

Good Morning,

This morning I want to talk about the power of a story.

Stories have great power over our lives, the stories that we tell shape our very experience of the world all around us. We tell all kinds of stories, about the world and how people move in it.

We vote for elected officials, im convinced not because of what they've done, but rather because of the types of stories that they tell, how they frame our lives.

Stories are how we pass down our values, our morals.

They teach us and orient us.

We tell stories about ourselves. I know I cant be the only one that has a voice inside my head...my heart beats, my lungs breath, and that voice, it just tells stories, all day long.

Sometimes the stories that it tells are uplifting, life giving. The stories we tell about how we feel about another person, our love, our empathy. Other times we tell stories that are not particularly positive. Im too slow to be a professional football player, Im never going to understand that math problem, I'm always going to be alone, ill never find happiness. The stories that we tell have great power over our lives.

So I want to ask you a question, what makes a story true? How do you figure that out? Is it who says it? Or maybe its what they say? Can you double-check it? Can I open up a book and read it? Maybe its true if I hear that story reflected and repeated by others. What makes a story true?

Maybe that's not even the most helpful question to ask, what makes a story true. Maybe the truth is not in the hearing or the telling of a story, but rather, maybe the truth is revealed in how that story makes us feel and what it causes us to do with our life.

Maybe that is where the truth is revealed, not in the words, but in the effect that the story has over our lives.

Our Old Testament lesson offers us a famous story, the story of Noah and his ark. It is a beautiful and challenging story faith and perseverance.

A story of a man and his family who trust in God, despite the improbable. God said he was going to flood the earth for 40 days and 40 nights, God told him to collect two of every kind of animal and put them on this gigantic ark that Noah was instructed to build.

The piece of the story that we get today is after, after the flood,

God is speaking to Noah and his sons and is where God establishes a covenant with them and with every living creature, that God wouldn't ever flood the whole earth again.

God said, " I have set my bow in the clouds and every time I see it I will remember my covenant with you"

People have argued about the truth of this story. I remember not infrequently as I was growing up seeing headlines of news article that said... "We found the ark"  
But is finding the ark what makes this story true?

Or perhaps this story has another kind of truth in it, truth about God.

Truth that God cares about the quality of life on the earth, truth that God puts the care of the safety of the world on a person's shoulders.

The truth is God cares about the way we live our lives and how we relate to the rest of creation, The truth that God wants to purify, God wants to clean humanity, God wants to reconcile us to Gods self. The truth of this story is not in the finding of the ark but in the relationship between God and us.

The stories that we tell have power of over our lives. They reveal truths about who we are and about the world as we see it.

We tell stories about who we are, about where we come from, what our dreams are. We define ourselves through stories.

But what if, we stopped trying to define ourselves, our lives through the stories we tell to ourselves or that others tell about us. But rather you defined yourself by the story that God tells about you.

Yeah God tells stories about us. In our epistle lesson Peter shares the story that God tells about us.

Peter says, Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God.

Gods story about us... Ive come here today to tell you to clear away all the other stories in your life and allow Gods story to define you, allow Gods truth to be your truth.

That is what Lent is about 40 days and 40 nights of clearing away all of the other stories that fill our life, so that we might be drawn into the only story that offers eternal hope, the only story that can save us.

The only story that brings us into a deeper relationship with each other, with all of the world around us. The only story that brings us back to God.

So I encourage you, each day this lent to meditate on  
Gods story, to pick up your bible, and read Gods story,  
allow it to define who you are and all that you do in this  
world.

Amen