

Session 1 Wednesday AM GYM

By: John Eldredge

[00:00:01.510]

Host: Good morning. I'm glad to see you. And it's good to be here. It is my privilege this morning to introduce our first speaker, Mr. John Eldredge. I read his book, I received his book as a gift two summers ago and I was very impacted by it and then I was able to hear Mr. Eldredge speak in Colorado Springs this last summer. And so, we wanted to invite him today because it's an incredible message that he has to share with us. He is a counselor. He has a counseling practice in Colorado Springs, and he teaches at the Focus on the Family Institute, which is a one semester college program for juniors and seniors. And yes, it transfers to Biola. And he's the author of the book entitled The Sacred Romance. And finally, he is a father of three boys and a husband. And so, let's welcome Mr. Eldredge.

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Eldredge: Good morning. It's good to be here. Wow. When I'm sitting in the front row, I had no idea the place filled up. It's a little terrifying. John, in his gospel, describes the impact of the life of Jesus of Nazareth in the following words. In him was life and his life was the light of men. Or in other words, his life made sense of human experience. Let me begin with a question for you all to wonder about with me.

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What do you make of the success of the film Titanic? Unprecedented, right. All-time leading box office, best seller. It passed Gone with the Wind in 98. Nobody thought that would ever be done.

The CD, the soundtrack was the best-selling CD of 1998, swept the Oscars. You all know the story. (Wait, we're going to need that, pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. There's some wizard of Oz fans. I thought it was just going to keep coming and coming.) Absolutely staggering. \$586,000,000 box office sales, unbelievable success of this film. What do you make of that? How do you understand that? I know people who have seen the film six and seven times.

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Now, you have to understand that this is far more than about teenage adoration of Leonardo DiCaprio. He's a fairly good-looking guy, but he's not a great actor. And it's more than about Kate Winslet, who I think is a lovely lady. And yet the film is larger than the two of them. You cannot explain the cultural phenomena of Titanic in those terms. The sort of popularity and teen idol worship and that sort of thing. A woman who I know has seen it 16 times is an upper middle class 47-year-old lady. So, what do you do with that? How do you understand that? Well, in order to understand the phenomena of Titanic and why I read or quoted the passage from John, you have to ask a deeper question, and that is, why do we go to films? Why do we go to movies?

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Robert McKee is considered the leading instructor of screenwriting in Hollywood. Today, people pay large amounts of money to go to his seminars and learn how to write great movies. Almost all of your favorite films have been written by his students. McKee has a new book out entitled Story. And in the book, he says, the reason that we go to films has to do with our search for meaning. We don't go to movies merely to escape, McKee says. Rather, we're seeking a double-edged encounter. We go to enter a world that is foreign to us, a world that is exotic or strange,

the world of Elizabethan England, or the world of medieval Scotland, or the world of Pharaohs Egypt.

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But once we are in that world, we discover ourselves. In other words, McKee says, we go to enter the story of others so that we might understand our own stories. We go to live in a fictional reality that illumines or brings light to make sense of our daily realities. And why is that? Why do we need to do that? Meaning is not a luxury for us. Dallas Willard says, it's a sort of spiritual oxygen that our souls breathe. Throughout the course of every human being's life, we are constantly trying to make sense out of our experience. When you are born, the answers to your deepest questions are not handed to you with your birth certificate. Who am I? Why am I here? What will become of me? What am I to make of life? Where will I find happiness? What is it that the universe is requiring of me? What is wanted from me?

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And we try and make sense out of our experience at this point in Western history, a time of the greatest crisis in meaning that the Western world has ever known, perhaps the entire world. You have to get in line these days to talk about postmodernism, and so I'm not going to belabor that. But what it means to live in the postmodern era is to live in an entire crisis of meaning. As we pass through the modern era, science was where we turned to provide us with our orientation for life. And in answer to some of the deepest questions, like, how did it all begin? Science says, well, probably by an accident. And to the question, how will it all end? What will happen to me? Science says, well, probably an accident.

