

# Session 4



# THE STORY OF SALVATION



# THE STORY OF SALVATION: Creation, Fall, & Redemption

## INTRODUCTION

**We all want to know** that our lives have meaning. But the modern world tries to tell us that we are simply insignificant specks in the universe, and that there is no real meaning to life. Our choices don't matter. How we live our lives doesn't matter. Each individual should just do whatever he or she pleases.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Our lives are a part of a much larger story. We are God's beloved children, created in his own image, and made for greatness. Despite the fact that we live in a fallen world, God, who is all-powerful and all-loving, reaches out to us, desiring to bring us back into unity with him and inviting us to help bring his goodness and his love into a broken world that has turned away from him.

This story of salvation, which we recall through the words of the Creed, reminds us that there is a reason for our existence. Because each of us is loved by God, each of us has a role to play in God's creation and his great story of love, a role that only we can play. When we refuse God's loving invitation, all of creation is the poorer.

## THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **The three major parts in the story of salvation: Creation, Fall, and Redemption**
- **How originally we were united with God and experienced harmony within the human family**
- **How sin broke our unity and left us with an inclination toward sin, called concupiscence**
- **How Jesus came to restore us to the Father, but also to establish the Catholic Church to gather the broken family of humanity into the united family of God**

## OPENING PRAYER

We pray to you, O Lord,  
who are the supreme Truth,  
and all truth is from you.

We beseech you, O Lord,  
who are the highest Wisdom,  
and all the wise depend on you for their wisdom.

You are the supreme Joy,  
and all who are happy  
owe it to you.

You are the Light of minds,  
and all receive their understanding from you.

We love, we love you above all.

We seek you, we follow you,  
and we are ready to serve you.

We desire to dwell under your power  
for you are the King of all. Amen.

—St. Albert the Great, one of the great teachers or Doctors of the Church

*“O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!”*  
(From the Exsultet or Easter Proclamation)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Dr. Sri talks about the story of salvation and how this story plays a role in each of our lives. What does it mean that “our modern world has lost its story,” and why does that matter?
2. Dr. Sri speaks of a timeline that demonstrates how salvation history is the growth of God’s family as he draws mankind back to himself. Here is the process by which God’s family grows:

One Couple→ One Family→ One Tribe→ One Nation→ One Kingdom→ One Church  
(Adam & Eve)→ (Noah)→ (Abraham)→ (Moses)→ (David)→ (Jesus and the Apostles)

Consistent throughout salvation history are covenants. How does entering into a covenant “define the relationship” between God and his people?

3. In the video, we were reminded that we all have an inclination toward sin. As St. Paul says in Romans 7:15, “For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate.” Recall sometime in the last week when you didn’t do something that you knew you should or did something that you knew you shouldn’t. Ask God to help you make a better choice the next time a similar circumstance arises.

## CALL TO CONVERSION

*After spending a few moments in prayer, write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:*

- #1** Now is your time to enter the story of salvation. What might you be putting off with regard to your faith? Is God asking you to do something right now? If you have been reluctant or afraid to commit your life to Jesus, spend some time writing about the reasons why. Are you afraid of what your friends or members of your family might say? Pray with the father who asked Jesus to cure his son: “Lord, I believe. Help my disbelief!”



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**#2** Read the following quote from Pope Benedict XVI:

*“Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed. Each of us is loved. Each of us is necessary.”*

List two or three roles that you play in your life, such as parent, worker, or friend. Now consider what would happen if you didn't live those relationships well. Who would suffer? What wouldn't be accomplished? Say a prayer of gratitude that you have been, in the words of Psalm 139:14, “fearfully and wonderfully made” and ask God for the grace to help you fulfill your responsibilities with the people and missions he has entrusted to you.

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**#3** In his “Meditation on Two Standards,” St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, challenges us to see the real struggle between good and evil in the world today. Following the spirit of his meditation, prayerfully imagine a battlefield with Jesus, the commander-in-chief of good, on one side calling all people under his standard (his flag). He calls men and women to follow him with humility, patience, generosity, purity, poverty, and sacrificial love. Next, imagine on the other side of the field Satan, the chief enemy of all that is good, inviting people under his flag. He entices people away from Jesus through the lure of riches, the pursuit of worldly honor and success, pride, and lust, and he distracts them from the true meaning of life with constant busyness and amusements. Finally, put yourself on that field and honestly consider: Which side attracts you the most? In what ways are you pursuing the standard of Christ? In what ways do you find yourself lured by the standard of the devil? In what ways can you live more for Christ's kingdom and not Satan's?

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## CLOSING PRAYER

We give you praise,  
 Father most holy,  
 for you are great  
 and you have fashioned all your works  
 in wisdom and in love.  
 You formed man in your own image  
 and entrusted the whole world to his care,  
 so that in serving you alone, the Creator,  
 he might have dominion over all creatures.  
 And when through disobedience  
 he had lost your friendship,  
 you did not abandon him  
 to the domain of death...  
 And you so loved the world,  
 Father most holy  
 that in the fullness of time  
 you sent your Only Begotten Son  
 to be our Savior...  
 To accomplish your plan,  
 he gave himself up to death, and,  
 rising from the dead,  
 he destroyed death and restored life.  
 And that we might live no longer for ourselves  
 but for him who died and rose again for us,  
 he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father,  
 as the first fruits for those who believe,  
 so that, bringing to perfection his work in the world,  
 he might sanctify creation to the full.

—From the *Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV



## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

**Here is a verse from the Bible that you can memorize and reflect on this week to help you apply today's session to your daily life:**



*“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” —John 3:16*

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#### **For Further Reading:**

For more in-depth reading about the story of salvation, see the following *Catechism* passages:

- *Created in the image of God: CCC 356–358*
- *Before the Fall: CCC 376–379*
- *Original Sin: CCC 396–405*
- *The gift of Jesus: CCC 457–460*
- *The Catholic Church: CCC 830–848*
- *Sending of the Holy Spirit: CCC 731–737*
- *The Last Judgment: CCC 1038–1041*

#### **Other Resources:**

- *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapters 6–10*
- *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of Faith* by Fr. Robert Barron

