

Sunday, Sept. 9:

Message Title: "Join the Rebellion: The Real Star Wars" The Duality of Reality

Text & Memory Verse: "For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-13

Series Blurb: This Sunday we start our fall message series, pulling from the popular movie series *Star Wars*. Although these are not Christian films, we can see ways that the biblical message of the Gospel is illustrated in the narratives, characters, and plot lines of the blockbusters. Such memorable illustrations hopefully will help us apply the biblical truths to our lives so we can live as better Jesus-followers.

Message Blurb: This Sunday's message is "The Duality of Reality." The Star Wars "universe" the strong battle between good and evil is represented in The Force and The Dark Side. The reality for us in real life is that we, too, live in a strong reality. This Sunday we'll see how two key stars of the Bible (the "star" of Satan and the star of Bethlehem announcing Jesus' birth) show us the REAL "star wars." Jesus calls His followers to join the real-life "rebellion" and fight for good against evil!

Opening Song: *All I Have Is Christ* - Sanctify

Welcome: -Pastor David

Memory Verse:

"For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4

Worship Music Set: - Sanctify

The Way

Standing on the Promises

White Flag

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Offering: *Overcome the World* -Sanctify

Serve Moment: Echo: Archery -Andrew

Prayer Time: School Starting -Andrew

Message Bumper (30 seconds)

PP1#1: Join the Rebellion: The Real Star Wars

"For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4

Star Wars. It was the brain child of one brilliant, but emotional roller-coaster genius George Lucas. Since the first movie's release in 1977, it has shaped and cast our modern culture in ways we can't even describe.

PP1#2: *Fabricated image of Star Wars good guys on left facing the bad guys from the right*

Tell me, in Star Wars, who are the good guys? The Jedi. The Rebellion. Luke Skywalker. Who are the bad guys? The Evil Empire. Darth Vader (he even has his own music!). The Emperor! The main weapons? Light sabers. Blasters. The main power? The force! Finish the phrase, “May the force ... [be with you!].

“And also with you!” Sorry, my church reaction coming through!

That phrase “May the Force be with you!” is in the top ten movie quotes of all time. The number one quote? Here, our old timers have to step up. What’s the #1 movie quote of all time? Hint, it’s from *Gone with the Wind*.

“Frankly my dear, ... [I don’t give a dam!]” Careful, we’re in church! Kind of naughty!

PP1#3: *Montage of some of the most iconic Star Wars characters.*

Just some quick facts. When adjusted for inflation, the first-released *Star Wars* movie is the fourth highest-grossing film of all time, at nearly \$3 billion. By the way, what is the highest grossing film of all time, adjusted for inflation? Old-timers, again? Yes, *Gone with the Wind*. But Disney’s first *Star Wars* release, *The Force Awakens* comes in at #10, with over \$2 billion. All in all, *Star Wars* is the #2 movie franchise in the world. #1, any guesses? Marvel. How about merchandise? They make more money on merchandise than the movies, you know. *Star Wars* is #2, again behind Marvel, (which is also owned by Disney, by the way). How about all media, including animation and video games? Again *Star Wars* is #2. Guesses on #1? *Pokeman*!

Well, *Star Wars* is a giant among giants!

Movies, in today’s world, are giants in expressing *and shaping* of our culture. Studies claim that movies have a unique impact on shaping our culture, unlike anything else. And the reason is that movies are the one common, unifying storytelling medium of today. And those stories shape our thinking, our beliefs, our values, and our behaviors.

Going to the movies is not just entertainment. We are being shaped.

So, as Jesus-followers, disciples, we can be described as story tellers, too. We tell a story that is actually true, and that changes not only who we are, but it changes our futures.

PP1#4: Image of Jesus and cross light saber from <http://thechristianjedi.com/why-use-star-wars/>

And so, for our message series this fall, we Jesus-story-tellers are going to see how our story is being told, in perhaps indirect ways, in the culture, through the Star Wars stories, and find ways that we can use these stories to tell our real stories. We will see biblical truths displayed in *Star Wars*, and we can use these truths to speak to others in our culture, using language they can understand. If you can speak Star Wars, then you can use that to speak about your faith to other people today.

George Lucas originally pitched *Star Wars* as a three-movie, space operas. And, in one of the greatest media blunders of all time, Universal Studios, who originally bought the rights to the movies in 1971, ultimately rejected it in 1973. Fox picked it up, and, in 1977, it was a block buster beyond comprehension!

PP1#5: 1999: Episode I: *The Phantom Menace*

2002: Episode II: *Attack of the Clones*

2005: Episode III: *Revenge of the Sith*

1977: Episode IV: *A New Hope*

1980: Episode V: *The Empire Strikes Back*

1983: Episode VI: *Return of the Jedi*

2015: Episode VII: *The Force Awakens*

2017: Episode VIII: *The Last Jedi*

2019: Episode IX: ??