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And as Neil Postman says, the accidental life is not worth living. And so, we go to films. We go to story to try and help us make sense out of human existence, to try and give us a sense of identity, a sense of direction and meaning. I want to show a film clip, so we're going to need to take the fluorescence out here at least and illustrate for you what it feels like to live in the postmodern era. I'm not going to set the clip up. I'm just going to show a short clip and then I'll unpack it when we're done. Should I keep rambling, or are we ready to do that?

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[Shows film]

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It's perfectly clear. Your experience right now is how most people experience their life. Like a movie they arrive to 20 minutes late. Something important seems to be going on. Seems to be good guys, seems to be bad guys. Seems to be something at stake. I can sense the drama of life. I feel my own life may be at risk. But on any Wednesday morning, I have no idea what the story is, right? Chesterton said, we all feel the riddle of the earth without anyone to point it out. The mystery of life is the plainest part of it. With every step of our lives, Chesterton said, we enter into the middle of some story which we are certain to misunderstand.

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Now, why story? Well, as Eugene Peterson says, we live in narrative. We live in story. Existence has a story shape to it. You have a beginning and an end. You have a plot, you have characters. The scriptures are given to us in the shape of a story, but we don't read them like that anymore. You see, once upon a time, the world had a story. Christianity was the story that made sense out of human existence. It was the grand drama that gave purpose and location and direction. It gave meaning to your scenes. You see, every person's life is like a chapter from a book. John Dunn said that, and we don't understand the chapter unless we have the rest of the story.

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But something absolutely tragic has happened. For reasons I don't have time to go into yet. This morning, the Gospel, as it has passed through the modern era, was transformed into something almost unrecognizable, I want to say, not for dramatic effect, but in all honesty, we've lost the gospel. And what we have left is a Christianity of tips and techniques, right? Yeah. Three steps to a good quiet time. Four ways to better share your faith. Five habits for improving self-discipline and that sort of thing. That will not do it. It will not do it. And so, people go elsewhere looking for the story that will explain their life. I'll tell you now the secret of Titanic. Do you want to know its success? What's going on there? Culturally, it's the longing for the Gospel. Think about the film for a moment, those of you who have seen it. Three of us.

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In the film, you have a story of sacrificial love, a story of real pursuit where the hero risks everything and eventually gives his life to save his beloved. It's a story where tragedy is given its due. The ship goes down, life is terribly broken, and yet tragedy does not have the final word.

Right? What does she say? What does Rose say at the end of the film? He saved me in every way a person can be saved. And that last scene of Rose walking up the staircase and there's the bridegroom and she's dressed in whites and there's the great cloud of witnesses. It's the wedding feast. It is the Gospel. The story is borrowing its force and its power from the true story of life. That's why it is speaking to people's hearts so deeply in a way that the Christianity of tips and techniques never will. And so, what I want to do this morning, having said everything I've said by way of prologue, I want to recover the Gospel for what it truly is. And that is the light that makes sense of human experience, the story of our lives.

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I want to tell you the Gospel again in four acts. Act One, in the beginning for once upon a time, as the saying goes. Now the phrase is used twice in the Gospels or in the Scriptures. In Genesis One, of course. And that's probably where your thoughts are racing as Bible students. Oh, yes, in the beginning and I was going to go, God created the heaven and the earth, right? You can't start there. That's Act Three. You have to go to John 1. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. What is that all about? What does that mean? It means in the once upon a time, before all time, in the once upon an eternity, if you will, there was perfect love, there was the life of the Trinity.

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I have a confession. I don't know how long I've been a Unitarian without knowing it, but I have always thought of God as by Himself, strong, sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, all that but by himself. God has never been by Himself. He has always been community. He has always been

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is immensely important that we recover, because when we get to Act Three and it says that you are made as an icon or an image of this God, it says that you are made in the image of the Trinity, which is why every human being is relational at the core.

