth day, he makes us, but it's a big statement, it's said God made human beings, male and female and just kind of stands there as this big thing.

And then in the second chapter of Genesis, he's like, "Yeah, let's take the lid off, then let's go in." Let's zoom in, and he gives the details of the Creation of human beings. And I mention this because it's not only an interesting way that Genesis is patterned, it's also an important way of understanding the way God works in our lives. God loves to take back the layers, he loves to peel off layers. He loves to get further in.

And most of us have layers, don't we? And God is relentless in peeling off those layers. How many of you can testify to that? It can be sometimes a very painful process, but it's a good process. What God's doing is he's getting to the real core, he is getting to what's important. And so we see that in his word, this constant sort of like, "Let's go deeper, let's peel off the layers, let's get further in." And we just kind of have to understand if we're gonna get into the story with God, he's going to get into us in that way. And so it's a little bit scary. It can be painful at times but it's always gonna be good, and we have to go, "Okay, that's the God that I'm getting involved with."

So he begins to peel off the layers of this big statement, and he says now the earth was formless and empty and darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And there's that sort of the hush, there's that moment of expectation, something great is about to happen.

And God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." And God saw that the light was good and he separated the light from the darkness and he called the light day and the darkness he called night. And there was evening, and there was morning the first day. That's His first active creation, light. And I think that's fascinating for a couple of different reasons. One is because it seems to me that it's another pattern that we find repeated throughout Scripture. And that is that God often shines light on something before he moves to change that thing, do you hear me?

God often shines light. He defines what is before he begins to move towards what should be. And I think we see that throughout Scripture. I think for instance of a little bit later on in God's word, there's a story of God calling to himself a people, the Israelites. And God, of course, was their King and at a certain point pretty early on in their existence, they said, "Yeah, you know, God you're doing a great job but here's the thing. We'd kind of like a king like everybody else has. All the other kids have like human kings, we'd kind of like one of those"

And so God in his grace and in his mercy said, " Okay, even though I'm your king, you want a king? Fine, I'll give you a king. You wanna get a lead you in battle? That's fine." And here was the interesting thing is, they wanted a particular kind of king. They



wanted a king who would they said lead them in battle. So they were looking for, you know, particular kind of guy and God in His grace said, "Okay, we're gonna give you that guy, but you're gonna be a little surprised by what happens when you get what you want."

So they picked a guy named Saul. Saul was a head taller than everybody else. Saul was a good looking guy, and the Israelites looked to him, and that's exactly what we want. And everything went bad. Things got a really messy with Saul in charge because what God was doing was he was shining light. He was shedding light on the fact that what they wanted is not what they needed. But rather than just giving them what they need, he showed them the reality of what would happen if they got what they wanted. So they were ready when he finally gave them David, a man after his own heart, what they needed.

And I think this is true not only in the Old Testament, it's true in the New. Jesus was 33 years old when he died for us. Why? Why did he wait 33 years? I mean, he could have died as an infant. He still was of infinite value. He still would have been sufficient to be a sacrifice for all of our sins, all the wrong stuff we've done. So why wait 33 years? And the answer is because he was shining light. He was shedding light on the fact that the religious systems of people clung to and the boxes of do's and don'ts that they checked off were insufficient. That they didn't accomplish what they wanted, they didn't bring people into a relationship with the God of creation. They didn't actually bring the transformation that they knew that they needed and God was through Jesus was shining a light on that fact before he died for their sins and actually began the real transformation they needed.

And then it's true in our own lives. How many of you are in a place where you really want God to do something? No? Okay, you're not asking enough of him. I think I will speak of God's behalf and say if you're not asking God to do something right now, you need to start because God wants to do something. I mean if I ask the question how many of you everything is just absolutely perfect? Yeah, I didn't think so. So you should be asking. And how many of you are in a place where you're asking God to do something, and you feel like it's just not happening nearly fast enough? You know [inaudible 00:13:02] I know, it's a little hard thing to admit. But I mean the reality of all of us face that.

