

Sunday, Sept. 16:

Memory Verse: "Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people.'" -Luke 5:10b

Message Title: Join the Rebellion: The Real Star Wars! "The Bigger Story"

Theme: We are part of a bigger story, we can't just ignore it. God is on a mission to push back the evil. We must join, and fight. Parallels: Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Jyn, Rey.

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:9-12

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:20 "So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ's representatives, "Be reconciled to God!"

Message Blurb: In the cosmic struggle between good and evil, you have a role. God has a purpose for you, to make a difference in the bigger plan. We cannot stand on the side and watch the world go by. When we follow Jesus, we join in His work in this world. This Sunday, we who join the "resistance" are commissioned to live into our life's purpose!

Opening Song: *Hymn Sing*

Welcome: -Pastor David

Summer! Heat!

Star Wars!

Lines up front...jumping into hyper space!

Battle - Boarder Battle! Promise to be done preaching by Noon.

Memory Verse:

"Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people.'" -Luke 5:10b

Worship Music Set: - Sanctify

All I Have Is Christ

Onward Christian Soldiers

No Longer Slaves

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Offering: *Overcome the World* -Sanctify

Grow Moment: Choosing Sides

Sign up for Grow Groups

Prayer Time: -David

Hurricane Florence...11 dead. North and South Carolina.

Lord's Prayer

Message Bumper (30 seconds)

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

The Bigger Story

“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

Superstar Harrison Ford was speaking this past week in San Francisco at a global science summit, saying how we are all part of something bigger, and how we need to do our part. He was talking about climate change, and how each person has a role.

PP1#2: Iconic image of Harrison brandishing a blaster.

Ford knows about being a part of something big...huge. He is one of the iconic characters of the wildly popular *Star Wars* series.

It was *Star Wars* that actually launched his acting career. At Universal Studios, George Lucas, who later created *Star Wars*, directed a film called *American Graffiti*. It starred famous actors like Richard Dreyfuss, Ron Howard and Paul Le Mat, but also an unknown actor named Harrison Ford.

Well, Universal Studios, in one of the greatest blunders of Hollywood history, rejected Lucas' new movie idea for *Star Wars*. So, Lucas moved over to 20th Century Fox, who picked it up. Ford was struggling, and had given up hope as an actor. Out of kindness, Lucas hired Ford to do some *carpentry* work on his home. He did a good job! So, when Lucas started directing *Star Wars*, he also had Ford come over to the studio to work on the sets, again as a carpenter. Then, by just happening to be in the right place at the right time—and personally knowing the director—Lucas gave Ford a chance to audition for the character of Han Solo. He beat out Curt Russel and Christopher Walken for the part!

PP1#3: Image of Harrison Ford as Han Solo, aside Chewbacca, piloting the Millennium Falcon.

So, Harrison Ford was launched into stardom playing the character of Han Solo. Solo and his furry friend Chewbacca, piloted the spaceship The Millennium Falcon through all the original three *Star Wars* movies, and in a recent one last year as well.

This success then enabled him to take the lead role in the *Indiana Jones* series, as well as *Blade Runner*, both which came shortly after the second *Star Wars* movie.

Yet Ford always felt that his Han Solo character was more popular to everyone else, than to himself. He thought the character was shallow, underdeveloped, and had clunky lines. Over the years, he's tried to distance himself from that role, but to no avail. *Star Wars* has been just too popular. He wanted Lucas to kill off Han Solo after the third movie, but Lucas said that A dead Solo wouldn't sell many action figures! Ford found himself part of something bigger, in which he had a role to play, literally!

PP1#4: Image of Harrison Ford with sign, “Han is dead. Yay!”

Well, when Disney bought the franchise, he finally convinced them to kill of the character in *The Force Awakens*. Even so, to perhaps a majority of people, Ford continues to be best known for his role as Han Solo. Whether he likes it or not, Ford is part of something much, much bigger!

