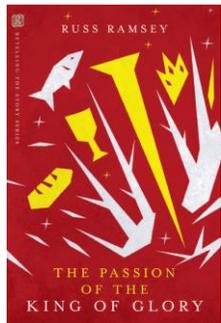


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## Retelling the Story Series

The Retelling the Story series explores the narrative arc of the Bible from Genesis through Revelation in compelling language that is faithful to the text of Scripture. Russ Ramsey's dynamic narratives, including *The Advent of the Lamb of God*, *The Passion of the King of Glory*, and *The Mission of the Body of Christ*, trace Jesus' birth and life, as well as the early disciples' missionary call in the book of Acts. Written in the form of daily devotional readings, the stories are told afresh to help readers hide God's word in their heart by way of their imaginations.

### *The Advent of the Lamb of God*

Pastor Russ Ramsey narrates anew the greatest story ever told – the true tall tale of the coming of the Christ. It's more than the story of a baby born in Bethlehem; the story encompasses the whole of the Old Testament and all of human history, unveiling God's longsuffering, loving pursuit of his people. Rediscover how the purposes of God culminated in the coming of Jesus, in twenty-five readings ideal for Christmas or any season of meeting the Savior.

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In this carefully researched retelling of the story of Jesus, pastor Russ Ramsey invites us to rediscover our wonder at Jesus' sinless life, brutal death, and glorious resurrection. Featuring forty short chapters recounting key episodes from Jesus' time on earth, this book expands on the biblical narrative in a fresh and creative way – giving us a taste of what it would have been like to walk next to Jesus and experience his earthly ministry firsthand.

### *The Mission of the Body of Christ*

Ramsey's dynamic narrative traces the journey of the early church with thirty-one daily readings through the book of Acts, as the people of God carried out Jesus' mission as his ambassadors. This unlikely band of believers faced enormous challenges yet experienced God's power and grace as they moved forward in the Spirit. Through this new community, a movement spread around the world that continues to this day.



*The Mission of the Body of Christ*

Retelling the Story Series

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*"Ramsey has written a narrative that captures the life of Jesus so vividly, at times you'll wonder if he sat down and spoke with all the people involved in the story."*

— Trillia Newbell, author of *United*

## Jesus of Nazareth's death did not bring an end to his ministry.

Rather, his crucifixion at the hands of Pilate and the chief priests fanned into flames a movement that would reach around the world and down through time. The reason? Jesus' death did not end with a corpse on a slab. It ended with resurrection — a real, bodily resurrection and a truly empty tomb.

Three days after Jesus was buried, he rose from the grave and appeared to his disciples. Over the course of the next forty days, the resurrected Jesus, with his nail-pierced hands and spear-split side, spent time in the company of his friends — teaching them, encouraging them, and preparing them for a mission to take the story of his resurrection to the furthest reaches of the globe.

On one of those occasions, as Jesus was eating with his friends, he told them to wait for the gift the Father had promised — the Holy Spirit Jesus had told them about. The Holy Spirit would come and comfort them and lead them forward. They were to remain in Jerusalem until this happened.

It could not have been easy for the disciples to sit with their risen Lord. For as much joy and hope as Jesus' resurrection brought them, they had been present at his death. They had witnessed the brutal execution of this man they loved, followed, and gave their lives to serving. They saw his beaten and bloody form hang from the cross as he breathed his last. After he died, they were hollowed out with grief.

Along with their grief was the guilt. The trauma of the crucifixion had revealed weaknesses in each one of them. To a man they watched their loyalty to Jesus collapsed under the weight of the chief priests' resolve to put an end to what he had started. Not one of them had shown the strength they believed they possessed when Jesus was taken into custody. Each one denied knowing him in his greatest hour of need.

On top of the grief and the guilt was the fact that the world as they knew it had changed. When the resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples, it was to remind them of their call to be his witnesses in the world. But after the resurrection, they hardly knew what that world was anymore.

They were fragile and unsettled, but they could not escape the reality that Jesus had in fact risen. And they knew they were somehow tied up in it. How could they not be? In a world where everyone dies, one man's resurrection becomes instantly relevant to all. His resurrection was part of their story.

