



The Practice of Story: Suffering and the Possibilities of Redemption

Mindy Makant

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The grammar of Christian redemption cannot live solely in the future tense. Despite confidence about the effects of Jesus' resurrection in the present, Christians are tempted to depict salvation as a future accomplishment, rather than a present reality. No doubt this failing is well founded, for most Christians know all too well that the power of the past—particularly past suffering—shapes the present.

But as Mindy Makant argues in *The Practice of Story: Suffering and the Possibilities of Redemption*, such reserve may cede too much to suffering and grant too little to redemption. Makant admits the horrors of suffering: that suffering damages and destroys, that past suffering renders one unable to live in the present, and that profound suffering can make it altogether impossible to imagine a future.

Yet in the very midst of this impossibility, Makant shows how suffering, even extreme and profound suffering, does not have the final word. God does. The story of suffering is not the defining narrative. Redemption wields ultimate power to shape human identity. God has given the church gifts—specific ecclesial practices—necessary to bear witness to the story of God's redemptive activity in the world. These practices constitute the practices of story. They re-order the lives of Christians and make future redemption present despite the destructive power of the past.

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