

Elders' Statement on the Story Project

September 16, 2018



The elders asked me to address the current project we're calling The Story. In spite of saying a number of times that the copy of The Story is not the Bible, and certainly is not a replacement for the Bible, it seems that some are still confused with this church-wide project, and in side conversations are saying that this is not good, that we are on a slippery slope to rejecting God's word. And, fed by online line websites and perpetual critics they are saying that the book was edited deliberately to leave out important and sometimes controversial parts of the bible.

So let me say again, simply and clearly, this book is not the Bible. It's an abridged story, directly from the NIV translation without the added chapter and verse divisions, and it has a single specific agenda: to shine a bright gospel light on the overarching, meta-story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation about God's desire to have a relationship with us, and the extent God goes to bring this redemptive plan to us.

I am not preaching from this book each week. I am preaching from the Bible. I'm including some of the passages in the sermon series that are not included in the book. As the Life Group that Deb and I participate in went through the first video session and discussion together last Monday night, everyone was referring to their Bible, not this book.

The book is simply a tool, like a daily devotional or the kinds of tools you all use to help you grow in your spiritual life. Many are finding it helpful; blessings on you. Deb has bought two extra copies to give to unsaved, unchurched friends and start a conversation with them. Some of you want to read the real thing word for word in your Bible; blessings on you.

In the past the elders have been too silent on issues that we allowed to simmer below the surface around here and cause discontent and division in our church family. We have been humbled by that failure and we've hopefully learned our lesson.

So I am trying to be unusually clear. There is no agenda to replace the Bible or to ignore the difficult parts of the Bible in this series. Any talk that insists repeating on that narrative might be well-intentioned ... but it's wrong. It has to stop. From this point forward, any talk like that is unhelpful and risks dividing the church. We expect it to stop. If it doesn't stop we will take this conversation to the next level with those who are perpetuating it.