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Nothing will touch your heart like relationship to thrill your heart's deepest longings or to break your heart. Loneliness, isolation, a sense of estrangement. Why are these the deepest afflictions of mankind? Because we are haunted by a memory of Act One. In the once upon an eternity, there was the perfect love that every human being has been looking for all their lives. In junior high school. You think it's the click you've got to get into or you're just going to die. Or you got to make the team. For boys. If you don't make the team, you're nobody. And then you get into high school and college and it's the dating thing, right? And if I can just find Mr. and Mrs. Right, it's marriage, marriage is what I'm looking for. And you get into marriage, and you realize it is a wonderful taste of something that is still calling you.

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And so married couples go off and they try and find the right church or the right community. People are looking, CS Lewis says, for the inner ring, the sacred circle, the sense of being welcomed into the center of things. Because if you strip away all of reality, Bertrand Russell was wrong, the great atheist in the early part of the century said, if we can get down to what's really behind the whole universe and all of human existence, it's a mathematical equation. No, it's a community, real relationship.

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When I was a boy, I was kind of a wild kid. Grew up here in Southern California. My parents didn't know what to do with me in the summer so they would ship me off to my grandfather's ranch in eastern Oregon for three months every summer. It was a schoolboy's dream. Pickups and tractors and horses and shotguns. And my grandfather was a real cowboy. And yet my favorite part was Sunday afternoons when we would do what he called going visiting. We'd just jump into his pickup, and we would ride around, and we would just drop in on other ranches in this large valley, third cousins, great aunts and uncles, people who had just become family over the years. And I'd sit on the front porch and the old folks would get out the coffee and the pie and they would tell stories. And there was this settled feeling inside of me that finally I had come home.

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Here was this wonderful life that had been going on for years. I didn't have to start it. I didn't have to keep it going. And yet this wonderful community, this fellowship was actually planning on me, was inviting me up into it. That's the invitation of the gospel again. Eugene Peterson says traditional Christian spirituality is not taking bits and pieces of doctrine and putting them to use. It is entering into the life of God that is already in motion. A home that is centered around Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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Now, all true love, all real love is generous in its heart. It's not like those cliques in junior high that you couldn't break into to save your life. Or some church choirs, for that matter. All

generous love is open armed. It's open hearted. It wants to welcome others in. And so, it is with the life of God in Act Two. He begins to write other characters into the story. He begins to invite others in to share in this great story he is telling that he is living in. He creates angels.

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Now, we're not given a lot of insight into the life of angels in Scripture. We don't know who they're rooting for in the NCAA. We don't know whether they like Titanic or even watched it. But notice this never anywhere in Scripture do you meet a bored angel. True. I mean, whenever you see them, they're having a ball. In Isaiah, chapter six. The year that King Uzziah died, I saw God, I saw the Lord. And he also sees the angels, the seraphim flying around the temple. And what are they saying? Holy, holy, holy to each other. It's not a hymn. Look it up. They're saying it to each other. Holy, holy, holy smokes do you see what I see?

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It is the experience of having your breath taken away. You've had the experience of the angels, and maybe you didn't even know it. You're walking on the beach in the evening and the sun is setting, and it is so beautiful. But the first thought that comes to mind is, I wish Mary was here. I wish Ted was here. I wish my family was here. They would love this, right? Or you'll go to a great movie or maybe a symphony, a piece of music that so deeply moves you, and you say, ah, I wish my friends had been here. I want to share this with them.

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Here's the clue. Every moment of glory is meant to be shared. And so, the angels are caught up into the glory of this great romance, this story that God is living. And they love it. Well, most of them, because something else happens in Act Two that is absolutely crucial that you understand, so that you know why life is the way it is. In Act Three, there is the betrayal in Heaven, there is a war in the center of the universe. Lucifer, son of the morning, who Ezekiel says, walked among the fiery stones, in the very presence of God, decides that he doesn't want to be best supporting actor. He wants to be best actor. He wants the story to be about him.