But here's the interesting thing, it is a so often we ask God to do something. We say, "God would you fix this?" Maybe it's your marriage or relationship in your family or are with your neighbors or at work or it's something, and you're saying, "God would you fix this? Would you give me what I need?" And God saying, "You don't know what you need. What you want is not necessarily what you need. And I love you too much to give you what you want instead of what you need." And sometimes what's happening in that phase where we feel like it's taking too long is that God is allowing us to see what we actually need so that we can appreciate it when it actually comes. So I think it's interesting that God shines light before he moves to do any shaping. You can even think about that way. God often shines before he shapes.

I also think it's interesting that he did light first because light's just kind of cool. And was anybody just sit around thinking about light? No. After last service like one guy came and he's like, "I do that." And I'm like, "Me too." Because light is actually, it's really cool. And you know, I've tried a couple of ways and they didn't connect last service, we will see this one.

Okay, one thing that is cool about light is that it's both a wave and a particle. Okay. It vibrates in two different directions at exactly the same time. One little woo. All right. How about this, light's fast. Can we get on the same page on that one? Here's how fast light is. Light travels a 186,000 miles a second and all God's people went. Yeah, wow. Like, I don't know what I do with that, how fast is that? It's like really, really fast.

How about this? 186,000 miles a second. The earth is about 25,000 miles around so if I went about...this is about a five mile an hour pace. If I could keep that pace up without stopping, without slowing down, without speaking, if I kept that speed and I could walk through walls and through mountains and across water, if nothing ever slowed me, eventually if I kept walking, where would I end up? Right back here because the earth is?

Audience: Spherical.



Craig: Again, I'm new here, gonna make sure that we're on the same page in some of the stuff. If I were able to go at that pace, it would take me about seven and half months to get back to here. That's how long it would take me to make that journey of 25,000 miles.

Light makes that same trip seven times every time you snap your fingers. One second seven times around the earth, that's how fast 186,000 miles a second is, and God's people went. Well, is a little more real, okay.

That's the first thing that God made is this crazy thing. And I don't know if the angels were there. I like to think that they got to see this. I hope they got to see it. In my head, they definitely were there. And then in my head, you know, God's just like he kind of gathered them and he said, "Guys, check this out. Michael seriously, pay attention." Some of the reason in my head the angels have ADD. I don't know why. I call this one light, and he said, "Let there be light."

Like how would you respond to that as an angel? You're like that is cool. That is the coolest thing I've ever seen. Actually, that's the first thing I've ever seen. You just invented seeing too, that's impressive Lord. I mean it's an amazing thing, and it shows us both a pattern but also begins to tell you something of who this God is that's beginning the story.

And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate the water from the water. And so God made the vault, and he separated the water under the vault from the water above it, and it was so. And God called the vault sky, and there was evening, and there was morning the second day." And you see again, all three of those things, right? He creates by speaking, and it just comes into being as a sign that he's a King. But also we see that he names it. He pulls it to himself and says, "You're mine."

By the way, do you know that he does that with us too? You see it throughout the Scripture. When God pulls people and calls them to himself, he gives them a new name. In the Book of Revelation, we're told that each of us has a new name. What you need to understand is that's God saying, "You're mine. You're my daughter, or you're my son, you're mine." It's not just a sign of authority, it's also a sign that he's taking possession of us.

And we see that here, and we see it throughout His Word, and we also see him here, we see him building the lines, right? Separating and saying, "Here's the boundary and, you know, you can go this far and you can go that far." And that's also a really important principle.

I think in general, we don't react very, very well to boundaries. Our natural tendency I think as fallen human beings is to look at boundaries and go, "Yeah, I'm going over that one. Who are you to put that boundary?" And we do that for everybody, right?

