



THE REST OF THE STORY

PREVIEW

If you've ever taken a creative writing course, you might have heard the term "denouement" (day noo 'ma). The denouement comes at the very end of the story. It's the part where the author ties together all the different plotlines and answers all the reader's questions. It comes after the climax of the story (the most exciting part), and it shows the aftermath of that climax. The author may even give the reader some hints so they can imagine what will happen next.

God is an author. Although His Word was written with human hands holding a quill dipped in ink, He is the inspirer and author of that Word. And God doesn't leave stories open ended. He always has an end (denouement) established from the beginning.

PRAISE

Did you know that God authored more than just the written Word? He also is writing your life story. He loves you so much that He planned your story from beginning to ending before you were even formed. So even though you can't see it now, there is much more to come before your story comes to a conclusion. .

PARABLE

Throughout the Bible we see instances where God provided the rest of the story.

- Abraham and Sarah waited so long for the child God had promised that they may have thought the fulfillment would never come. But twenty-five years later, along came Isaac, the denouement of the story.
- God entered into a covenant promise with David that someone from his lineage would always reign in Israel. David died before seeing the fulfillment of that promise, but God wrote the rest of the story when He was born into this world to become our Savior. Isaiah wrote that the increase of His government and peace and reign on the throne of David would be "established with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isaiah 9:7).
- The disciples were bereft after Jesus ascended into Heaven. What was going to happen to them now? They had left everything behind because of their love for Christ and now He was gone. But Jesus had promised to never leave them alone. He had promised to send them a Comforter. And He did when He gave them the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

We've all watched a show, read a book, or experienced something that left us hanging on the edge of our seat wondering "What happens next?" It's so disappointing. But God doesn't leave readers in suspense; He doesn't leave them hanging. He always fulfills His Word and always finishes the rest of the story.

.

PRESENT

Have someone read Acts 4:23–31.

Peter and John were arrested because they had healed a lame man through the power of the Holy Spirit and then preached to the crowd about the gospel and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They spent the night in jail and the next day were brought before the chief priests and elders who threatened them and finally released them.

Peter and John hurried to where the other believers were and told them what had happened. They all began to pray, and the place was shaken and the Holy Spirit fell on them. Afterward they began to speak the Word freely and with great confidence. In other words, they walked into the rest of their story. This moment became the climax in which the early church saw their own personal power of God. This was their first encounter of opposition without Jesus being present, but in this moment the rest of the story began to be fulfilled. The Comforter showed up and gave them boldness. God will always back His Word, but we must have faith in who He is and faith that He will finish the rest of the story.

PRACTICE

If you are trying your best to walk with God, you can expect to encounter opposition. But when that happens, it's an opportunity to keep going—because there is always a rest of the story in your life. God has a rest of your story waiting for you! Your story doesn't have to end with the opposition, the defeat, the anxiety, or insecurities; it can be much greater—because God is writing your story!

The enemy does not fear someone who is spiritually idle, indifferent, and lacking drive, or, as one prophet described it, "settled on their lees" (Zephaniah 1:12). The devil fears those whose faith produces action. This is why he tried so hard to stifle the church's efforts at the beginning. He knew if the church got off the ground the world would be forever changed. What he didn't count on was that the opposition and persecution had the effect of pouring gas on the fire of revival. The church began spreading the gospel boldly, and signs followed. They saw God do the supernatural and the impossible.

PRAYER

God, thank You for speaking to us and allowing Your Word to be our guiding light. Thank You for planning more of our story than what we can see right now. Thank You for not ending our story after our mess-ups or mistakes. Thank You for having a rest of our story!



PLUS

What are some things in your story that you wish you had answers to? What are some big prayers you are praying? What is something you can do to help see God confirm His Word in your life?