

Without The Applause: Examining Celebrity Culture In The Church

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I recently wrote an article which I called '[Beneath The Skin](#)'; a critique of sorts of modern Christianity and the Western church.

The article focused primarily on the collective Christian identity; *The Church*, not on any one particular denomination or way of 'doing church' but, rather, on the church's influence and presence, as a whole, in the world today. I endeavored to identify both *the good* and *the bad*, historically and now, but, in particular, I was looking for an answer to a specific question: what was beneath the skin of the modern, Western church?

Was there still a heart beating for Jesus, a life still given in allegiance to the king?

Was the church still the 'woman of valour' for whom Jesus died, shining brightly in a darkened and impoverished world through her most basic and guiding principle: that is, to incarnate Christ?

Or had she exchanged her birthright for a mess of pottage, trading persecution for privilege, and skeptical dismissal for a platform of popularity?

In this article, I want to dig a little deeper, to take a closer look at one of the issues I think played a part in asking this question. I want to examine the phenomenon of *celebrity culture* within the modern Western church and, in

particular, the influence this culture has had on the average, ordinary Christian.

Social Reach

With the rise of social media and the massive reach of online platforms, there's no doubt that the ability of the Christian faith to be expressed and shared has increased exponentially. The ability to virtually connect, through live streaming or recorded services, was demonstrated to be invaluable in more recent times when many churches worldwide were forced to close their physical doors during the COVID-19 crisis. For many people, this was the only way they were able to still 'go to church' and connect with their faith community through long periods of isolation and disconnection.

Many faith communities now count in their membership those who may only attend church virtually (for a variety of reasons) and the reach of these various faith communities, in terms of missions and evangelism, goes well beyond their actual geographic borders.

It seems hard to believe, but the means that makes this even possible – the internet – is only just over 30 years old. Although an electronic information network of sorts already existed prior to the early 80s, it was almost entirely text-based and difficult to use and barely resembled the online network that we recognise today.

"Almost everything which you needed to know in your daily life was written down somewhere," Berners-Lee [creator of the World Wide Web], told NPR's Fresh Air in 1996. "And at the time, in the 1980s, it was almost certainly written down on a computer somewhere. It was very frustrating that people's effort in typing it in was not being used when, in fact, if it could only be tied together and made accessible, everything would be so much easier for everybody."

In April 1993, everything changed forever. The World Wide Web was launched into the public domain, becoming the first royalty-free, easy-to-use means of browsing the emerging information network that developed into the Internet as we know it today. It's estimated that there are now 5.19 billion internet users (of a total world population of 8.1 billion people (as at August 2023)). The total number of internet users around the world has grown by 105 million during the past 12 months alone.

In the three decades since the web went public, the way in which we communicate, how information is shared, and how we connect has changed completely. The internet has expanded the reach of many valuable causes and community endeavours, but it has also increased the level of propaganda and disinformation, as well as challenging our standards of privacy and security.

For Christianity, this level of connectivity is somewhat of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it offers the opportunity for preaching, mission activities, and the expression of faith to be shared on a global scale in a time-effective manner. But, particularly for the individual, it also offers the alluring possibility of a global stage, with the ability to curate a popular (but often artificial) public persona, within the reach of millions through a simple tap of the keyboard. Anyone can become *someone*, with something to say and an audience to hear it.

Obscurity, mediocrity, and martyrdom have been replaced by an unnatural emphasis on personas, platforms, and profits. The era of 'Celebrity Christianity' is well and truly upon us.

A Toxic Culture Of Self

Don't get me wrong. I love the internet and social media as much as the next person. I believe huge value can be added to the church; to our various ministries, and to the lives of regular, ordinary Christians through collaborating together in

this form of information exchange. Social media and the internet are phenomenal tools for sharing the gospel, enabling churches to be more discoverable in their local area, and for sharing resources with a wider audience than only in-person services would allow. This kind of exposure may make a church or an individual Christian *well-known*, however, but not necessarily result in *celebrity* status.

