

Write Your Story 1 – How will your story end?

Write Your Story Bumper

Write Your Story Title

Welcome to Redemption Church everyone. I am Chris Fluitt and I am glad to be bringing you the Word of God today. Greetings to everyone watching and listening online. We appreciate you stopping by!

Today we are kicking off a new sermon series called Write Your Story.

Everyone loves a good story. Your favorite books, movies, tv shows, and stage plays likely all have one thing in common – They have a great story.

We believe that your life ought to be a great story. In this WRITE YOUR STORY series we are going to challenge you to – Make your life a story worth telling.

Make your life a story worth telling.

There are great stories that are told and re-told time and again. These stories are remembered. Stories so great that they seem to jump off the page as you read them. Stories that sparked imagination, entertained, and taught lessons. ...stories that are so good that when you when you realize someone you know has not been exposed to the story you say... “What!? You need to know this story!”

We believe your life... YOUR LIFE... ought to be a story just like this. We want you to make your life a story worth telling.

As we begin this quest of a great story, we need to know how great stories are written. Great stories are not written, but crafted.

Great stories are not written, but crafted

Stories are not just a series of words that fall out of a pen upon a page. Great stories don't just happen. Great stories are crafted... they are carefully conceived & constructed. Great stories are not just written they are written, and then re-written... Great stories are carefully edited to tell the story the author wants to tell.

We need to craft our life... we need to edit our life... there are parts of our life that need a re-write... in order to tell the story that we want to tell.

So as we begin to craft our story I want to ask you...

How will your story end?

Every great story has a great ending. Don't you agree?

We have all experienced stories that started great but ended poorly. We don't call these stories great, but instead we usually mourn the fact that the story had such potential but fell short.

We have also experienced stories that had a weak start, but the ending was strong. We usually forget the weak beginning and are powerfully moved by the conclusion. The ending is this important.

This is your life. This is your story. You are the one who gets to craft the ending. Do you know how you want your story to end?

It's not where you begin but where you end that makes the story great.

We have no control on how our life begins. None of us decide our family, our location, our genetics and race, our skills and appearance... **We do not get to decide where we begin, but we all get to decide our end.**

Are we focused on crafting our end? Are we more focused on the past & the present than the end? We cannot influence our past or our present, but we can influence our future.

You may have been born into poverty or an abusive home, but that is only your past! It does not have to be how your story ends. You have the power to create a new future.

Maybe in the present you just lost your job, or received a bad diagnosis from your doctor, or are living with a dark depression or struggle. This does not have to be how your story ends.

You have the power to craft your own story's end. What has been does not have to continue. What is now does not have to stick around. You have the power to change your story.

"Your most important work is always ahead of you, never behind you."

The well-known leadership author, Stephen Covey wrote a great book called "7 habits of highly effective people." His second habit is this – Begin with the end in mind.

Begin with the end in mind – Stephen Covey

The ending of your story is so important that you should begin with the ending.

A lot of authors do this.

J.K. Rowling always knew that her series of books would end with Harry Potter facing the evil Voldemort and overcoming his foe.

J. R. Tolkien from the beginning of his classic, “The Lord of the Rings,” already decided that Frodo would succeed in destroying the ring.

George Lucas, before day one of shooting “Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope” had decided the redemptive end of an entire trilogy.

No good author gets to the end of their story and writes the ending. Good authors start with the ending in mind and then start their story toward that end.

- The time to start thinking about the ending of your story is not as you are drawing your final breaths.
- The time to start contemplating your end is not after you retire at an older age.
- The time to start crafting your final act is not during your final act.

The younger you are, the more important it may be that you hear me today. Many have destroyed their life by procrastinating the crafting of their story.

“I’ll work on that later...” “I’ll worry about that when I’m older...” “No need to be concerned with that now...” These phrases have ruined many a life.

How will your story end?

Do you know how your story will end? Have you crafted your ending?

Knowing how you want your story to end is not depressing as it may sound. Some might find that a little dark to think about the end of your life... to think about your death may seem a little macabre. It is exactly the opposite!

Knowing how you want your story to end allows you to live each moment fully devoted towards the best end. However if you have not defined a proper end to your story, you will drift & meander towards the conclusion.

Picturing the end before it arrives requires imagination.