PP1#5: *Image of Han Solo meeting with Obi Wan and Luke, in the bar, Star Wars III: New Hope.*

And that was a key component of his Han Solo character, actually. We meet him, and Chewbacca, when the young Luke Skywalker and his mentor Obi Wan need to get off their planet. Solo is a “for hire” pilot, and willing to take questionable freight from dubious sources, and ask no questions, all for a high premium. So, Obi Wan hires him to take them to the Rebellion, promising a hefty tip upon delivery.

As the plot twists, Obi Wan and Luke explain how the evil empire is spreading throughout the galaxy, bringing tyranny and oppression. Solo says he wants to stay out of it, and simply make piles of money playing to the highest bidder.

But then, Solo meets Luke’s sister, Princess Leia. He sees her and all of the resistance risking their lives. There is something bigger going on. They all beg Solo to join them. It is a good cause. They are fighting for good. So, as all the pilots gear up to lead a raid on the Death Star, with only the outside chance of a pin-pointed shot, Luke asks Han Solo to join them. What will he do? Take a look at this clip.

Video Clip: (Han’s Departure 1:12 minutes)

[Han chooses self-preservation rather than join the rebellion.]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HloaKhpp3Ho>

So, Han chooses self-preservation rather than join the rebellion. Luke tells him, “take a look around,” and see what everyone is doing. There’s something bigger going on! You can’t just ignore it, stay in the margins, just care about yourself!

Well, as the resistance pilots all head to the Death Star, they meet stiff defenses. The Death Star is just minutes away from destroying the resistance base. They’ve got to hit the sweet spot; it’s their only hope. But the fighters are being destroyed, and hope fades. Finally, Luke is their last pilot. As he comes in for his shot, suddenly Darth Vader comes on his tail. He doesn’t have a chance. Darth Vader get’s his shot ready, and...well, take a look at what happens.

Video Clip: “Luke Destroys the Death Star” (2:30 minutes, start at 45 seconds?)

[Han comes back to help rather than run away!]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuKqcfO31is>

Han changes his mind, and comes back into the fight! He saves Luke, and Luke saves the day. The Death Star is destroyed, because Han Solo chooses to become a part of the bigger plan.

PP2#1: Join the Resistance: The Real Star Wars

Being a Part of Something Bigger

This fall we’re looking at the *Star Wars* films to see Biblical truths that can help us live as better followers of Jesus. They can help us apply our faith to our lives. Last week we saw that the grand duality, the struggle between good and evil, was not just part of the fantasy universe, but that it is also true here in our actual reality. Evil was a called a star, that fell from heaven to the earth, in an angel named Lucifer, or Satan. His evil spreads across our world, invading every area. But there was another star, that appeared over Bethlehem, announcing the arrival of the Savior. This is the real star wars! And Jesus defeated the power of evil by dying on the cross and by rising again.

Even though evil's power is broken, it is still seeking to spread where it is invited. Our reality is a star wars, we live our daily lives in a battle zone. There is evil vying for your attention, for your heart, for your allegiance. But there is a more powerful God, calling you to join the resistance and to stand your ground against evil.

And Han Solo's character development, that we've spent so much time on today, shows us a reality that is true in our daily lives. There is something bigger going on. There is a bigger story unfolding, a plot on a universal scale, a galactic struggle. Evil seeks your allegiance, but so does Jesus. What is your role? What will you do?

PP2#2: 1 Peter 2:9-12 (CEB)

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God's own possession. You have become this people so that you may speak of the wonderful acts of the One who called you out of darkness into His amazing light. 10 Once you weren't a people, but now you are God's people. Once you hadn't received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Turn to 1 Peter 2. Peter here is talking to Jesus-followers. Listen to how he addresses them, listen for their identity. We'll pick it up in verse 9. "But you are a *chosen race*, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God's own possession. You have become this people so that you may speak of the wonderful acts of the one who called you out of darkness into His amazing light. Once you weren't a people, but now you are God's people. Once you hadn't received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

Do you hear the identity? You are chosen! You are on the side of holiness. You belong to God! Your allegiance is to God, and you have an identity. When you choose Jesus, you choose the resistance!

