

“I Have a Story to Share”

STORY OF MY LIFE Sermon Series | Week Two | Newbreak Church

March 14th, 2021

This week is about our story. We all have a story to share. And that is important to know! So what do we do with our God story? How do I connect the dots in my life to craft my God story?

For more insights relating to this week’s sermon, see <https://newbreak.church/blog/>. We post a new blog every Sunday which coincides with the sermon passage or theme from that day.

Start Here

- What is something new that God is doing in your life right now?
- Is there a difference between a “testimony” and a God story? In what ways are they alike? In what ways are they different?

Going Deeper Into the Message

Point 1 – Become an eyewitness to the God stories taking place in my life.

2 Corinthians 3:3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Corinthians 3:3, NIV)

As you read through these verses keep these questions in mind:

- What value does this chapter add to what we understand about God?
- What are some of the things that stand out to you when you read the passage?

In context, Paul’s point is that the Corinthians are the validation and confirmation of his gospel message. Even when he is not present, they are the demonstration and proof of God’s saving power to those around them!

But the significance of the passage is broader. This idea of having eye-witnesses (“living letters”) to the gospel’s activity in our world has profound implications (see

Additional Insight below). This provokes some discussion. Think about how God has chosen to reveal Himself to us. He has acted decisively in and throughout history (e.g. choosing Abraham to be the father of many generations, the Exodus deliverance, and God becoming incarnate in the person of Jesus). But His work is not simply a memoir of the past. He is active today in our world. How else could Paul say to the Corinthians that they are “a letter from Christ”?

As it turns out, ***you and I are the first Bible many people will ever read.***

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- William Toms said “Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some person ever reads.” Have you ever considered yourself as a Bible to others? Does that inspire you? Concern you? Why?
- Think about what might hold you back from sharing your God Story with others. How can you work through these hurdles?

—ADDITIONAL INSIGHT—

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

(2 Corinthians 3:2-3, NIV)

When Paul says that we are a letter “*known and read by everyone*” (2 Cor 3:2) he means that we are walking gospel letters to the world around us.

This doesn’t mean we have to be perfect. People aren’t looking for our perfection. They’re looking for relatability and authenticity. *We don’t have to pretend to be the hero, that’s Jesus’s role!* It is the difference between trying to be impressive and showing how impressive Jesus is in His work in our lives.

The point is that the message of the Bible is sufficient. We are not in any way adding to the Bible. However, we become the embodiment of the story of Scripture to those around us. In that way, we are “living letters,” ink that spills off the page of Scripture and resonates into our very lives.

We not only speak the message; our life is a living message of the gospel in action.

So if our lives are living messages of the work of the gospel, then God stories are happening all the time around us! We have to realize that our "testimony" is not *only* about the time we first encountered Jesus. Of course, that is a remarkable moment, but what happened after? What happened last year? What happened *today*? All of this contributes toward our testimony, which is what our God story consists of. Imagine asking how a friend's marriage is going and they respond by telling you how they met and about their wedding day. That is great, but you want to know how they are doing right *now*. How are they growing in their love? How are they navigating the challenges that are before them? There is so much more to a relationship than its genesis; there is also the journey.

Our God story is not only about how we came to know Jesus, but how our life with Him looks every day since.

Going back to where we started, we recall that we are "living letters" of the gospel in action. The story God creates in and through us will be the first kind of letter about Christ many people will read. So, instead of reading about God's mercy in Scripture, they might "read" about it by watching how God has been merciful to you; or how you have been merciful toward others. We get to be honest in both times we get it right, and times we get it wrong. It is all helpful to others we share our faith with. The only perfect person in our story is the Lord who walks with us, despite our mistakes and shortcomings.

Jesus is the hero, not us.

And that is okay! Let's be authentic with the whole journey. The whole story is still our God story and our God story is still being written. The real question is, are we becoming more aware of the stories God is writing in our lives?

Point 2 – Be a beacon of hope to those around me.

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to **give the reason for the hope that you have**. But do this with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15-16a, NIV)

As you read through these verses keep these questions in mind:

- What value does this chapter add to what we understand about God?

- What are some of the things that stand out to you when you read the passage?

If you have given your life to Jesus, then you have hope. It's a fact. People are hungry for hope; And we get to be the storytellers of this hope, especially because we get to speak from experience.

We get to be people who are always curating and crafting stories of hope to give to people to meet them where they are at. And this doesn't mean every component of hope we talk about is dramatic and life-altering. Sometimes people just want to hear how Jesus makes a difference in their ordinary Tuesday afternoon. Don't we all? And that is why small things are not so small when most of our lives are the little moments of everyday life.

And notice how Peter starts the verse in 3:16. If hope is like the *meal* we serve to people, then the *seasoning* of it is "gentleness and respect." Although everyone wants to hear hope, gentleness and respect make hope easier to receive.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- How would you define "hope"? What is the difference between hope and wishful thinking? Why is this distinction important? (See the Word Study below for more on this word!)
- As we discussed: ***Sometimes people just want to hear how Jesus makes a difference in their ordinary Tuesday afternoon.*** What are some ways walking with God has impacted your everyday life? How can this be a source of encouragement to someone?
- What does it look like to share our hope "with gentleness and respect"? What are good examples of this? What are bad examples?

—WORD STUDY ACTIVITY—

"Hope" Greek: ἐλπίς, *elpis* (noun) 53x in the New Testament

Biblically speaking, hope is more than wishful thinking. We can not equate hope in Christ to hoping your favorite sports team wins the championship. After all, placing your hope in the promises of God is certain since God is the one who sovereignly holds the future. In fact, the hope of our resurrection is as secure as the resurrection of Christ Himself. Perhaps that is why 1 Peter 1:3 speaks of the resurrection of Jesus as the very foundation as to why we have a “living hope” as opposed to a dead or dormant hope.

In Peter’s first letter, hope stands at the center of Christian existence. Considering the use of the noun and verbal form of the word, “hope” occurs in the following verses in 1 Peter: 1 Peter 1:3, 13, 21; 3:5, 3:15.

As an activity as a group or as an individual read through those passages. Highlight, circle, or underline the noun or verbal form of “hope.” And then, discuss how our concept of hope is given more color based on the ways in which Peter leads us to think about our hope.

—SUMMARY—

Sharing our God story involves opening our eyes to the ways in which God is writing our story every single week. He is always giving us opportunities to connect the dots and see how He is engaging and interacting with us toward a transformative journey of faith.

So we are challenged to take to heart how to:

- 1) Become an eyewitness to the God stories taking place in my life.
- 2) Be a beacon of hope to those around me.

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

1. How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?
2. What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?
3. BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?