

# SERMON NOTES – 09/27/26

## THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE – ‘A Lead Character’

*Exodus 3:1-6*

### Big Idea

Every compelling story begins with a **lead character**, and our lives are no different. God invites us to live intentionally rather than simply settling for what is safe, predictable, or comfortable. The choices we make—and especially the actions we take when something feels risky or frightening—help shape the people we are becoming.

### Are We Living the Safest Story Available?

- Sometimes the stories we never live are not lost because we made a terrible choice, but because we made the **safe** one.
- Fear can quietly become one of the strongest forces shaping our lives.
- We may avoid risk, discomfort, uncertainty, or failure simply because we want life to remain manageable.
- But a meaningful life often requires us to step into situations that stretch us beyond what feels safe or familiar.

### What Makes a Good Story?

- Donald Miller discovered that the principles of storytelling could also become a way of thinking more intentionally about life.
- Robert McKee describes story as “**a character who wants something and overcomes conflict to get it.**”
- A good story normally includes four basic elements:
  - a **Lead Character**
  - an **Objective**
  - **Conflict**
  - a **Resolution**
- Over the course of this series, these same elements can help us examine the stories we are living with our own lives.

### We Need a Story Worth Living

- Human beings are wired for story. We need a sense that our lives matter and that we have a meaningful role to play.
- When we do not have a compelling story to live, we may settle for whatever story seems most available—even if that story leads us somewhere unhealthy.
- Miller tells the story of a teenager whose life began changing when her family invited her into something larger than herself: helping build an orphanage in Mexico.
- Her circumstances did not simply change because someone told her what not to do. She was given a **better story and a better role within it.**
- Purpose can transform how we understand ourselves and the choices we make.

## You Are a Lead Character

- Being the lead character in your life does not mean believing the world revolves around you.
- It means taking responsibility for the part of the story God has entrusted to you.
- We cannot control how long our lives will be, but we can influence **how we live them**—the choices we make, the relationships we nurture, and the actions we take.
- Instead of merely allowing life to happen around us, we can participate intentionally in the story God is unfolding.

## The Goal Is Transformation

- A good story changes its main character.
- In storytelling this is called a **character arc**—the transformation a person experiences through the events of the story.
- Christian faith also expects transformation.
- John Wesley described the Christian life as “**moving on to perfection.**”
- Wesley was not talking about becoming flawless. He meant a lifelong process of being changed more and more into the people God created us to be.
- A faithful life should therefore leave us different from the people we were when the story began.

## Humility Shapes the Hero

- The most compelling characters are usually imperfect and flawed.
- What distinguishes the hero is not perfection, but the direction of their life and the choices they make.
- Humility is essential to Christian character.
- A hero does not need to see themselves as better than everyone else.
- Following Jesus means becoming people who recognize both our own need for grace and the dignity of those around us.

## Moses Had Settled Into a Safe Story

- Moses’ life had already contained enormous upheaval: he survived Pharaoh’s threat against Hebrew infants, grew up in Pharaoh’s household, killed an Egyptian while defending a Hebrew, and fled Egypt.
- Eventually he built a new life in Midian, married, raised a family, and became a shepherd.
- There was nothing wrong with that life. It was stable, respectable, and predictable.
- Moses might easily have spent the rest of his years quietly tending sheep in the wilderness.
- But God was about to invite him into a much larger story.

## Moses Turned Aside

- While tending sheep, Moses notices a bush burning without being consumed.
- The crucial moment comes when Moses says, **“I must turn aside and look.”**
- God calls Moses only after Moses chooses to stop, pay attention, and investigate what God might be doing.
- That simple decision to **turn aside** opens the door to everything that follows.
- Moses does not yet know where the story will lead, but his willingness to pay attention becomes the first step toward transformation.

## A Character Is What a Character Does

- Robert McKee argues that true character is revealed through the choices people make under pressure.
- What we think, feel, or believe matters—but eventually character becomes visible through **action**.
- Moses will become the person we remember because of a long series of choices and actions made in response to God’s call.
- Our character develops the same way.
- The decisions we make, the risks we take, and the moments when we say **yes** even when we are afraid all shape the people we are becoming.

## What Am I Going to Do?

- Moses could have seen the burning bush and simply kept walking.
- He could have decided that his present life was comfortable enough and predictable enough.
- Instead, he turned aside.
- God may also be trying to get our attention through opportunities, relationships, needs, or challenges that interrupt our ordinary routines.
- The most important question may not simply be, **“What kind of person do I want to be?”**
- The better question may be: **“What am I going to DO?”**

## Takeaway

God is still writing stories of transformation, and we have been given a meaningful part within that larger story. We do not have to settle for lives shaped primarily by comfort, predictability, or fear. Like Moses, we can **turn aside**, pay attention to where God may be calling us, and take the next faithful action. We will not always know where that choice will lead, and sometimes it may scare us. But those choices are precisely how our character is formed and how we become more fully the people God created us to be. So as this new chapter begins, the question is not merely **“Who do I want to become?”** but **“What am I going to do?”**

## Sources Cited

Donald Miller, [Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality](#)

Donald Miller, [A Million Miles in a Thousand Years](#)

Robert McKee, [STORY: Substance, Structure, Style and The Principles of Screenwriting](#)