



# The Story



creation.fall.redemption.return

Lesson 3 of 4 from Story of the Bible

## Glorious Grace (Lesson 3 of 4)

### Scope and Sequence

**Felt Need:** It is unlikely that I could ever be used to do something great.  
**Doctrine:** Redemption/Salvation

### Objective

Students will understand that God uses the most unlikely people and plans to accomplish His purposes, bringing Himself glory.

### Memory Verse

**Philippians 2:8**  
How humble was the King of kings?

**Worth Repeating: God specializes in the unlikely.**

**THE FELT NEED:** It is unlikely that I could ever be used to do something great.

- Start the lesson off with one of the following videos to set up the concept of unlikely heroes.
  - o “Autistic Basketball Player Jason McElwain’s – Inspirational Story”
  - o “Boy with Autism hits walk-off home run”
- God constantly chooses unlikely people to be His heroes and unconventional plans to win the battles.
- If you have ever thought, “It is unlikely that I could ever be used to do something great,” think again.
- You are the exact kind of person God delights in using.

**THE TRUTH:**

1. Unlikely heroes
  - a. Abraham, the physically unable
    - Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were physically unable to have children.
    - God can and does use people with physical disabilities all the time.
  - b. Jacob, the lying thief
    - Jacob was a lying thief who was in it to win it for himself at all costs, even if it hurt his own family.
    - Is it not ironic that God used Jacob, a former liar to be part of the family who would be known for the truth (John 14:6)?

- c. Rahab, the prostitute
    - Rahab was not even an Israelite and furthermore, she is remembered as a prostitute.
    - If God can love and transform a morally twisted person like Rahab, He can certainly do the same with you!
  - d. David, the forgotten nobody
    - David was the youngest of eight boys and was such an unlikely candidate for king that his own dad did not bother to call him when Samuel came to make one of his sons king!
2. Why God uses the unlikely
- a. God's unlikely strategy (1 Corinthians 1:27-29)
    - God is the hero of His story every step of the journey and unlikely candidates help ensure that God continues to get the glory He deserves.
  - b. God can use anyone.
    - Pastor David Jeremiah said, "Throw out all your ideas about who God can use. If you belong to Him and have a pulse, God can use you for His glory!"
    - Missionary Hudson Taylor once observed that "God uses men who are weak and feeble enough to lean on Him." God specializes in the unlikely and when you factor him into the equation, the impossible can become reality!
3. An Unlikely Plan
- a. Stage 1 – Enjoying the glory of heaven (Read Philippians 2:5-6)
    - Jesus did not start to exist when He was born in a manger; He was actually in heaven with God the Father and was the visible form of God in heaven.
  - b. Stage 2 – Laying aside His glory to serve sinners (Philippians 2:7)
    - He came to earth in the form of a servant, not a king. That word actually means "slave." A slave is not just someone who does what someone else says; they are someone who has no rights or choices of his own.
  - c. Stage 3 – Humbling Himself to die in our place (Philippians 2:8)
    - Jesus was equal in value with God but He lowered His status by adding humanity to His deity so that He could serve you and me.
    - Jesus reminded Himself that He was here to do the Father's will, not His own and the result was the most unlikely victory in the course of history!

## THE CONNECTION:

Save the Cockroaches?

- To deliver a message to cockroaches living in darkness, a human would have to lower himself to actually become a cockroach!
- When Jesus lowered Himself to become a human, coming down to our level, He made it possible for us to be saved from sin and death.

## THE DECISION:

Receive Jesus' free gift

- Being a good person will not add to or subtract from your salvation. Forgiveness and peace with God is given freely, but only to those who admit their sin to God and put all of their trust in Christ's work for them on the cross.

Remember who God uses.

- God is not looking for superstars, popularity, stud athletes, or money. He isn't waiting for you to "get it together" or pull yourself up by the bootstraps.
- God is looking for humble servants who will surrender themselves.

## Definitions

**Forgiveness:** the gracious act of God in removing the charges against sinners because Christ paid the penalty for their transgressions

**Humility:** the quality of being without pride, having a proper view of self

**Slave:** one who does not own his life; it belongs to his master

## Checklist

- Lesson Power Point
- Equipment to show YouTube videos
  - “Autistic Basketball Player Jason McElwain’s – Inspirational Story”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2IU1h9sG7U>
  - “Boy with Autism hits walk-off home run”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkwskEEeDqk>

## Resources

Jeremiah, Dr. David. “Today’s Turning Point: Christ the Cure.” Friday, July 24, 2015, <http://www.aaronshp.com/youngauthor/elements.html>

Jeremian, Dr. David. “Today’s Turning Point: If you have a pulse...” Tuesday, September 15, 2015

Strong, J. (2009). A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible (Vol. 2, p. 51). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software. Hebrew, #3290.