Now, I need to explain something to the non-Star Wars geeks. George Lucas created the first three original movies, with the main character being Luke Skywalker and his twin sister, Princess Leia. They join the resistance, who are fighting the Evil Empire, led by the Emperor and his muscle Darth Vader. Now, Lucas intended to make more movies, but after making the first three, he went through a nasty divorce, and sank into depression. It wasn't until 15 years later that he finally got his mojo back, and made three more movies. But these second three movies were set as prequel movies, or movies that were about what happened *before* the original three. This trilogy is about Luke and Leia Skywalker's father, Anakin Skywalker, who we know turned to the Dark Side and became Darth Vader.

Well, in 2012, Lucas, to the great dismay of Star Wars fans across the globe, sold the whole franchise to Disney. And Disney is now making three more movies, with a plot line that now follows *after* the first six. These current three are centered around Leia's son, Kylo Ren, Luke's nephew.

They are also making other side films about other characters in the Star Wars universe.

PP1#6: *Second image you send me, "Which side will you pick."*

But the success of main series, besides being set in the future, in a fantastic sci-fi world, is because it is about an average person, a nobody named Luke. It's his journey, and his struggle. But, as we are watching Luke, we see ourselves. He is showing us our story, our struggle, our desire for good, but the lure of evil. In fact, each of the three main characters, Anakin, Luke, and Kylo Ren, all struggle personally in the galactic struggle between good and evil, and we see ourselves in them.

Star Wars frames reality in a duality. It's a grand battle between good and evil. The Dark Side is led by it's highest ranked people, called siths, who lead the Evil Empire, with it's storm troopers and clones. The Force's highest ranked are Jedi Knights. They are joined by what is called The Rebellion, a collection of people who fight against the Empire. All of the galaxy is set in this reality of duality. And it's embodied by each person, who must struggle and choose if they are going to follow the Force or Dark Side, be in the Empire or the Resistance.

Let's take a look at a clip from the last movie of the original trilogy, where Luke Skywalker fights a light-saber battle against Darth Vader. Luke wins, but because he is filled with anger, the Evil Emperor tries to coax him to embrace the Dark Side. And Luke struggles. What will he do? Have a look.

Video Clip: "Luke Against Vader Part 2" (3 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyTk09EHEU>

Luke makes his stance for the side of good. And the Emperor now fights him.

PP2#1: *Image of the Star of Bethlehem on left, and the star of Lucifer on the right, subtitled, "The Real Star Wars!"*

The duality between good and evil we see in these movies is a great expression of the duality that is our reality of the real world. We Jesus-followers speak this language. We speak of good and evil, how these forces are at conflict in our world, and in each of us. We speak of the real star wars!

You see, eons ago, there was a star in heaven. His name was Lucifer. The Bible actually calls him a star! He was beautiful, and bright with light. But Lucifer chose himself as the center of his heart, rather than the goodness of God. And the Bible says, he attacked God and tried to dethrone Him. So God cast him out. Isaiah 14:12 puts it this way, “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!” Revelation 12 shows Lucifer as a dragon: “His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth...the great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him” (Revelation 12:3–9).

So now, on earth, we live in a battle zone. The defeated morning star, and his other stars, fight on earth against God and God’s people. The world was thrown into darkness, and despair.

But, God did not abandon the world! Another star appeared in the sky, on one quite night, right above Bethlehem. A star shown so brightly it marked the spot where the Savior of the World came down into enemy territory, and began His invasion. Two stars: the morning star of Lucifer, and the Bethlehem star of Jesus. This is the real star wars! There is a galactic battle, and we are in it!

PP2#2: The Reality of Duality

1. We live in a battle zone

“If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” -John 15:9

We name this reality to a culture that has tried to overlook this. The common trend is to claim that reality is neutral. We all live in a benign world, where most things are harmless. We are safe, but we just try to avoid the dangers. And because of this, our world cannot cope with what really happens. It can make no sense of the bad things that happen, the bad things people chose to do. We call bad people “crazy,” not in their right mind, people who are not able to think right. We fool ourselves believing that if people were just able to think properly, they will be good. And then we are so befuddled when we see rational people willingly choose to be selfish and bad.

Into this culture, we speak of the grand struggle between good and evil. It is the reality we all live in. It is the reality that is in each of us. We are made good, yes, but our hearts are tempted to follow selfishness, and anger, and hate. And to not follow evil takes a hard and defiant stance!

We either are slaves to good, to our good God, to our savior Jesus Christ, or we are slaves to evil, to our selfishness. When we claim a neutrality, it is, in reality, a veiled form of evil. We believe we can chose whatever we want. But that’s an excuse to make what we want, our choice. It’s a form of selfishness. Evil is an absorbing focus on self. Choose to follow your feelings, your hate, your anger, your desires, the Emperor says.