PP2#3: Being a Part of Something Bigger

1. Identity: Choosing Jesus Means Joining the Resistance

Once you were not a part of this family. Once you were not on God's side. Your identity was with evil, and you forfeited God's mercy. But all that has changed. You now have a new identity.

PP2#4: Being a Part of Something Bigger

1. Identity: Choosing Jesus Means Joining the Resistance
2. Purpose: Joining the Resistance Means Joining the Fight

Peter says, "You have become this people *so that* you may speak of the wonderful acts of the One who called you out of darkness into His amazing light." When you align yourself with Jesus, you join Him in doing the work He is doing. Being saved doesn't mean we just get a new identity. We also get a new purpose. We have work to do!

We share about how good the God is that we serve. We speak of the wonderful acts that He has done for us. We want this goodness to spread to others. We can't just keep it for ourselves! Our Jesus is a *going* Jesus. He doesn't just hang out in the resistance headquarters. He moves into enemy territory, He intersects with people who walk in darkness, He calls us to follow Him, out there!

Too often we Jesus followers treat our identity *as our purpose*. We have come to know Jesus, so we are done. All's good. That's all we have to do. We go about our lives, blessed beyond belief, and we desire to die in mercy. But that's our identity, not our purpose!

PP2#5: *Image for we, the church, following Jesus, out of our building and into the world.*

You see, our Jesus doesn't stay home! He's out in the streets of Forest Lake, He goes to where we work, where we shop, where we eat, where we play. And He sees people who are not with Him, and He seeks to win them over.

Our purpose *comes from* our identity. We belong to Jesus, and now we must follow Him, go with Him and make disciples. We cannot just mind our own business. We can not just do our own thing. It's not about us. The church is not a party hall. It's a life-saving station.

Han Solo was at resistance HQ. He was part of their group. Then, the alarm rang to go on the mission. But he packed to go somewhere else.

Listen, church, we need to live into our purpose. Enough of making this about us. When you go to work, you are a missionary. You can't just blend in, or not ruffle feathers. You have to live differently. Be the beacon of light! When others start badmouthing Shelly, you jump in with a different idea. When you go to the game to see your grandkid play, you can't just sit with your friends. You're on a mission. You go and sit with someone else. Introduce yourself. Ask which player they are there for. Talk about how they feel their kid is doing.

Then, next time you see them, ask them how their kid is doing. Perhaps tell them you'll pray for him. And the next time you run into them in the post office, ask again. This time, offer to pray with them before you take off.

When that annoying person in the store is there, blocking the apples that you want, and mumbles to himself rather than makes a quick decision, ask him a question. "You looking for apples? What kind are you wanting? What are you going to make? Are you cooking for others?" And the conversation begins. Your time doesn't belong to you. It belongs to the mission. Your deadline to get to the movie just got eclipsed by the mission. It is your job to shine light in the darkness. There's a bigger story.

Han Solo was packing up his reward while others were suiting up for battle. Too often we are Han. We let the mission go on without us.

We don't get involved. We focus on us. We have our reward.

But not getting involved lets evil spread. "All that is necessary for evil to spread is for good people to do nothing." We can't stay out of it. We can't let others do the work. Without Han, Luke would have been shot down. Without you, someone else goes wingless on the mission!

Someone else touched that person in the next cubicle a few days ago. You don't know it, but you're God's follow-up. That means not getting angry at customers when that person is watching. That means walking away from the group when they all start bashing on someone. That means looking them in the eye and smiling from time to time. That means chatting as you walk past. That means asking about their pictures. That means following up on the struggle they shared last time.

PP2#6: 1 Peter 2:9-12 (CEB)

11 Dear friends, since you are immigrants and strangers in the world, I urge that you avoid worldly desires that wage war against your lives. 12 Live honorably among the unbelievers. Today, they defame you, as if you were doing evil. But in the day when God visits to judge they will glorify Him, because they have observed your honorable deeds.