Anybody remember being a kid in the backseat with a brother or sister on a long car trip? Those always went well, right? And at some point somebody whirled around, hopefully, it was whoever wasn't driving. But somebody's whirled around and said, "I've had it, I'm drawing a line right there, you're on that side you're on that side, you do not go on her side, you do not go on his side. You stay on the other side of the line." Anybody? Anybody also remember this when mom or dad turn back around. Because we cross boundaries. There's something in us this is we got to get over these boundaries, and we do that not only with human rules, of course, we do with God's rules. But here's what we got to understand about these boundaries is that boundaries define blessing.

God's boundaries are intended to define where blessings are to be found because he's good and he loves to pour good and to pour blessing upon us but he also says that here is where those are. And when we go through the boundaries what we find ourselves is not finding new blessings, we find ourselves broken. We'll talk about that in a couple of weeks here. The boundaries define the blessings. Here's where they are to be found.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place and let dry ground appear, and it was so. And God called



the dry ground 'land' and the gathered waters he called 'seas,' and God saw that it was good. And then God said, let the land produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants, and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it according to the various kinds. And it was so. The land produced vegetation, plants bearing seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good and there was evening and there was morning the third day."

And here what I wanna make sure that we understand is that God's giving us another pattern. And we could probably say it this way, it's the pattern that God prepares before he populates. He sets the stage before he puts the things on the stage, he gets the ground ready before he fills it up with the good things that he's got there. So he creates the sky and what we'll see next week is that he then fills it with birds. He creates the waters, the ocean, and then he fills it with the sea creatures. He creates the dry ground and puts the seed in it with the food there so that it's okay. It's a great place for the land creatures that he's gonna create.

But he prepares before he populates and we see that pattern throughout Scripture too. And we see that pattern in our own lives. At least I see it so much in my own life. And I've definitely been in those places where I've been looking at God and what I'm not looking at him with his worship, what I'm looking at him with is frustration. And I'm going, "God, why are you taking so long in this? This needs to change. Why haven't you fixed it?" And God's answer is, "Because I'm getting you ready for something great."

And here's the reality is that when we're in the midst of pain, we don't care about great. We just want a little good, right? We're in those places where things are hard, and we're like, "You know, you don't have to do anything amazing if you could just get me out of this thing. That's all I need. You don't want to fill it with something better, just get me out of this hole." We're content with a little bit of good. God is not content with a little bit of good, do you hear me?

God is fanatical about great good. God always prepares the stage so that he could put the greatest good on it. We're content with just a little bit, and God is like, "Yeah, but I love you too much to be content with that. You might be okay with a little bit, I'm not okay with a little bit. I've got something so much better. I've got a healing that goes beyond what you could ever dream. I would not only heal the pain, I wanna heal the pain in such a way that you can become a healer of other people's pain. I wanna use you to speak into other people's life, and you're not quite ready for that, but that's what I'm getting you to. That's the stage that I'm building." And so we find ourselves frustrated that God hasn't done what we expect him to do yet. What we need to do is to begin to step back and to rest in the knowledge that God is fanatical about the greatest good and that if he hasn't done what we were hoping for yet, it's because we were not hoping high enough. He's got something bigger because he always prepares before he populates. God is never okay with a little good, he's always got to make it the best. I think we see that in this next part.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times and days and years and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth. And it was so. And God made two great lights, the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night."

Speaking about big, and what we call this great light that governs the day? It's the sun, right? I don't know, do you...nobody said they sat around thinking about light, how about the sun? You may just sit around and thinking about the sun? No? We should because that's an impressive work. I mean, think about it, it's like a great big flaming ball of flame, right? Like, that's cool.

I don't know how the angels responded to that one and God's like, "You guys ready for this, I call this the sun. Let there be a Sun," boom. Again, I don't know how do you respond to that as an angel, like that's that's cool. And it's like a big, flaming ball of flame. And it is big, did I say that, it's big. Like, you know, if we're gonna scale it, probably we have to scale it if we're gonna get a handle on it. If we just deal with it in its normal numbers, like it doesn't even make any sense to us.