We are like the rebellion. The stronger forces of evil are everywhere. We live in danger.

When things go wrong, we get it. We don’t expect things to be benign, and harmless. We expect things to not go right. We have to make a willful choice to follow God, and to practice love. We die to ourselves daily. We put off the selfishness that rises within us. We choose to respond differently. It is not easy. Others don’t get it. We won’t be accepted. But we are part of the resistance.

PP2#3: The Reality of Duality

1. We live in a battle zone
2. We live not in fear, but in urgency

“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4

But, although we live in a battle zone, we do not live in fear. We are not afraid. Yes, life is full of scary things, and bad things fall against us. But we don't cower back or hide.

We have a power, a force, that is good, and more powerful than any evil we may encounter. We follow Jesus, who faced the full brunt of evil, at it's height, and won! He died on the cross to conquer sin and evil. He rose again to conquer death. Our Leader has already won the epic battle! Evil is still harsh and real, but it cannot win against us when we claim Jesus. Say our memory verse with me: “For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4

We live in a battle zone, but we are not afraid. Instead, the battle gives us urgency. We cannot sit idly by and let evil spread. We must fight! We must do our part. We have to tell others who are being hoarded into the darkness, and who live in despair and resignation. We have light to show them. We have to tell of the other Master, our Master, the One who gives life, not takes it, not just uses us.

I want you to see another clip, this from one of the new movies, from Disney. It's from the 7th movie, *The Force Awakens*. The good guys are on the run, and some trying to get out of the fight all together. They visit an old character named Maz. She's small, and seems to be harmless. But she snaps them back to reality, and tells them they must fight. She has seen evil down through the generations, and it has risen again. They must fight. It is urgent. Take a look.

Video Clip: *Luke, Finn and Ren talk with Maz. (0:30 minutes)*
Clip from the movie.

We must face them. Fight them.

PP3#1: Ephesians 6:10-13 (CEB)

10 Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and His powerful strength. 11 Put on God's armor so that you can make a stand against the tricks of the devil. 12 We aren't fighting against human enemies but against rulers, authorities, forces of cosmic darkness, and spiritual powers of evil in the heavens. 13 Therefore, pick up the full armor of God so that you can stand your ground on the evil day and after you have done everything possible to still stand. 14 So stand . . .

Turn to Ephesians 6. Here's the passage about putting on the full armor of God. But let's look for a minute just before that part. Paul is talking about why we need to put armor on. After all, he says, we're in a battle zone. We need not fear, but we must fight. Ephesians 6, starting in verse 10. “Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and His powerful strength. Put on God's armor so that you can make a stand against the tricks of the devil. We aren't fighting against human enemies but against rulers, authorities, forces of cosmic darkness, and spiritual powers of evil in the heavens. Therefore, pick up the full armor of God so that you can stand your ground on the evil day and after you have done everything possible to still stand. So stand”

Do you see that? “Put on God’s strength.” Why? “So you can stand against the evil one. We fight a spiritual fight, against cosmic darkness. All is not calm, and placid. But we stand our ground.

PP3#2: The Reality of Duality

1. We live in a battle zone
2. We live not in fear, but in urgency
3. We are God’s strong fighters

“Be strong! Be fearless! Don't be afraid and don't be scared by your enemies, because the LORD your God is the one who marches with you. He won't let you down, and He won't abandon you.” -Deuteronomy 31:6

We speak of the spiritual battle, because we need to be God’s strong fighters. Jesus does the work, we stand our ground on Jesus’ name. When we face the battle, whether inside of ourselves, or as it struggles within those around us, we are strong. We are fearless. We are not afraid. The Lord is our strength, and fights on our behalf. We stand our ground.

This means that we choose what is right, and good. This means that we can defiantly choose against what our willful, selfish nature wants. This means we choose to love, and care, to respond by doing good. This means that we can speak hope into the lives of those struggling around us. We cannot win in our own strength, but we have God’s power fighting through us. This is the hope we share. This is how we stand.

Our reality is duality. We feel it in the fight inside each of us. It is the fight we experience in our daily lives. It is the reality of the galaxy we live in. We must see our reality. We must name it. We must speak its truth to the culture around us. To those who are struggling from trying to live in denial or ignorance, or those living selfishly, we graciously speak of another way, the joy of living for Jesus. It is only when we name the reality of evil that we can share the reality of hope in Jesus.

PP3#3: The real star wars: Join the Rebellion!

There is an evil empire. It is trying to spread across our world. But there is a rebellion, whose leader is destined to win. There is a real star wars. And today, I call you to join the rebellion!

Amen.

Closing Song: *Build Your Kingdom Here* - Sanctify

Memory Verse:

“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4

Announcements:

St. Andrews Family Shelter Signup
Wednesdays start this week!

Benediction: -Pastor David