2 Peter 2, picking it up at verse 11. "Dear friends, since you are immigrants and strangers in the world, I urge that you avoid worldly desires that wage war against your lives. Live honorably among the unbelievers. Today, they defame you, as if you were doing evil. But in the day when God visits to judge they will glorify Him, because they have observed your honorable deeds."

We don't belong to the Evil Empire. Avoid doing things that way. There's a battle going on in our behaviors, and choices, too. Live in a way that others see that we belong to a different empire. Oh yes, as they see you, they will judge you, mock you, write you off as a nut. But, if you stick to your mission, you will point them to the light, and the truth. At some point—and this is what you are praying for—they will get so fed up with how they are living now, and they just may remember how you always had that joy and blessing that marked your life—your honorable deeds—that they will be tempted to give your way a try. You may never know it. But then again, it's not about us!

In *The Force Awakens*, this is the character of Finn. He's a stormtrooper, but gets fed up with the ways of the evil empire. At first, all he wants to do is run away. But as he spends time around the resistance, he notices they are different. He watches Rey, in particular. At first he cares just about her. But by the end of the movie, he joins the resistance, and cares about her cause.

PP2#7: Being a Part of Something Bigger

1. Identity: Choosing Jesus Means Joining the Resistance
2. Purpose: Joining the Resistance Means Joining the Fight
3. Witness: Joining the Fight Means Living Holy Lives

How you live is central to your witness. Others who come to know you, observe you, watch you. At first they ask themselves about you...“Why does he do that?” “What keeps him so happy?” “Why does he always improve the mood with those around him?”

Then they start asking others about you. “What do you know about her?” “Have you ever heard her badmouth someone?” “Have you noticed how she treats others?”

And some day, when the opportunity comes, they may even ask you about you. “What do you do when you're not at work?” “How do you handle your kids when they drive you crazy?” “Why do you not stay out late Saturday evening...what are you doing Sunday morning that's so important?”

Your witness is a combination of behavior and words. Usually, your behavior leads to the conversation. If not, trying to talk about your faith with someone can seem really pushy.

We live in a battle zone; around us there is the epic battle between good and evil. When we chose to follow Jesus, we join the resistance. We have a new identity. That means we join in the fight, we cannot just mind our own business, or try to simply avoid evil. We live differently, missionally. Our behaviors become our witness, and that can lead to conversations when we can share about our faith. Light shines through us when we do, and the darkness is pushed back.

PP2#8: United Methodist Baptism and Membership Vows

United Methodist Hymnal, page #34

Notice the language of how Jesus-followers fight the battle against evil.

Many of you have joined this church and become professing members. Do you remember the vows you took when you joined? It is customary to have people proclaim their faith in Jesus when they join this church. I want you to take your red hymnals in the pews, and turn to page number 34. Here are the vows that we United Methodists take when we join a church. Do you recall that these vows talk about the real star wars? Page 34.

Today, I want to invite you to proclaim these vows, perhaps for the first time, or for some of you, a second time. These vows are what mark our identity, purpose, and witness. Look them over first, because they are weighty. I'm not asking you to join this church today, but I do want to use these vows to proclaim our allegiance to Jesus and to join the rebellion.

So, I invite you to stand with me, and make this profession.

Pastor: *On behalf of the whole church, I ask you:*

*Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness,
Reject the evil powers of this world,
And repent of your sin?*

People: I do.

Pastor: *Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you*

*To resist evil, injustice, and oppression
In whatever forms they present themselves?*

People: I do.

Pastor: *Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior,*

*Put your whole trust in his grace,
And promise to serve him as your Lord,
In union with the church which Christ has opened
To people of all ages, nations, and races?*

People: I do.

Pastor: *According to the grace given to you,*

*Will you remain faithful members of Christ's holy church
And serve as Christ's representatives in the world?*

People: I will.

Welcome to the resistance! Don't sit down. There is so much work to do!

Amen!

Closing Song: *Hosanna* - Sanctify

Memory Verse:

“Jesus said to Simon, ‘Don’t be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people.’” -Luke 5:10b

Announcements:

Wednesdays start this week!

Benediction: -Pastor David

Prayers for Paul Sarver and John, and Nate.