### Additional Teacher Resources:

For more detail on the life and testimony of Jack Wyrzten see

[http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/protestant/jack\\_wyrzten/](http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/protestant/jack_wyrzten/)

**The Felt Need: It is unlikely that I could ever be used to do something great.**

## Teacher’s Note

*Start the lesson with one of the following videos to set up the concept of unlikely heroes. We are inspired when people who we would not expect to be the hero, become the hero.*

- “Autistic Basketball Player Jason McElwain’s – Inspirational Story”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2IU1h9sG7U> Watch video to the 4:30 mark.
- “Boy with Autism hits walk-off home run”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkwskEEeDqk>

When we look for a hero we usually look to the biggest, strongest, best, or most popular to step onto the stage, don't we? That is what makes a video like this one go viral. An unlikely person steps on the stage and becomes the hero.

For the past two weeks we have been discovering the story of the Bible. In some ways it is a conventional story with a very normal plotline – things go right, then things go terribly wrong, and finally things are resolved and the story is concluded. In many other ways, this is no ordinary story. Yes, things went right at first. God created the world in perfection and made people in His image. They enjoyed God and brought Him glory every day. Then things went terribly wrong. Again, this

should not surprise us. This is how good stories develop. The villain is expected to show up somewhere in the story. And in this case his name is Satan, formerly one of God's highest ranking and most beautiful angels. But he rebelled against God and lured the first couple into sin. Adam and Eve lost everything that mattered and their sin unleashed a Pandora's Box of consequences on the entire earth.

So what would happen next? Would God lose this battle with Satan for control of the world? No, of course not. But this is where the conventional story ends and the genius of God begins to shine. God has a plan to save the world from the tyranny of Satan. He has the power to fix these problems. But the puzzling part for us is that He never seems to use His power in predictable ways. God constantly chooses **unlikely** people to be His heroes and unconventional plans to win the battles. If you have ever thought, "It is unlikely that I could ever be used to do something great," think again. You are the exact kind of person God **delights** in using. If you turn to Matthew 1, you will see it for yourself.

## The Truth:

### 1. Unlikely **Heroes**

The book of Matthew begins with a genealogy. It is the earthly side of Jesus' family tree, reaching all the way back to Abraham. If you were going to introduce the family line of a great king, you would probably make sure you listed all the greatness down through the family tree, right? As we will see in some of the stories behind the names in Jesus' family tree, greatness was not something many of these people had in common. They all were very unlikely to be chosen for this King's family tree. As we follow walk through some of the names we begin to realize that **God specializes in the unlikely**, and He uses unlikely people to be His heroes.

#### a. Abraham, the physically **unable**

- Read Matthew 1:2. Who is first on the list? Abraham is the first name. He is a hero because he was the father of the entire nation of Israel. And Messiah was supposed to come through him. But there is one essential ingredient to being a father – kids. Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were physically **unable** to have children. Even after God promised to give them a son, they tried having children for more than twenty years, and nothing worked! Maybe we should say that nothing worked until God intervened with a miracle to reverse their disability. God can and does use people with physical **disabilities** all the time. In Abraham's case, he became a dad just before he turned one hundred years old. God made sure to keep His word. Only He could specialize in surprises like that!

#### b. Jacob, the **lying** thief

- Third name on the list we see in Matthew 1:2, Jacob. He was an unlikely hero in God's plan because he rejected God. Jacob was a lying thief who was in it to win it for himself at all **costs**, even if it hurt his own family. His name actually means "one who trips up or overthrows" and he had no problem living up to that reputation! God promised to save the world through Abraham's descendants, which meant winning back this morally bankrupt, self-absorbed liar from his sinful ways. Is it not **ironic** that God used Jacob, a former liar to be part of the family who would be known for

the Truth (John 14:6)? Again God specializes in surprising us with unlikely heroes.

c. Rahab, the **prostitute**

- If God went out of His way to pick a morally unlikely candidate like Jacob, He did not have to stretch too far to find Rahab. Rahab was not even an **Israelite** and furthermore, she is remembered as a prostitute. Who wants to name their child after a famous prostitute? But what we so easily forget is her name appears in Matthew 1:5 as part of Jesus' family tree. As unlikely as she was, God claimed her to be part of HIS family tree! He cleaned up her tarnished reputation and used a woman everyone else had probably given up on. If God can love and transform a morally **twisted** person like Rahab, He can certainly do the same with you!

d. David, the forgotten **nobody**

- While the list of names leading up to the birth of Jesus is long, there is at least one other unlikely candidate that God chose as a hero – David (Matthew 1:6). Later in life God gave him the distinguished honor of having an eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7) and knowing that the Savior would be one of his descendants! He was not always thought of as “the man” in God's plan. He was not even on his dad's radar as important! David was the youngest of eight boys and was such an unlikely candidate for king that his own **dad** did not bother to call him when Samuel came to make one of his sons **king**! To the surprise of his whole family, God advanced His plan for saving the world through a forgotten nobody.