Imagination

Beginning with the end in mind requires imagination--the ability to envision in your mind what you cannot at present see with your eyes.

You have a very creative imagination. Some of you don’t feel like you are creative, but let me present to you that you are twice as creative than you

realize. Everything you have ever created you have actually created twice. First there is a mental creation, and second there is a physical creation. The physical creation follows the mental, just as a building follows a blueprint. So in a very real way you have created everything twice – you are twice as creative as you realize.

If you don't make a conscious effort to IMAGINE... to visualize who you are and what you want in life, then you empower other people and circumstances to shape you and your life by default.

We understood this as children when we all answered this question.

Who do you want to be when you grow up?

When you were young, how did you answer that question?

You would imagine inside yourself, then you would speak out that answer, and then you would proceed to become who you wanted to be.

If you wanted to be a basketball player you went out shot baskets. If you wanted to be a fireman or police officer you went out pretended to save lives. If you wanted to be an astronaut you would learn everything you could about traveling to space.

Little me and little you understood this so well. We imagined it and then we made it happen.

Who do you want to be when you grow up? You should still ask yourself this question. You should still imagine great things for yourself and then go make them happen.

You create things twice... but you will never create in the physical what you have not created within your mind.

Great stories are not written, but crafted

So far this sermon has read like a self-help book. I haven't shot any scriptures at you or Bible stories, but have simply approached you logically with some good advice. I don't knock or degrade self-help books, because a lot of times they are helpful... and usually they get their ideas straight from God.

You know who began with the end in mind?

God began with the end in mind.

Before God created the world he stepped back and thought it about what He wanted to create. Do you know the verse I am talking about? You know this verse... but do you really understand that it says this?

John 1:1 (NIV2011) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In the beginning was the WORD. In the Greek the Word is Logos. It is where we get the word Logic. In the beginning was the cognitive thoughts and plans of God. In the beginning God was imagining... Before He said "let there be light..." He was imagining.

And God did not just imagine the first few days of creation. He imagined everything... and He imagined you.

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV2011) For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Do you understand that God imagined you. Do you understand that God imagined good works for you to accomplish. God has good works that He has prepared advance for you to do?

We have these to do lists. We have to run errands after work, go to the store, clean the house, and do laundry. But do we ever give thought to God's to do list? God help me to accomplish your to do list of the good works you have prepared in advance. BEFORE HE CREATED THE WORLD He imagined you doing these good works.

Lord help us to understand these good works you have prepared for us. Before we leave today, reveal these things that have come straight from your imagination.

I told you that you create things twice. So I want you to understand that God created you within His mind in the beginning... The Logos thoughts of God... and then God created you in the physical. Scripture says that God formed you and knit you together in your mother's womb (Psalm 139:13).

God also created the good works He has prepared for you in advance within His mind... And then He creates them in the physical. He helps you accomplish these good works. He creates them twice. He creates them within His mind... and then He creates them within you!

He has done this for every single one of us FROM THE BEGINNING!

You know if we really want the best ending to our story, we ought to look to God.

Isaiah 46:10 (NIV2011) I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'

Revelation 22:13 (NIV2011) I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Isaiah 41:4 (NIV2011) Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord—with the first of them and with the last—I am he."

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV2011) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the *author* and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Philippians 1:6 (NIV2011) being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

This is your story, but maybe God would be a better author. You want a great story, why not let God craft your story.

He is the beginning and end... the first and last. He is the author and the finisher of our faith. He has IN ADVANCE prepared good works for you to accomplish.

musician

Will you allow God to author your story today?

God can right now change how your story ends. That is what salvation is... Salvation is when God changes how someone's story ends.

I was on my way to hell. I was marked with sin and shame, but Jesus Christ the author and finisher died for me on the cross and He forgave me of my sin. He rescued me from hell and gave me such a better ending. I will be in heaven with Him.

If you have never experienced salvation you need to come find me in this altar today. God can change your story today.

Some of you are saved, but you need to repent today. You have lost your imagination. God has big things for you and you need to start imagining them. Ask God to build up your faith today.

Some of you are checking things off your to do list, but if you were honest you would admit that you are not accomplishing the good works God has imagined for you. Talk to Him about this today.

Ask Jesus, what is the story you want to tell in my life? Jesus, come craft my story.