Celebrity, unlike fame, is another animal altogether. While celebrity can't exist without fame – broad public recognition, it goes beyond mere recognition alone, devolving into intense public interest, attention, and, frequently, adulation. This *cult of personality*, particularly when related to individuals, often focuses entirely on what is perceived or promoted, not necessarily what is real, with the idolising of an individual creating a level of adoration beyond what is natural or healthy.

Celebrity Christianity turns an individual into a brand, encourages the promotion of self, necessitates the ongoing careful curation of a popular public image, irrespective of whether it is authentic, and runs the risk of reducing the gospel to merely a vehicle for global Christian consumerism.

Within Celebrity Christianity, ministries, churches, and people's faith are often orientated around a central, charismatic figure who wields immense social influence and power, but whose platform is devoid of personal proximity or systems of accountability.

Writer and editor Katelyn Beaty, in her book *Celebrities for Jesus*, makes the distinction between *fame*, a morally neutral state of being known by more people than you know, and *celebrity*, with its focus on self-promotion and brand-building. "The right kind of fame," she writes, "arises from a life well lived, not a brand well cultivated."

We're all, of course, aware of the rise and fall of many well-

known celebrity pastors and preachers, who got about in their fancy cars, wearing trendy outfits, with their slick media team and an entourage of understudies. Celebrated and acclaimed while they were in public favour, they quickly became the focus of criticism and derision, by Christians and the secular world alike, when their true private lives became known and their moral failures and abuses were exposed.

Yet they are not alone in their blame. To some degree, we are all complicit in allowing this toxic celebrity culture to grow, unchecked, within the Church. We gave them their platform, we encouraged their rise to Christian stardom, and we promoted *their kind of Christianity* as somehow superior and more praiseworthy. And, by *their kind of Christianity* I mean, with our platform-centric churches and our consumer-driven services, we have not-so-subtly sent the message that anything worth saying must be said from a stage and that the ordinary faithfulness of regular Christians is, well, a little boring and not particularly noteworthy.

At its core, celebrity Christianity is about *pseudo-love* or *the feeling of love* that we get from Christian celebrities and which they, in turn, get from us. This degree of people worship is a disturbing tell, betraying the reality that we are, in many ways, a deeply narcissistic society, obsessed with and in love with self, more attracted to personality than character, more inspired by charisma than moral courage.

We have turned people into gods, worshipping the created rather than the Creator, looking to humans to satisfy us, rather than turning to the One in whom we live and move and have our very being.

We all “feed celebrity by turning to famous people to meet our own social and emotional needs,” Katelyn Beaty comments.

Things We've Lost Under The Glare Of The Stage Lights

With our eyes blinded by the bright lights of celebrity, perhaps we've forgotten some of the foundational truths of the Christian life; spiritual disciplines that faithful Christians have endeavoured to live out for centuries.

The call to ordinary faithfulness

Fame doesn't necessarily come at the expense of faithfulness. Jesus, of course, was and still is one of the most famous men on the planet and yet would also be the supreme example of trust and confidence in God. But, by and large, the Christian life is not about notoriety but about quiet humility; taking up our cross daily, dying to self, and following Jesus wherever he leads.

This kind of faith rarely looks glamorous and is unlikely to make the daily news. More often than not, it goes largely unnoticed by all but One.

Maybe it's simply holding down two jobs in order to provide for your family and meet your financial responsibilities. Perhaps it's committing to authenticity and honesty in your relationships; business, friendship, community, church, romantic, and parental, choosing to make God at the heart and centre of your interactions. Maybe it's continuing to trust God, even through challenging and difficult circumstances like job loss, ill health, or relationship troubles. Maybe it's volunteering in service in your local church in steady and joyful commitment. Maybe it's doing the right thing, even (or perhaps especially) when no one is looking. At all times it is, as Eugene Peterson puts it, *a long obedience in the same direction*; committed discipleship through worship, service, joy, work, happiness, humility, community, and blessing.