So the sun is 800,000 miles across. Like if you did from like one edge all the way to the other, if you go straight through it's 800,000 miles. Can you imagine that? No, you can't because we can't wrap our heads around it. So it would take about seven and a half months to walk around the earth. If I could walk on the surface of the sun, if I had great sunscreen, right and I could



do that journey, it would take about 2.5 million years. Man, that's big, right? It's so big that it's got to be 93,000,000 miles away from us for us to live here, 93,000,000 miles and all God's people went? Yeah, you don't feel it, do you? You're like 90? Yeah that's, I'm supposed to be impressed, wow. Because you can't wrap your...93,000,000 miles, what do you do with a number that big?

You know, okay so let's do this. Can we shrink that down a little bit? Yeah, okay, so we're gonna do a little scale exercise. We're gonna shrink the sun down to...they say that's about eight inches across, so 800,000 miles in real life. So that was eight inches across. That means that one inch equals. It's interesting, this side is the math side. That's been true of two of the three services so far, that's fascinating.

Okay, so one inch is 100,000 miles, Okay. So let's just do a little scale. So if that were the actual sun, if everything's shrunk down, let's talk about where we have to put the Earth, but let's start with other planets. What's the first planet on our solar system?

Audience: Mercury.

Craig: Mercury, okay. So, Mercury, I get a little piece of pocket lint here. That's too big. Still too big. All right there we go. That's about the right size. On this scale, I have about a 44-inch stride so, that's 44 times 100,000, I can't do that math. But you get the point. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. There would be Mercury, okay. Mercury is not a good place to hang out. At any given day, Mercury, all the metal on Mercury is in liquid state because it's crazy hot. It's just too close, okay.

So let's move on out to the next planet, which should that be? Venus, all right. So here we go, Venus, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, there's Venus. Still not a good place to live, way too hot. So we're going now to Earth, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, here is the Earth. The sun is so big, and it's so hot that, that's how far away we have to be to live.

And let's be honest. Every now and then say in August in Colorado, middle of a day don't you feel like it's still a little too close? I mean, that's how big this thing is. It's this unbelievable thing. And God just like, "Yeah, let's make that." And here, how about this? It's not even the only one of its kind, right. I mean the Sun is one of what? What do we call it? It's a star. Have you ever noticed any other stars? In Colorado, we have the ability to really see quite a few of them, right, and so we realize the sun is not really the only one out there. In fact, our sun is not even a particularly big version, it's just kind of a middle version. And there's a few others that he made.

Have you ever been outside in the middle of maybe especially the winter here in Colorado? Everything is crisp and clear, and you got perfect views, and there's nothing in the way. Have you ever seen so many stars that it just kind of sucks the breath out of you? Seeing a lot of nodding, yeah.

Here's the thing. Perfect viewing conditions with perfect eyesight, the most stars that you have ever seen is about 10,000, which sounds like a lot until you realize that there are a hundred billion stars in our galaxy. And a hundred billion means nothing to anybody. So take the most stars you've ever seen in your entire life, 10,000, multiply that by 10. Can you imagine a sky with 10 times as many stars? We wouldn't be able to breathe. And we're only at a hundred thousand at this point. I can see the math people, don't worry, it's okay.

Ten times the most stars you've ever seen, we're at a hundred thousand. We've got to multiply that times 10 to get our first million. We've got to do a thousand of those millions to get our first billion and then we need a hundred of those before we have the number of stars that make up this little clump that we call the Milky Way galaxy.

By the way, on that scale we were all working with, the next nearest star in our little clump is in Sacramento. There's a hundred thousand stars. No, there's a hundred billion stars in our galaxy. And there's a hundred billion galaxies out there each with



around hundred billion stars. Somebody apparently counts these things.

Which leads me to my favorite verse in the entire Bible, he also made the stars. Yeah, I also made those. Like seriously? Like the angels were staggering around and they're just trying to figure out this whole light business and then the waters, and the sun, and the moon and they're just like, "This is unbelievable," and God's like, Yeah, it's nice, but I don't know, it feels like it needs a little something something."