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In Paradise Lost, Milton says, how shall I relate to human sense? The invisible exploits of warring spirits? How? Without remorse, the ruin of so many glorious once and perfect while they stood. Milton lets his imagination go back into act Two in Paradise Lost, and he pictures a great banquet in Heaven where the Father is honoring the Son. And that's like the Trinity, isn't it? The Trinity is so other focused. It is not self-centered. It is not elbowing for one-ups-manship. The father exalts the son. The Son says no, no, the glory is the fathers. I only do what I see the father doing. I only say what I hear the father saying. It is so other centered. You will never understand why love is the highest ethic in the Christian system of ethics until you see the way the Trinity treat each other.

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And yet Satan is jealous. He wants this honor, this worship, this attention for himself. And so, revelation suggests he convinces a third of the angels in Heaven to join him in a mutiny. Why is

it that every great story has a villain? Have you ever wondered? Because they are telling you something about reality. The story has a villain.

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And here's how Milton describes the battle that takes place in Act Two. He says arms on armor clashing braid horrible discord. Dire was the noise of conflict, while overhead the dismal hits of flaming darts in fiery volley's flew soaked together under [inaudible 00:23:25] with ruinous assault and inextinguishable rage all heaven resounded and had earth [inaudible 00:23:34] then all earth had to her center shook. Deeds of eternal fame were done, but infinite. For wide was spread that conflict and various, sometimes on firm ground a standing fight and then soaring on main wing and all the air seemed conflicting fire, long time in even scale this great battle hung till Satan no equal among the angels, ranging through the dire attack of fighting seraphim, confused saw were the sword of Michael, smote, the great archangel Michael, who now is the head angel in Heaven.

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By the way, this is several hundred years before Frank Peretti. Just to set this in its literary context, Milton describes Michael as felling whole squadrons of demons at once with broad two-handed sway. The terrible edge came down wide wasting. But at the approach of Satan, Michael stops from his warlike toil, and he confronts him. And he says author of evil unknown till thy revolt how hast thou disturbed heaven's blessed peace and unto nature brought misery uncreated till the crime of thy rebellion. How hast thou instill thy malice into thousands? Once upright, now proved false. Heaven cast thee out.

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It's the end of act two. But I want you to notice something. (Hello. Come on in.) At the end of Act Two, Satan and his minions are left as characters in the story. They're not chained, not yet. And secondly, Satan has introduced a doubt into the universe. He's sown a seed of doubt into the story. Can you really trust the heart of God? Is he really for you? Because at the end of Act Two, God wins by power. And power is not the same thing as goodness. Anybody who's met a bully knows this. You can be bigger and not necessarily be better. And so, the drama is set for Act Three.

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In the beginning, in Genesis one, in the beginning of Act Three. You see God preparing to woo our hearts with a world that is breathtakingly, beautiful, and adventurous. It's exotic. Those of you who got the gospel in flannel graph don't quite have the imagery of paradise, right? I mean, something really luscious and good. He makes Maui and the French Alps. He makes the African Savannah. He makes mangoes, right? And he gives us the whole thing like a wedding present. And he says, here, do you like it? Take it for a spin. He creates man and woman to be his intimate allies. He creates us with the deepest longings of our heart for intimacy and adventure.

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See, this is why Chesterton said romance is the deepest thing in life. It is deeper even than reality. He's not talking about Danielle Steele and sort of her dime store, loves eternal flame. He's talking about the human craving to be part of this great heroic intimacy. And God creates us for

that. And he sets us in paradise, and he takes an unbelievable risk. He gives us freedom to reject Him. Why? He's already suffered one massive betrayal. He knows what free-willed creatures can do. He knows how we will use it. Why?

[00:27:48.150]

Phil Yancey reminds us that power can do everything but the most important thing it cannot control love. The guards in a concentration camp, for example, possess unlimited power over you. They could make you renounce your God, kill your mother, eat human excrement. There is one thing they cannot force you to do. Love them. Its why God seems shy to use his power in Act Three because he did not create us as cringing subjects or merely as servants. He created us as lovers. And we kick off the honeymoon by sleeping with the enemy.

