



SHARING YOUR STORY

Bethel Worship Center

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Maybe you've heard the term witnessing before. You may have even heard the term evangelizing, or evangelism.

Even if you haven't you may still have an idea of what we're talking about here. You may say, oh I know exactly what that is. It's when you shove your beliefs down my throat, and look at me as if to condemn me when I don't accept what you're saying.

Sadly, there may be some truth to that statement for some Christians. But that's not what it's meant to be.

It's also not meant to be seen as a competition, where we keep score of how many salvations we've gotten. "Let's mark another notch in the belt. Won that one to Christ, let's move on down the hit list."

There is better reason we should want to share the story of Jesus Christ with those who haven't accepted.

The Bible uses three words to describe those who are without Christ. Those three words are lost, blind and dead. Every person is more than just the title they have in life; they are a soul.

Luke 19:10 we see where Jesus says that He has come to seek and save that which is lost. Jesus uses several parables, or stories, to illustrate the importance of finding what was lost. Those stories are meant to illustrate the importance finding those who are without Christ.

5 times in Matthew 23 the Pharisees are referred to as blind, and blind guides, because they aren't leading people to Christ, the only way to a relationship with the Father. John 9:39 (The Message translation) reads, "Jesus then said, "I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."

John 5:24-25, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."

Ephesians 2:4, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved." – Colossians 2:4 says it similarly.

Luke 15:24 in the story of the prodigal son, Jesus says that the Father proclaims, “For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

Our hearts as followers of Christ should break for the individual who is without Christ, because the foundation of our faith, the very life source of God, speaks to us and says they are lost, blind and dead.

The reason we should share the story of Christ and what He’s done in our life is not for selfish reasons, to feel as if we’ve accomplished something, or we’ve made some big difference in the world. No the reason we should share the story of Christ is because we are burdened and we are passionate about what’s taken place in our life, what a man was willing to do for us, and an entire world.

Read 1 John 5:9-12

Here is a simple understanding that we need to come to: We are not anyone’s Savior, Jesus is. It’s not up to us to work the gospel but to just let the gospel work.

Read Matthew 9:9-10

After Matthew met Jesus, some would say he threw a party. That may be the case, but let's look at it a little bit differently. Matthew wanted his peers to meet the man who had just radically made a difference and had impacted his life. His heart immediately became burdened and impassioned for his friends.

John 1:35-51 tells the account of several of Jesus' disciples first encounter with Him.

In Verses 40-42 we see that Andrew is the first to go up and meet Jesus. He immediately sees that there is something about this man that is powerful. He goes to his brother, Simon, and brings him over to meet Jesus. Jesus sees Simon, not for who he is, but who is to become, and calls him by Peter.

Something else that stands out in this is that Andrew brought Peter to meet Jesus. Only one other place in Scripture do we read of Andrew bringing someone to meet Jesus, and that's in John 6, when he brought a boy that had 2 loaves of bread and 5 fish. Andrew brought two

individuals to Christ. That's all. At least that's all we know about.

Here's the thing though. The two individuals that Andrew brought, went on to feed multitudes. Peter would see thousands come to know Christ, 3000 in his first message alone. The boy with the fish and loaves, would see his gift used to feed over 5000 people in the hands of Christ. You never know the importance of that one individual you bring to Christ may have for the kingdom of God.

In Verses 45-49 of John 1 we see a very interesting conversation between Philip and Nathanael, a conversation that could sound very similar to one you've had before with someone.

Philip got Nathanael to meet Jesus with a simple "Come and See." This is the whole point. We don't have to do anything. Jesus does everything. He will provide the necessary revelation, and the change that needs to take place in a person's life.

Nathanael was still skeptical at first appearance of Jesus, but the more he was around him, the

more he explored him, the more he couldn't deny him. All he had to do was come and see.

In Matthew 4:19 Jesus said to follow him and he would make you fisher's of men.