How about a hundred quadrillion zillion of these? And they're like, "Yeah, that'll work." Here's what you've got to try to understand. This is our God. A God who can fling a hundred billion galaxies with hundred billion stars across them. Across an expansive space that's so vast that our brains can't even begin to understand it. And you think God flung the stars across the heavens and then went, "Whoa, do I need a nap?" Yeah, this is how great he is.

Some of you may have seen the video that we were using to kind of launch this series. And several years ago, I was talking to a skeptic, and he said, "Here's the problem I have with this whole Christianity business. What you guys want me to believe is that the God who threw a hundred billion galaxy with a hundred billion stars each across this unbelievable expanse of space, we can't even wrap or you want me to believe that the God who did all of that pays attention to me?" And actually, he said, "Actually it's worse for you guys because you're not only telling me that that God pays attention to me, you've been trying to tell me that that God died for me. He cared enough about me to come and actually die for me." And he looked at me said, "Doesn't that seem just a little bit ridiculous?" I remember thinking, "Yeah, it is ridiculous."

It's just also true, the flinger of the stars knows your name. And it's not a passing notion, it's not just a gradual general awareness. Not just, yeah, there is that guy, there is that girl, there is that woman. He knows your name, and he knows what you're going through, and he's fanatical about you. And he's intensely interested in you.

And the heart of the Christian story is that that God did in fact come and to die for us. That that God does know who we are and that God does have a story in which we have a place and a plan. And he is on pins and needles, he's on the edge of a seat waiting for us to join into the story that he's written for us to be a part of. Yeah, it's ridiculous. It's just also true, the flinger of the stars invites you to step into his story.

That's all I have for today because that's a big enough idea to wrestle with for a while and I want us to feel it. Because as we continue on in the series, we begin to understand what the story is, we have to begin with the understanding of the author of the story and who he is who invites us into this because it's the only way that it's ever gonna come home.

When Jesus says, "I no longer call you servants, I call you friends." If we don't understand what it means to have a King and what kind of a king he's, the flinger of the stars' kind of king, when Jesus says, "I call you friends." We're just know, well that's nice. And what we should be going is, "Are you kidding me? You call me friend. You invite me into your story, you open up the backstage curtain, you let me know what's going in behind the scenes, you let me be a part of this? Seriously you?" Yeah. The flinger of the stars invites you to step into his story.

And for many of us stepping in his story begins by simply inviting him to step into our stuff where we stop writing our stories for ourselves. We stop trying to get the right ending, we stop trying to get everything to work out on our own. When everything is falling apart, and we go, "Listen, I am not the author who can pull this storytelling off, but you are and so God If you really want me to step into your story, would you step into my stuff. I give you my PIN. Well, that's archaic. I'll give you my word processor, I'll give you my keyboard. I want you to write the story that I'm part of."

Would you pray with me? God, I'll be honest. Most days, I don't get this. I don't understand how you who are great beyond our wildest conceptions, who are awesome beyond our wildest fantasies, why you would pay attention to me or you'd pay attention to each one of us. And not only just pay attention but love us so deeply that you sent your Son to die for us to pay off the debt of sin



that we'd accumulated so that we could join into the story that you were writing for us. A story that's bigger than we can imagine, a story that's certainly big enough for all of us but a story that somehow has a place for each of us, a place of significance and meaning.

How could the God of all of these wonders invite us to step into his story? I don't get that, but I'm grateful for that. So Lord, would you speak to each of us now. Would you convict us of those ways that we're so busy trying to write our story and struggling to get it to come out right. That we need to just trust you and invite you into our stuff, and put ourselves in your story.

Lord, if there's anyone here today who is not only struck by the wonder of the story of a God who could fling the stars across the heaven and yet knows us, but if they're here this morning saying, "But that God could not love me. Not after all I have done, not after what I've been." But would you just pour out love upon them right now? Would you help them to feel the reality of this truth that the flinger of the stars is their biggest fan, their highest hope, their most passionate lover. Lord, would you give each of us the courage to trust in this ridiculous truth and to commit ourselves to your story in Jesus' name, Amen.

