



THE STORY Sermon Study Guide

Week 1: The Grand Narrative of Scripture

Lance Blythe

3 August 2025

Visit the [NewHope Teaching](#) page to find this week's sermon

In life, it can be easy to drift without realising it. Like a surfer carried by unseen currents, we can be subtly moved by the influences around us until we look up and realise we've lost sight of where we should be. We need a fixed reference point, a true and time-tested touchstone that not only endures but transforms lives. The Bible is that touchstone.

Over this 12-week sermon series we will explore 'The Story' of God's redeeming work in the world and His relentless pursuit through history to call us home.

Read Genesis 2:25, 3:1-13 & 3:21-24

The grand narrative of Scripture begins with a loving, all-powerful God who creates a world of beauty and worth. Adam and Eve are created and placed in the garden where they live in peace and connectedness with God. The story starts not with sin and pain, but with good at its core, until Adam and Eve lose their point of reference and this beautiful picture is fractured.

The Genesis story shows how evil and sin work to subtly twist the truth and lead us to make choices that ultimately harm us. Evil rarely comes to us in obvious forms; it often masquerades itself as good, playing on our God-given longing for goodness and fulfillment. Therefore, we must be vigilant and learn to test our ways against the true reference points of God's word and a discerning community.

1. What is one influence in your daily life that may be subtly shaping your direction? How can you intentionally check your bearings and realign with God's truth today?
2. Are there areas in your life where you've rushed to decide what's "good" or "right" without seeking God's guidance?



The Word of God

Read Hebrews 4:12

The Bible is not just a book to be understood intellectually, but a living word meant to be read, engaged with, and allowed to read us in return. Research shows that regular engagement with Scripture—at least four days a week—leads to significant transformation in our lives, from sharing our faith more to gaining freedom from destructive habits. The stories and teachings of Scripture become a mirror, revealing both our strengths and our weaknesses, and inviting us into deeper self-awareness and growth. The discipline of immersing ourselves in God’s word is a practical, powerful way to anchor our lives in truth.

1. When was the last time you let a passage of Scripture challenge or correct you, rather than just encourage you? You may like to use the NewHope Bible Reading Plan or a spiritual practice like Lectio Divina and ask God to show you what He wants to reveal to you today.

A Discerning Community

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Adam and Eve’s downfall was not just about personal failure, but about the absence of a discerning, truth-speaking community. We are not meant to navigate the complexities of life and faith alone; God gives us the gift of community—small groups, friendships, the local church—to help us discern, reflect, and challenge one another. When we isolate ourselves or rely only on secondhand faith, we become vulnerable to deception and drift, but true community helps us stay oriented toward God’s purposes.

1. How has Christian community helped you see things differently or more clearly?
2. Who in your life can you invite to speak truth and encouragement to you this week? How can you take a step toward a deeper, more honest community today?

God’s Response to Evil: Justice and Grace

Read Isaiah 61:10

Even in the midst of judgment and consequence, God’s response to our failure is marked by both justice and grace. He does not ignore wrongdoing, but neither does



He abandon us in our shame; instead, He moves toward us, clothing us as He did for Adam and Eve, restoring dignity, and preparing us for the journey ahead.

Genesis 3 finishes with exile from the garden—but that’s not the end. The story flows forward to Jesus, who restores access to the tree of life and offers freedom from shame and separation. In Jesus, God Himself bears the cost of our brokenness and invites us back to Him. Our response should not be to hide behind our own fig leaves, but to surrender to His grace, trusting that He will redeem, restore, and guide us home.

1. Where are you tempted to hide in shame or self-reliance instead of receiving God’s grace? What would it look like to let God “clothe” you with His forgiveness and restoration today?

Bible Reading Plan & Resources

Engagement with God’s word is a practical and powerful way to fix your reference point and stay anchored to what is true. As we engage in this sermon series and reflect on ‘The Story’ of God’s redemptive pursuit of humanity, we invite you to practise the discipline of regular Bible reading.

You may like to use the [NewHope Bible Reading Plan](#) which has been developed to accompany each sermon over the next 12-weeks. Get a physical copy at church, download a digital copy from our website or follow NewHope in the Bible App for daily updates.

There are also many other wonderful ways to engage with Scripture and you can find a collection of resources, such as books, apps, courses, and more at newhope.net.au/the-story.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for your word, which speaks truth and life, and for the gift of community, which helps us discern your voice in a world of noise. May we anchor ourselves in you as the reference point for our lives. You are the God of justice and grace, redeeming all things in love, and we open ourselves up to your forgiveness and freedom today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.