Abraham, Jacob, Rahab and David are just a few examples we find in the Bible as proof that God specializes in the unlikely. God can take anyone, even the most unlikely and use them to bring glory to Himself.

2. Why God **uses** the unlikely

So why did God choose so many unlikely people to be heroes in His plan? Why specialize in so many surprises? What we find is that this is actually a strategy God uses all the time. We can find this laid out in 1 Corinthians 1:27-29.

a. God's unlikely **strategy** (1 Corinthians 1:27-29)

*Have a student read 1 Corinthians 1:27-29.*

- Through every chapter and every character in the Old Testament, God was telling the story of His glory. God is the hero of His story every step of the journey and unlikely candidates help **ensure** that God continues to get the glory He deserves. Think about the few examples we have already mentioned – a couple with a physical handicap, a lying thief, a prostitute, and a forgotten nobody. Raise your hand if you can identify with at least one of those people. If God could overcome their problems and make them useful to Him do you think He can use you?

b. God's can use **anyone**

**Teacher's  
Note**

- There is hope for everyone here; God CAN use you! Pastor David Jeremiah said, “Throw out all your ideas about who God can use. If you belong to Him and have a pulse, God can use you for His glory!” Missionary Hudson Taylor once observed that “God uses men who are weak and feeble enough to lean on Him.” It boils down to who or what we choose to focus on. Do not become so wrapped up in your world or hung up on your problems that you forget how powerful God is. Remember **God specializes in the unlikely** and when you factor Him into the equation, the impossible can become reality!

### 3. An Unlikely Plan

It is refreshing to remember that all of history is about God, but the greatest part of the story is yet to come. Imagine that you are God for a day. You have every resource in your creation at your disposal; you can do with it whatever you want and you can have whatever you want. The world exists for you and your pleasure! What would you like to have if you could be God for a day?

*Allow only 1-2 minute discussion. After this have a student read Philippians 2:5-8.*

Like we were saying at the beginning, nearly every good story turns the corner after things go terribly wrong, and the hero comes to fix the situation. There is a good chance that most people here know that God fixes the mess of sin in this story, but how He accomplishes it is so unlikely according to our normal way of thinking. If we are really paying attention when we read, we have to admit that we do not “get it.” Why would God do things that way? It does not make sense!

In Philippians 2:5-8, we see three stages of God’s plan for fixing the carnage sin had caused in the world.

#### a. Stage 1 – Enjoying the glory of heaven (Read Philippians 2:5-6)

- These verses describe Jesus in Stage 1 as equal with God. Jesus did not start to exist when He was **born** in a manger, He was actually in heaven with God the Father and was the **visible** form of God in heaven. Picture Jesus as the King of kings, supreme and worshipped by everyone! So Jesus is not stealing any of God’s glory by claiming to be God. He is God and enjoyed all the glory of heaven. Now let’s look at stage two.

#### b. Stage 2 – Laying aside His glory to serve sinners (Philippians 2:7)

- As Jesus looked at the mess we were in, our slavery to sin and Satan, how we lived for our own glory instead of God’s, the certain death right around the corner, and the separation from Him forever in hell, He made a choice to intervene. (Re-read Philippians 2:7)

Jesus laid aside His glory and came to earth to be a servant! Does that surprise you? Why does it not say that Jesus came and demanded that Satan release his prisoners at once or Satan and his armies would be annihilated? He had the power to do that. Why does Jesus lay aside His power and come in human form? Is this Him specializing in surprises again? That does not make any sense from our perspective! We usually think it is impossible to win fights by giving up our position and strength but that is exactly what Jesus did.