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You see, when you live in a Christianity of tips and techniques, you trivialize sin. Sin is running stop signs. It's drinking. It's going to see Titanic. And God calls sin adultery of the heart. He says, it's what you give your heart away to other than the heart of God. And here, at the worst moment in the larger story, paradise is lost. It looks like evil has won. God comes into the garden and something about his heart is revealed that no one ever saw before. And what's that? Grace. Grace. Nobody knew. No one knew that he was this good. He says, oh, your life will be very hard now in very gender specific ways, but I will come for you. I will come for you.

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And then the long story of God's pursuit of a people who will be his intimate allies, who return to Him from the heart once more begins to unfold. We call it the Old Testament. First in Noah, and then in Abraham, and then in the people of Israel. You see God looking for a people who will be his comrades, who will join his side from the heart. Intimacy, adventure, abandonment of our souls unto Him, our beloved.

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You get to the prophets and again, Yancey says it's like listening to a lover's quarrel through the apartment wall. Theologians who talk about the impossibility of God, that God is far removed and above emotion. They have never read Jeremiah. They are completely unfamiliar with Isaiah. For in the prophets, God is a ranting, jealous lover. He says, return to me and I will have compassion on you. I will pardon your sins because you are precious in my sight. And yet you, you are a swift she camel in heat, sniffing the wind in her craving, running here and there after all her other lovers. And we all have them. We have all taken on other lovers' food, sex, music, sports, romance novels, some place that we go for a little taste of what we were meant for in communion with God.

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God says, come back. I will betroth you to me, although you were as a wife deserted, yet your maker will be your husband and they will no longer call you deserted. But Isaiah says you will be called, sought. But you said it is no use. I love foreign gods and I must go after them. You get to the end of the Old Testament, and it looks like the experiment has failed. It looks like the wager of the entire risk of creating mankind has failed. 400 years of silence. God won't call, and

when we do, he won't pick up the phone. Total estrangement. But the story is about to take an unbelievable turn. Right. He has something up his sleeve. It's incredible.

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Here's how Kierkegaard tells in a parable what God is about to do. He says, suppose there was a king who loved a humble maiden. Now, no king was like this king. Every other ruler trembled before his power. No one dared breathe a word against him. He had the strength to crush all opponents. And yet this mighty king was melted by love for a humble maiden. How could he declare his love for her? In a way, his kingliness tied his hands. If he just comes to her cottage in the woods with his armed escort and his royal carriages and the army and the banners waving, it would overwhelm her. If he just took her straight to the palace, crowned her with jewels, clothed her with royal robes, she might say she loved him.

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But would she, really? How could he know? And so, in the Kierkegaard's parable, he has the king leave all that behind, disguise himself as a beggar and come to her door in the woods alone to win her heart. It's the incarnation. The Ancient of Days sneaks into the enemy camp as a newborn. The great heart behind this phenomenal story comes into our lives as a carpenter from Nazareth. And that's why Paul says in Romans 5, I know that the evidence of life looks mixed. I know this suffering. I know that it feels random. And yet look at the cross. He came for you. Just as he promised he would. You have never been pursued and loved so fiercely.

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Christ is Jack and you are Rose. He gave his life to rescue us. In fact, in a fascinating moment in the life of Jesus after the trial in the wilderness. And he comes into the synagogue, and we recognize it as his first sort of public moment, they hand him the scroll of Isaiah and he tells us the plot of the story. And what does he say? He says, I am here to rescue hearts. I am here to set the captives free. All of us fell into a captivity of spirit when we fell in the garden and gave our hearts away to the evil one. Every human being comes into the world trapped, desperate for the life that they were meant for, but captive of spirit in bondage to everything that will destroy them. And Jesus comes and says, I'm here to rescue you, just like I said I would.

