

Which story is yours?

(Based of the Christmas Story)

We just heard the Christmas story. It is so familiar for most of us. We have grown up listening to it. Why do we still listen to it? Why are we here this evening?

It is not a rhetorical question? This is a real and challenging question. Can we answer it? Can you answer it? Why are you here?

I'll propose one possible answer. We are here because of this story. Let me explain.

There are many stories in this world. Each of us has chosen one of them to be our story. It is quite complicated with these stories. It is not just about knowing them. These stories actually shape our lives. Much more that we may think.

Stories, which we accept as true, define who we are, they define who others around us are, what this world is about, and why we are here. Our stories determine what we do, and what we don't do. How we treat others and the world around us.

There are Eastern stories, where all that exists is just an illusion. These stories don't motivate you to care about your neighbour or about the world, or even about yourself. For everything is just illusion... and sufferings.

There are Western stories where all that is is just about meaningless survival of the fittest. This story doesn't produce grace, mercy, compassion or generosity, or care for others either. But we all value these qualities so high, especially when someone apply them to us.

That story which dominates particular society determines where society is heading. Towards prosperity and wellbeing, or towards foolishness, corruption and destruction. That's why we see that different cultures with different stories have produced very different societies with very different values.

We live, we belong to so called Western culture. This culture came into being thanks to one particular story. This story changed hearts of countless people. This story enabled us to look at our neighbours in a different way.

Searching how to serve them better. This story gave birth to all that we have today, to all that we are so proud about – our education, our medicine, our social welfare system, technology, science, good and just laws, human right and equality, and the list goes on.

This story made us appreciate service instead of tyranny. Justice instead of violence. Generosity instead of greed. Self sacrifice instead of slavery. Mercy instead of abuse.

Care instead of indifference. It is not a case with other stories. They don't produce good fruits.

We may wonder – what is this story that created our world? That made our culture the most advanced, the most prosperous, the most caring in the history of the world, that enables us today live in peace and prosperity.

This is the same story which we heard today. Christmas story - about the birth of unusual boy. The boy, who changed the world, not by conquering it, but by serving it. By laying down His life for others. He changed the world by changing our hearts. By enabling us to live for others, instead of using others for our benefit.

You know this story. You know it well. The question we need to answer is – how did this story accomplish all of this? Why is it so powerful? The answer is very simple. For, in fact, it is not a story. It is our history. The history of our world, created by holy, gracious and benevolent God the Father, where we have fallen prey to sin and Satan, and where God Himself comes to rescue His creation, His beloved children.

If this story is not a real history, then we all are fooled to be here. Why would then we be here? If it is a real history, then we are fooled every time when we are not here.

If this story is true, then there is God, who loves you, who considers you His child, to whom you are infinitely precious, yes you. And it doesn't matter if you know that there is not much good in you. It doesn't matter if you, not realizing your sin think too highly of yourself. This God, He wants to give you new life, freedom, joy, wisdom, He wants to protect you, to bless you, to be with you.

For He is the only one who truly knows who you are and what you truly need. He knows us, our hearts, our secret thoughts and desires. Everything, even those things we want to hide from ourselves. He knows you and He gives everything He has so that only He could be with you.

So, why are you here? Make up your mind, make up your heart! What is your answer? Just to listen to some story, or to receive what Jesus Christ, true man and true God, has prepared for you.

Take your pick, and know... your story determines your destiny. It can lead you into life, or into death. And as you leave... remember – this God, who came to us as a man, is always here, caring for you, calling you, waiting for you. For you. Don't be fooled, make a wise choice, trust this man Jesus Christ, don't be afraid of what can happen, but let Him transform your life, let Him bless you and make you a blessing for others. Amen.