**Teacher’s  
Note**

- Did you notice how much power He was willing to give up? He came to earth in the form of a **servant**, not a king. That word actually means “slave.” A slave is not just someone who does what someone else says; they are someone who has no **rights** or choices of his own. Slaves were completely controlled by their master. Who in their right mind gives up control to be a servant? We would never do things that way. It is crazy to think this way from our perspective. It does not make sense!
- c. Stage 3 – Humbling himself to die in our **place** (Philippians 2:8)
- Jesus was equal in value with God, but He **lowered** His status by adding humanity to His deity so that He could serve you and me. Now how does He do that? Through one more dreaded job. (Re-read Philippians 2:8.) Jesus humbled Himself, which means that He thought properly about Himself. He thought of Himself as the Son who was sent to earth with a task to do, not as one who was above certain jobs. He willingly died in your place and mine! As awful as dying on the cross was, Jesus was willing to do it because He was a humble slave. He simply chose to do what the Father sent Him to do – to give His life as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.

We were the ones who should have died. Remember that we are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). And the wages of our sin is death (Romans 6:23), which means our rebellion against God separates us from God forever in hell.

And even though a king should never have to die for his people, there was no other option this time. That is why Jesus did the unimaginable and unlikely. He humbled himself all the way to the cross. Jesus reminded Himself that He was here to do the Father’s will, not His own and the result was the most unlikely victory in the course of history!

### The Connection:

It is very difficult to imagine how much Jesus gave up to become a man. It is hard to wrap our minds around how much He sacrificed to die in our place. After all, we have never experienced the level of glory that He had every day in heaven. And we certainly do not know what it feels like to endure the torture on a Roman cross or the isolation of death. But our worship is better when we think about how great and glorious God is and how much He sacrificed for little people like us.

#### **Save the Cockroaches?**

A true story is told of a missionary family in Zambia, Africa that moved into a house overrun by cockroaches of all sizes. It was not uncommon for them to be “dive-bombed” in the kitchen by two or three inch flying roaches or to find them in the cupboards with the dishes and food. So to get even with these nasty critters, the oldest three (teens) would play a game of “Kill the Cockroaches” a few nights each week. Underneath the kitchen sink was an old, half-gallon milk carton full of scrubbing pads that the cockroaches loved to hide in. So after the sun went down, the children would turn off the kitchen lights and bring the old milk carton to the center of the room. Then, in a well-coordinated effort, the lights were turned on while the milk carton was dropped in the center of the kitchen floor. Cockroaches would scramble everywhere, trying to reach the safety beneath the cupboards while the



teens stomped and swatted out “justice” (death) to every disgusting cockroach they could reach.

This may be a stretch, but pretend for a moment that some human actually cared enough for those cockroaches to want to warn them of the danger of the old milk carton. How would they do it? What could they say that a cockroach could possibly understand? They could shout and yell all they want, but humans do not speak “cockroach-ese.” Their nature and language is entirely different! To deliver a message to cockroaches living in darkness, a human would have to **lower** himself to actually become a cockroach! Only then could the message be communicated in an understandable way.

So here is the question: “If you had the power to serve and rescue those cockroaches, would you?” Can you imagine lowering yourself that much? Who in their right mind would give up the glory of humanity to rescue a nasty bug from death? When Jesus lowered Himself to become a human, coming **down** to our level, He made it possible for us to be saved from sin and death.

### The Decision:

Receive Jesus’ **free** gift.

- Think of everything Jesus gave up to serve sinners like us. And He served to the point of death on a cross! As crazy as God’s plan was, it worked! He became nothing, and through faith in Him we become something. He paid our debt to God in full by sacrificing His life. His death actually restores our original glory and allows us to experience complete forgiveness. Once forgiven, we can enjoy a right relationship with God again.
- But all of this is a gift that can only be received by faith. It may sound unorthodox or “far out” to trust someone you cannot see to save you. But Ephesians 2:8-9 says we are saved by grace through faith, not by our works. Being a good person will not **add** to or subtract from your salvation. Forgiveness and peace with God is given **freely**, but only to those who admit their sin to God and put all of their **trust** in Christ’s work for them on the cross.
- Can you point to a time in your life when you put your faith in what Jesus Christ did for you? This is an issue that requires a response. If God is working on you, please do not put Him off. If you have questions, a leader would love to help you. Remember, knowing these facts do not make them real in your life only when you actually respond to them and receive Christ in faith. I encourage you to do that today.

Remember who God **uses**.

- For you who have already put your trust in Christ, remember that **God specializes in the unlikely**. God is not looking for **superstars**, popularity, stud athletes, or money. He isn’t waiting for you to “get it together” or pull yourself up by the bootstraps. God is looking for humble servants who will **surrender** themselves to Him and say, “However You want to use me that is what I want.” That is a decision you will never regret. He delights to use the most unlikely people to do His greatest work.
- I wonder if you truly believe God could use you now. He wants to use you. He can use you. He has already glorified himself through the most unlikely people in history. Would it not be awesome if He added your name to that list?