This is the kind of ordinary faithfulness that is, in fact,

extraordinary; a Jesus-saturated culture that takes root and thrives in the lives of ordinary people, and which replicates in the lives of all those who come into contact with them.

The relevance of the local church

This *long obedience in the same direction* – discipleship – is outworked primarily as part of a local church. As Jonathan Leeman puts it, *‘the local church enables the world to look upon the canvas of God’s people and see an authentic painting of Christ’s love and holiness. The local church lays down a pathway with guardrails and resting stations for the long journey of the Christian life.’*

Yet so many Christians only think of church as something they go to rather than something they identify as. They may describe themselves as Christian in a general sense, but feel no real connection to or fail to see the relevance of the local church and their participation in it.

Paul the Apostle speaks at length about the connection between the individual and the church. He comments in the book of Corinthians that “God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it”. This body of believers is governed or directed in all its functions by the head, who is Jesus. Through Christ’s work on the cross, Christians have been made his body, his family, his temple, his people, his flock, his joy and crown. But they only become these things collectively, never individually. The moment an individual becomes a Christian is the moment they *stop being merely* an individual Christian.

As author Rachel Held Evans comments, *“Christianity isn’t meant to simply be believed; it’s meant to be lived, shared, eaten, spoken, and enacted in the presence of other people. Try as I may, I can’t be a Christian on my own. I need a community. I need the church.”*

The relevance and significance of being part of a Christian

community can not be overstated, yet global connection has, in many ways, increased local disconnection to the heart and soul of Christian life.

More important than which online pastors we follow, what podcasts we listen to, or what Christian books we buy, is the essential reality that every Christian needs to belong to a gospel-centred local church (if this is geographically possible, of course).

It's only by being part of the local church that we can participate in and contribute to the collective Christian activities that have marked the church as unique throughout the centuries; those of 'worship', 'fellowship', 'discipleship', ministry', and 'evangelism'.

The priesthood of every believer

Under the old covenant made with the people of Israel, only one priest from a particular priestly family or class could enter into the Holy Place, approach the glory of God, and mediate between God and humanity as a representative of all the people.

All that changed because of Jesus. Through his reconciling work, the new covenant was instituted, where both Jew and Gentile could become part of God's family, where all people could draw near and find forgiveness and restoration of their relationship with God. The mediating work has been done, once, and for all time by the greatest of all priests, Jesus himself. Because believers become part of Jesus' body, part of the living temple of God, each one of us becomes an ambassador of this great ministry of reconciliation, people of the kingdom, collectively, a 'holy nation', in essence, a *priesthood of every believer* (Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:9)

The church is not some kind of class system or hierarchy, where only some minister and others merely watch on as spectators, but a collective organic reality, a *kingdom of*

priests, in which every person witnesses and ministers, loves and serves alongside one another, as God has gifted them, for the good of the whole and the glory of His name.

There is more for each one of us to step into, and not merely as passive participants, but as active ambassadors in God's great story of reconciliation, members of the priesthood of every believer. Don't let celebrity culture tell you that you need a platform or notoriety or global influence in order to minister. You don't. You already know more than you need to know in order to do what you need to do. Simply make a start and get active in your church.

The sufficiency of Jesus

What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

When we allow this truth to shine out of us, authentically and unvarnished, we discover, perhaps to our surprise, that Jesus is more than sufficient. His life-giving work on the cross, his selfless example of a life well lived, and his declaration of the sovereignty of God is more than powerful enough to transform the hardest of hearts. He doesn't need the lights, the cameras, the noise, the fancy clothes, the clever remarks, witty arguments, or public protestations of fervour.

He doesn't need any of it to impact a person's heart, to call them to himself, to transform and redeem them.

But the knowledge of this grace, of life-giving light, has been entrusted to us as a treasure shining out of rough jars of clay. It's our responsibility and our privilege to let this light – *his light* – shine brightly, to point the world to him, and to believe in his sufficiency and power to save.