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Now, our lover has done the wildest thing. He left. He left. He says, I'm going into Act Four. You all carry on the invasion. You carry on the invasion of the kingdom toward the end of Act Three, which is the battle for human hearts. And I will give you my spirit to be with you and to be in you, to show you the way. We live in an incredibly high stakes drama. We live in a drama that requires the deepest things that are set in our hearts. Heroic intimacy. We still have an enemy prowling around, trying to devour, trying to keep the unsaved blind, trying to hold his captives in prison. And Jesus, in a staggering moment of confidence in us, leaves and gives us the invasion. You guys finish up in Act Three. I'll see you in Act Four.

[00:37:41.370]

Did y'all see the film, Hoosiers? Remember when the coach gets himself kicked off of the court and he hands the playbook to the assistant coach? And the guy's got it's a tie game, 64 to 64, 20 seconds left. The assistant coach, who's barely getting off of his alcoholism, is holding the

playbook, and he watches as the head coach walks off the stage. That's Acts chapter one, right? When the disciples look at him and say, you're kidding, right? You're kidding. You're leaving, and it's up to us. Yes. God says, I believe in you. You have a far larger part in the story than you ever imagined.

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Now, is that the end of the story? I don't care what your doctrine is. Most of you believe that it is. Oh, yeah, yeah there's heaven. Most of you believe that this life is pretty much as good as it gets, right? Think of the verse in John where Jesus says, in this world you will have trouble, but take heart I have overcome the world. How come you're not more encouraged by that? Because we are still trying to make life work now, right? Partly because the evil one continues to rewrite the story and he has robbed us of Act Four. Act Four. Right. What is happening? What's coming next? Do they all really live happily ever after?

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Well, what's the typical church response to the question, what will we do in heaven? We will worship God. And something in your heart says, for how long? 1000 years? A couple of hundred thousand years? How many courses can we possibly go through? Heaven is an unending church service. That sounds like hell to me.

[00:39:48.810]

How many you guys, come on. Church is fine, but doesn't exactly take your breath away, right? And here's the deal. If the gospel does not take your breath away, something else will. You are

made for ecstasy. Ecstasy is not an option. The human spirit craves the life that we prize. It craves a fulfillment of our destiny that is full of intimacy and beauty and adventure. And think of how Jesus describes the beginning of Act Four not as a church service, how does he describe it? As a wedding feast, right?

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Okay, you've got to get images of Baptist weddings entirely out of your mind. People standing around the church gym with Styrofoam cups of punch talking about what a lovely couple they are. You've got to go to a Jewish wedding or an Italian wedding, right? You push back the furniture; you roll up the rugs. There is feasting. There is dancing, there is celebration. And I'm sorry, I don't know what you do with this verse, but Jesus says, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink of it again with you in the kingdom of heaven. There is celebration when we get there.

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And it's not just any feast. It is a wedding feast. What goes on at wedding feast? Well, after the guests are gone, Jesus uses the most intimate moment of human experience to describe what is coming between us and the lover of our souls. Intimacy, connection, knowing each other. Finally, Lewis says the door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last and we will be invited into the center of things. Welcomed. He will give you a new name on a white stone known only between you and the lover of your soul.

[00:42:00.930]

George McDonald says that that name is the signature of your soul's arrival in thee I am well pleased. See, he who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. And you think, hey, holy, holy, holy, ha. Could you wait to get here or what? In the Mediterranean world when John of Patmos was writing Revelation. If you were really somebody. If you were an artisan and you had designed the murals of the city. Or you were an architect and you had built the aqueducts, or you were a military hero and had won a great battle. They would literally put your name on one of the pagan temples. A pillar of the community, right?

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In other words, Jesus is saying, oh, no, heaven is not eternal rest. Like a cemetery slogan. A day is coming when you will finally be released into your full, giftedness Revelation says, we will reign with him forever. Enter into the joy of your master, Jesus says, and the parable of the talents, what is the joy of our master? It is the thrill that God has running the universe, and he will share that with us. Life's not a dress rehearsal, the bumper sticker says, live it to its fullest if you believe that it will destroy you. This life is not large enough for your soul. We need the hope and the expectation that something absolutely delicious is about to come and that sustains us during a very fierce battle.