Now this isn't to equate a lost soul with a fish. It isn't to say that we lure people and drag them in to the kingdom of God, celebrating our trophies for the Kingdom.

What Jesus was pointing out, aside the fact that the guys he was talking to were fishermen, was that there are people wandering around in the sea of humanity to who are looking for something to satisfy the cravings of their soul. When they are pointed to Jesus as that one who can do that, then everybody is victorious and there is much more fulfillment of a soul being found, coming to life and receiving sight, than anything else.

Sometimes that takes patience, as in fishing. It may not be instantaneous. It cannot be forced, it has to be received by the other person.

Read Luke 24:13-35

In this passage two gentlemen were walking on a seven mile walk to Emmaus from Jerusalem, and discussing what had just happened with Jesus of Nazareth.

As they were walking and talking, Jesus joins them, but they were unaware that it was Jesus. As he continued to walk with them and talk with them, they were captivated by what he was saying. They didn't want him to leave them, and eventually realized that they were actually talking to Jesus.

We often think a quick conversation with a person is all they need to change their life, but sometimes it takes a seven mile walk instead of a seven second talk before someone realizes the beauty of Jesus.

Christians are very guilty of favoring monologues more than dialogues.

Many times we come off as if we like to hear ourselves talk more than we like to listen to what others have to say, what others are going through, and what they've been through.

We ought to take James word's into consideration sometimes when we are talking with people about our faith, "be quick to listen and slow to speak."

Proverbs 18:2 says, "A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions." You say these aren't opinions. To those that don't believe, they are.

John Maxwell has said, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

If our mentality is only, "I gotta get them to say the prayer," then we're missing it. It's not about you. Reveal Jesus Christ in your life, then trust that Jesus will do what He does. Jesus saves, not you. Let the Gospel work.

In Matthew 16: 13-17 we see Jesus had a conversation with His disciples about how people were identifying Him. He asked them who do you say I am. Peter's answer, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus' reply, "This was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in Heaven."

You share your life in Jesus, then you trust God to bring the revelation.

We can't be afraid of failing to "get through", rejection, being scrutinized, or not having all the answers.

What we fear controls us. This is why the Bible teaches us to fear God.

If you're afraid of not having all the answers, it's ok. We don't. Sometimes the best answer is "I don't know, but here's what I do know." In the gospel of John we see a blind man's answer to who healed him. His response, "I don't know. What I do know, is I was blind and now I see."

If you're afraid of being scrutinized, Jesus tells us that we will be. To share in his glory we must share in his suffering. Please understand though your scrutiny in America is not near as brutal as the scrutiny that some of your brothers and sisters in Christ face in countries across this world. Our pride makes our scrutiny bigger than what it really is.

If you're afraid of "failing" or being rejected?
You never fail when you share your life in

Jesus. Remember it has to be received it cannot be forced.

2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

It may have only been for you to plant. Maybe you were just to water. We have to remember we don't make anything sprout or grow.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:4-9

If God is prompting you to share Christ with someone, it's very likely that he has been preparing their heart to receive it. We just need to be obedient and then trust God.

Charles Spurgeon made this statement, “The Holy Spirit will move them by first moving you.”

How moved are you for those you work with, those you live around, those you participate with in the community?

As a follower of Christ, if we believe this as the word of God, and we believe what it says, then

we must be burdened and realize that eternity is real and our story could be the story someone needs to hear.

So here's what you do. Cultivate your story. A story has three main parts:

- Your life before becoming a Christian

- How you became a Christian
- What God has done or is doing in your life now.

Take a moment and think through those three areas. You may even want to take out a sheet of paper or open up a blank document on the computer and write out your story.

The next step is to begin sharing that story with others. Maybe the easiest way to start this conversation is by inviting someone to church. You don't even have to lead with your story, just say, "Hey, I've been going to church and I'd love to have you join me. Come and see!" That question and their visit could open the door to a great conversation.

Be bold and share your story!