Anything we do, if it has any power at all, is only because it

flows from a life saturated in God, Who is love itself, and empowered by His life-giving spirit,

Celebrity culture tells us we need to be more. Scripture tells us that God's power is made perfect in our weakness and that in that weakness, the sufficiency of Jesus is still more than enough.

When God Moved Into The Neighbourhood

(Not a reader? Take a listen instead ↓)

Glory, All-In-All

I think our view or perspective of God and His intentions may have been shaped by many things, but the Bible seems to set the narrative straight pretty much right away, declaring His intent and purpose from the beginning. We read in Genesis 1:6 that God said *"Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."* Further, God declares in Numbers 14:21 that *"the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD."*

God's desire has always been for us to be like Him and for Him to dwell with us, utterly and completely.

He intended us to not only be like Him but for us to also rule

over His good creation on His behalf, exhibiting his justice, goodness, and truth throughout the earth. Affirming God's sovereignty, reflected in the way we choose to live like Him, gives shape and purpose to the role for which humanity was created (and, later in scripture, why and how [the church](#) also finds her purpose).

How amazing – the King of all the earth desired to make us in His image and in His likeness so that we might reflect His glory – the weight and splendour of all that He is, and so that everywhere one might look – east, west, north or south – all that can be seen and felt is God.

God dwelt with us once, long ago, in a garden. His glory and splendour could be seen then, as humanity and God walked together in perfect harmony and everything was *very good*. Only one thing remained in order to make this eternal; the application of our free will to partner with God and undertake this rule on His terms, a display of obedience and commitment to Him.

This isn't what the first humans choose, though, and the third chapter of Genesis starkly illustrates the terrible outcome; banishment from His presence and separation from His glory.

The book of Genesis is a means to a theological end; its purpose to illustrate in historical-mythological language God's relationship to creation and His intention of dwelling with us. *"The whole purpose of Genesis 1 is to set the ideal human community – a place in which the image of God, or the imitation of God, is actually going to be realised. That, of course, gets distorted in Genesis 3 when humans disobey God. But the first chapter is outlining the ideal."* (Professor C. John Collins).

Genesis 1–11, then, is the founding story of humanity, ending in crisis. These narratives give a real and true assessment of God's initial purposes and the human plight. Genesis 12–50

is the founding story of the nation with whom the covenant is eventually made at Sinai. The covenant establishes the relationship to Abraham and his descendants, provides the structure for living in God's presence, and lays the foundation for God's presence to be established on earth. – Biologos

The Purpose Of Israel

The people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, were the chosen people through whom God intended for all the world to learn of Him and be invited into a restored relationship with Him. After their epic deliverance from slavery in Egypt and a desperate flight through the Red Sea, the book of Exodus tells the story of Israel's journey under the leadership of Moses to Mount Sinai. There, they find its summit is wrapped in thick smoke and access to its base must be limited *because the Lord had descended on it in fire.*

Through rolling thunder and lightning, God makes solemn promises to them in that place. He intends to make of them a *"holy nation, and a kingdom of priests"*, contingent on their faithfulness to His covenant. He gives them ten commandments, so they might understand His holiness and His laws, by which their lives and worship of Him were to be governed. They will be witnesses to the nations around them of the glory and sovereignty of the God, who not only rules over them but also dwells with them.

It was also at Mount Sinai that *the tabernacle* – the *residence or dwelling place of God* was to be constructed. Designed to be able to be transported, it was to be a reminder that God was with them always, dwelling in their midst and travelling with them throughout all their journeys. Housed within *the holiest of holies* inside the tabernacle would be *the ark of the covenant* – a pure, gold-covered wooden chest with an elaborate lid, ornamented with two golden cherubim,

called *the mercy seat*. Inside the ark would be placed the *two stone tablets of the ten commandments*.

Swathed in an impermanent, transitory wrapping of tapestry curtains covered in images of cherubim, the glory of God descended and *tabernacled* amongst them. A large cloud of light and mist settled overhead, signaling God's presence was there in their midst. They would know it was time to set out when the cloud lifted but until then, they waited and rested in the presence of the Lord.