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Now, I want to come back to the deepest questions of the human heart and the way that Titanic tries to answer them. Who am I, really? What does God say? You are not merely my servants. I call you, my friends. You are my beloved whom I have pursued and rescued and ransomed. And I am inviting you up now to share with me in the drama of this great battle.

[00:44:32.910]

What will become of me? What will become of my life? Your life is about to take an incredibly exotic turn. Very soon we will round a bend in the road, and we will step into eternity. And it will be rich. It will take your breath away. And in the meantime? In the meantime, what does the universe want from me? I'll tell you what the universe most desperately needs from you. It needs your heart to battle for the hearts of others. That's the story that we are living in. I want to show you the power of a larger story to release hearts, to capture hearts and set them free.

[00:45:27.400]

Let's go back to that clip. What was that? It was not Monty Python Holy Grail, and it wasn't even Braveheart, although that is a fabulous, fabulous image of the gospel. The Lord is a warrior. The Lord is his name. Exodus 15. Braveheart is an incredible exposition of the gospel. But this was a scene from Shakespeare's. Henry V. Any of you seen this Kenneth Branagh film Henry V fabulous film. Shakespeare was living at a time when the Christian worldview, the Christian understanding of the story, still permeated culture. He probably wasn't a believer himself. We don't have any reason to think so. But he gave us, in many of his dramas, parables of the kingdom.

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And in Henry V, he gives us a parable of Christ in the figure of King Henry, who captures the hearts of his people and leads them personally in battle against the evil one. Now, this is a true story. England has invaded France, they have fought two massive battles, and they come to the

field of Agincourt. The English company has been reduced to a small band of men, several dozen, perhaps maybe 100. They are tired. They are wounded. Many of them are sick. They have been marching for days through the rain and mud. They come to the field of Agincourt, and they are met by the entire French army. They are outnumbered five to one. The French have a mounted cavalry. The English have none.

[00:47:16.230]

Have you noticed how God loves drama? He loves last minute deliverances, right? I hate that. You need the check on Thursday, right? So, it comes Thursday at 5:01 you know? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, no no no throw them in the fiery furnace, then I'll show up, right? Abraham and Sarah, you're going to have a baby, 25 years from now. Jesus, right? No, no. Kill him. Kill him. Put him in the grave. Leave him there three days, then I'll show up. He loves to be the God of last-minute deliverances.

[00:47:59.670]

So, what you saw on the film was the arrogance of evil. That was the French up on the hill, what Shakespeare calls the over lusty French. This is a true story. They're sitting up on the hill and they're basically saying, oh, come on, good doesn't stand a chance. We're going to wipe these guys out in a minute. There isn't enough here for all of us to do. Some of you go get a latte. And now we're going to go back to the film clip. So, we're going to need the fluorescence off and all that. Thank you. We're going to go back to the clip and the scene is going to shift now to the English camp. And all I want you to observe is two things here as the scene unfolds. First, look at the loss of heart on their faces. It is the same look that you see on people's faces as you walk

through the mall. We live in a time of desperate hearts, failed hope, shattered families, diminishing expectations. And then when, I want you to watch what Henry does in a figure of Christ, to give them back their hearts. Okay? So, we get lights out.

[00:49:22.250]

(Shows film clip)

[00:55:05.450]

A king who calls us his brothers and sisters. An enemy that mocks us and tries to defy us to live from our hearts in a larger story. He who seeks to save his life shall lose it. But he who loses his life for my sake shall find it. The gospel is not a set of tips and techniques. It is an invitation into the most dramatic story your heart has ever known. And it will require everything that God has set within in you as a woman and as a man, to be his intimate allies in the battle for hearts. This is where we live. But it's just a thought.