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## BOOK EXCERPT



*"Russ Ramsey has that rare gift – the ability to animate the imagination. May you and yours take up this book, read it, and be renewed."*

–Scott Sauls, author of *Jesus Outside the Lines*

The disciples used that time to ask questions of Jesus. They wanted to understand what would happen next. Would he deal with the religious leaders who opposed him? Would he overthrow Rome? Would he restore the kingdom of Israel to her former glory? And if so, when? Would they be part of it?

Jesus told them the Father was establishing his kingdom, but the particulars of this business were not theirs to know. Such knowledge belonged to God alone. What he could tell them, however, was that the Holy Spirit would come on each one of them in a matter of days, and when he did, they would be filled with power.

In that power, they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. This Great Commission, the disciples came to understand, was very much about the kingdom of God. Their mission, though they struggled to grasp it, was in some way the work of building the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit and the kingdom of God – the two main subjects Jesus discussed after his resurrection – were inseparably linked, meaning the disciples' call to bear witness to Christ carried eternal significance.

Forty days after the resurrection the disciples were on the Mount of Olives and Jesus was with them. He told them they would be his witnesses, and after he said this, he began to rise up into the sky right before their eyes. Up he went, until a cloud hid him from their sight. The disciples stood in silence as they watched him go. In that moment the world became an even greater mystery than the one the resurrection demanded they embrace.

– Taken from chapter two, *Ascension Acts* 1:1-26



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**Russ Ramsey** and his wife and four children make their home in Nashville, Tennessee. He is the author of *Struck*, and *Behold the Lamb of God*. He was awarded the 2016 Christian Book Award from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association for his book *Behold the King of Glory*. Russ is a pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church in Nashville and his writing has appeared at The Rabbit Room, The Gospel Coalition, The Blazing Center, and To Write Love on Her Arms.

[russ-ramsey.com](http://russ-ramsey.com)

## Retelling the Story “I Love More Than All Others”

### What inspired you to write the Retelling the Story series?

**Russ:** Biblical literacy and the cultivation of a biblical imagination. As a pastor I am driven by a desire to raise the level of biblical literacy among those God puts in my path. The goal of these books is to hide Scripture in the hearts of my readers by telling the biblical story of the coming of Christ, the life of Christ, and the ongoing ministry of Christ with compelling clarity, beauty, and continuity.

### What were you hoping to accomplish in writing these narratives?

**Russ:** My objectives for the Retelling the Story Series are threefold. First, to tell the story I love more than all others—the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection and what it means for us—for the edification of those who may be new to Christianity and the meaning of the empty tomb. Second, to help “rescue truth from the jaws of familiarity” (as parable-scholar Kenneth Bailey would say) for those whose love for Scripture has perhaps grown stale. And third, to offer a biblically-faithful narrative for individuals, families, churches, and study groups which nourishes their faith and enhances their worship of Christ.

### How would you describe these books to someone who hadn’t read them yet?

**Russ:** These books are a collection of stories that thread together to tell one big story. That is what makes them distinctive. I wanted to write something that would make the chronology of the Bible clearer for people.

I make very little “direct eye contact” with the reader. These books are not devotionals. They are not teaching books. They are stories. And as with any good story, the lessons are contained in the narrative. I don’t know of many straight narrative books about the Bible that are aimed primarily at an adult audience. But I do know that storytelling is one of the most effective ways to deliver information in a meaningful way. Stories are a Trojan horse for getting truth inside the gates of the heart.

### What do you hope readers take away from these stories?

**Russ:** I hope readers hide Scripture in their heart by way of the imagination, come to know and love Jesus better, or for the first time. I hope they read a beautiful, compelling, emotionally connective story that helps the Bible come to life and come back to this series on a regular basis, particularly during Advent and Lent. And I hope they are satisfied with the

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literary quality of these books and keep them on their shelves for years to come.

### How do you hope these books impact readers?

**Russ:** I hope they

- See lived out on the page the call they themselves have been given to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ;
- Experience the wonder of Christian theology as it unfolds in the practical, everyday lives of people trying to learn and practice what it means to follow Christ;
- Hide scripture in their heart by way of their imaginations through the mechanism of good storytelling, thus becoming equipped to tell again the story of their faith;
- Will be encouraged as they encounter multiple stories of hopeless and struggling people finding comfort and help in the context of biblical community and the Holy Spirit's care; and
- Grow in their biblical literacy as they learn how the familiar smaller episodes of the Bible fall into the larger, single story which begins in Genesis and runs all the way through the final chapters of Revelation.