God had moved into the neighbourhood.

Solomon Builds A Temple

The tabernacle was an itinerant dwelling place, as the people of Israel would be on the move, as it turns out, for 40 years. When they finally reached the end of their wilderness wanderings and settled in the promised land, it would be many more years before a permanent structure was built to welcome God's glory.

Under the reign of King Solomon the Wise, son of the great [King David](#), a glorious temple was constructed, some 480 years after the Great Exodus. Built with exquisite craftsmanship, using masterfully quarried stone blocks, and cedar and cyprus timbers from the great forests of Lebanon, it was a magnificent building dedicated to the God of Israel and intended as the place in which He would dwell with His people in a more permanent way.

Solomon's words at the dedication of the temple are beautifully moving to read:

"I have built this Temple to honor the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. And I have prepared a place there for the Ark, which contains the covenant that the LORD made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt. Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire

community of Israel. He lifted his hands toward heaven, and he prayed, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven above or on the earth below. You keep your covenant and show unfailing love to all who walk before you in wholehearted devotion. You have kept your promise to your servant David, my father. You made that promise with your own mouth, and with your own hands you have fulfilled it today. And now, O LORD, God of Israel, carry out the additional promise you made to your servant David, my father. For you said to him, 'If your descendants guard their behavior and faithfully follow me as you have done, one of them will always sit on the throne of Israel.' Now, O God of Israel, fulfill this promise to your servant David, my father. But will God really dwell on earth? Why, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!"
| 1 Kings 8:20-27, NLT

Solomon asks an important question. Will God really dwell on the earth, with us?

The answer is yes, but as humanity would come to understand, the living God desires to dwell not in temples made of wood and stone but in a living temple, in a structure softer and more pliable than stone, more ancient and beautiful than Solomon's temple or the wilderness tabernacle before that.

He longs to dwell *with us, in us*, utterly and completely.

The people of Israel, however, struggled with their unique and privileged identity. They would worship and serve God for a season and then, when things were going well, they would become complacent and selfish, turning aside to worship gods made of wood and stone, like the nations around them. They abandoned their covenant with God, over and over again.

They paid little heed to the warnings from prophets like Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, and Ezekiel about the impending doom that would come upon Jerusalem, should they remain feckless

and unfaithful.

Finally, Ezekiel is given a sobering vision of the end; of the moment that God's glory will leave the presence of His covenant people.

“Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the house, when the man went in, and a cloud filled the inner court. And the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the house, and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD. And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks. Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth before my eyes as they went out, with the wheels beside them. And they stood at the entrance of the east gate of the house of the LORD, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them. Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them. And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain that is on the east side of the city.” | Ezekiel 10:4-5, 18-19, 11:22-23

The God Who Dwells With Us

The nation of Israel had forgotten that God is not tethered to a building and His desire is not to dwell in a place, *but in a people.*

The final pages of the Old Testament come to a close with the prophetic words of Malachi, written around 460-430 BC. We find the people of Israel have now returned from nearly 130 years of exile and are back in the land of their ancestors. Yet the nation is vastly diminished. The temple has been restored

under the leadership of Nehemiah but it is a much smaller building than the previous, gloriously constructed temple of King Solomon's days. Despite Ezekiel's later vision which seemed to offer the promise of God's presence (Ezekiel 43:2), the glory of the Lord has not returned to this temple.

Yet there is still hope to be found. Isaiah speaks these comforting words to Israel around the time of their return from exile in Babylon:

"Comfort, comfort my people", says your God. "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." | Isaiah 40:1-5, ESV

John the Baptist deliberately echoes these words, over 700 years later, to announce the arrival of Jesus Christ (found in John 1:1-18).

The gospel of John (the Apostle, not Baptist) opens with an otherworldly prologue regarding Jesus and his origins; specifically, the identification of Jesus as the Word, who was with God and was God in the beginning, through whom all things have been brought into being, who is the light and life of humanity, and who *became flesh and dwelt among us*.

He concludes his origin account with a brief explanation as to his role. "I am", he simply says "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord".

As author and theologian, Eugene H Peterson puts it (and where

the title of this article is taken from), God had moved into the neighbourhood (Zechariah 2:10, John 1:14).

“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.” | John 1:14

God's Temple Is A Person

The glory of the Lord had returned to dwell among His people. But this time it was wrapped in a perishable, temporary covering [of flesh and bone](#). This was the true temple of the living God, the house of God in which there are many rooms, and which, though it would be destroyed, would be rebuilt again in just three days, an eternal life-giving spirit for all who would enter in (John 2:19-21, John 14:2).

A temple with just a single door, larger on the inside than on the outside, where worshippers as numerous as the stars of heaven would find sacred space.

A place where people could fully enter instead of only just drawing near. A place where the dividing wall would be broken down and peace would be found instead of hostility. A place where there once had stood a wall, but now there would be a way; many brought near by the blood of Christ himself.

A place where people and God could meet, at last, face to face and be reunited.

A place where there once had been two, but now there would be one; humanity reborn in this holiest of places with God dwelling utterly and completely in and with His people.

All the narratives of the Old Testament had been simply shadows and markers, one-dimensional illustrations intended to point the world to the real story God had been writing all

along, to the reality that God had intended from the beginning. God would dwell, as He has always intended, among people, *in people*; in a kingdom of priests ransomed to Him by the precious blood of the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

The glory of God dwelt among us, *tabernacled with us* in the person of Jesus Christ, God-With-Us, and it's in the truest of all temples – Jesus – that all things become possible.

He was all things; the presence of God dwelling fully with us, the glory of God in our midst, the way, the gate, the faithful shepherd, the life, the resurrection and victorious conqueror of death itself, our priest, our peace, the bright and morning star, and the true temple of the living God into whom we can fully enter, through the power of the blood of the cross (Colossians 1:20).

“Therefore, brethren, we have boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus.” | Hebrews 10:19, Weymouth

For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” | Ephesians 2:18-22, ESV

Worthy To Enter Into Glory

It's strange – the more I read the Bible, the more complex it seems, and yet the simpler it becomes. Sure, it's full of strange visions and obscure prophecies, lamentations and poetry, passages offering wisdom for life, and chapters

delving into deep theological insights about God and humanity.

Reading the vivid and apocalyptic language of Revelation, for example, stirs our blood while immersing ourselves in the trials and tribulations of faithful Job pulls at our hearts.

The Bible is a completely magnificent book, the traverse of which is the journey of a lifetime.

But there really is only one take-home point in all of it. God wants to *dwell with us*, all-in-all, utterly and completely, in glory.

It's what we were created for, yet humanity, left to ourselves, is unable to echo God's holiness, His perfection, His righteousness, and His supreme goodness. The nation of Israel, first specifically chosen to be God's people, showed the truth of this. Their faithless, inconsistent example and half-hearted desire for God are a reflection of all humanity.

We could never enter into God's temple, into the very presence of His glory without help. And Jesus was sent to be that help, to make a way, to break down the wall, to bring us back to God. Holy, innocent, unstained and exalted above the heavens, he is the guarantor of a superior covenant; both the presence, the pardon, and the promise of God.

Jesus makes everything possible.

All of scripture, in a million different ways, is simply telling us the truth of this; that in Jesus, God is saving, rescuing, atoning, justifying, ruling, and reconciling people for the glory of His name and in pursuit of His purpose.

And *that* is a story worth telling.

"Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of

God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” | Hebrews 10:19-25, ESV

The Pauline epistles are just brimming with thoughts on this subject, too numerous to comment on here. I'm conscious I've only just scratched the surface and hope I have managed to do it some small justice. If you're looking to soak a little longer in these thoughts, I'd recommend heading on over to the book of Hebrews and starting there with a read-through of chapters 1-10...

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