



TELL US YOUR STORY

Stories Reveal Your Heart's Longing for God

Summary: A Man embraces his story as a reflection of his heart's longing for God.

Bible Verses: John 5:39; Acts 17:23; Ecclesiastes 3:15; Esther 2:15; Esther 4:14; Esther 6:12; Esther 7:3; Romans 6:1,2

Video Clip: YouTube – "Schindler's List : what is power"

Music: "I Love To Tell the Story" by Alan Jackson

Resources: *TO BE TOLD – Know Your Story, Shape Your Future* by Dan Allender and *THE STORIES WE TELL – How TV and Movies Long For and Echo the Truth* by Mike Cosper

March 31, 2016

"If I asked you to tell me your story, what would you say? God is the author of your life story. God is engaged in an ongoing creative work in your life. You are a story—a well-written, intentional story that is authored by the greatest Writer of all time, and even before time and after time. You are a living story that is meant to reveal and create glory. What makes your life a glorious bestseller is that the plot reveals not a mere moral or lesson but the very person and being of God." - Dan Allender, PhD, in *TO BE TOLD – Know Your Story – Share your Future*

You were made in the image of a Storytelling God!

1. Telling your story helps you to know _____—to understand yourself and your place in the world. Stories are ways for the _____ to poke at the human condition, testing its borders and depths, looking for ways to understand the "_____ " behind the "_____ " of your life.
2. Stories give you _____. They stir your imaginations and help you to experience love, betrayal, hatred, and compassion that might be otherwise foreign. They prepare you for experience like love, or help you process things like sorrow and suffering. Story becomes the way to understand your life, your relationships, your past and your future. Your past is not only a set of facts. It's also a story for you to tell.
3. The _____ is a world's worth of heroes, villains, comedies, tragedies, twists of fate, and surprise endings. One grand narrative becomes "redemptive history" or the "old, old story!" Jesus affirmed this one grand narrative in a moment of frustration (John 5:39). Paul affirmed the same listening to pantheistic Romans (Acts 17:23).
4. The _____ are all part of the story God is telling. We tell stories because we are broken creatures hungering for redemption, and our storytelling is a glimmer of hope (Eccl. 3:15). After dying and rising again, Jesus commissioned _____ to carry on His mission. The raw material of storytelling is the stuff of ordinary, everyday life: relationships, conflicts, love, loss, and suffering. Quote from Mike Cosper.
5. The stories we tell must ring with _____. The overarching story of redemptive history—the old, old story—can be told through the framework of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.

The Story of the Gospel > An Invitation of WELCOME!

1. The Gospel of the _____ = The kingdom of God invites you into something not entirely new, but in large part to the restoration of something old—the world as it was meant to be. Jesus came and announced that the kingdom of God is here! A message that shocked and confused his followers, many of whom believed that He intended to overthrow the Roman government. But instead, He was announcing a restoration of a different kind of order and a different kind of King. God was reclaiming His world, His creation—all creation belongs to the property of the Creator!
2. The Gospel of the _____ = Though we can see God's good gifts all around us, we must be prepared to encounter the brokenness and twistedness that abounds in our stories. Stories of beauty and grace might also contain themes that are exploitative and dehumanizing with violence, greed, and sexuality. The world is fallen, and our creativity is often enlisted in ways that contribute to that falseness, i.e. a pornographic scene in a movie. The cross reminds us that falseness in the culture around us is costly. Quote by Mike Cosper. See Esther 2:15; 4:14; 6:12; 7:3.
3. The Gospel of _____ = The Gospel tells us that God saves us by grace. However, the last thing our knowledge of our security in Christ should do, though, is call us to some kind of indiscriminate license (Romans 6:1,2). Grace shapes us by two important encounters:
 - a. _____ > Nothing will ever harm you eternally!
 - b. _____ > Motivating you to better things, better standards, better ways of thinking about whatever you encounter.

Note: Where the law motivates with the threat of punishment, grace motivates with the promise of joy. You can NOW step into the world with a sense of invitation. Grace calls you to a life of a kind of thoughtful, mature engagement.

Note: Thoughtful engagement requires two key ingredients:

1. "How far?" > _____ = your "inner voice" that shapes your life.
2. "How much" > _____ requires two conditions: Commitment to honesty and friends who are willing to confront you.

Cultivating a sensitivity to your conscience will lead you away from much trouble, and community will be there to guard you from blind spots and self-deception.

Tell Us Your Story: Guideline #7 > Men's Coaching invites you into experiencing the freedom you were designed for ... all that we do is an intentional approach to you moving into a greater sense of freedom.

1. Freedom is the ability to love, to say "Yes" and "No", to express openly and honestly, and to be aware of self and others.
2. Jesus came to set men free (Galatians 5:1). God makes us spiritually alive by giving us a new heart. This heart desires to love God. It sees Jesus Christ as beautiful and desires to love Him as the Lord and Savior of our life. By faith, we give our life to Jesus and receive His forgiveness and freedom from failure, shame, and guilt. Not only this, but we are now free to do the very thing we were created to do — to honor and enjoy God forever. And this joy in God is from our heart — our new heart given to us by God.
3. This is true freedom. This is grace.

ACTION: Journal This!

1. What is broken in you? What do you wish was different?
2. What is your greatest failure as a Man, a Husband, a Father?
3. Where do you find the acceptance you need for the journey ahead?

Bible Verses

John 5:39-40

³⁹⁻⁴⁰ “You have your heads in your Bibles constantly because you think you’ll find eternal life there. But you miss the forest for the trees. These Scriptures are all about *me*! And here I am, standing right before you, and you aren’t willing to receive from me the life you say you want.

Acts 17:22-23

²²⁻²³ So Paul took his stand in the open space at the Areopagus and laid it out for them. “It is plain to see that you Athenians take your religion seriously. When I arrived here the other day, I was fascinated with all the shrines I came across. And then I found one inscribed, TO THE GOD NOBODY KNOWS. I’m here to introduce you to this God so you can worship intelligently, know who you’re dealing with.

Ecclesiastes 3:15

¹⁵ Whatever was, is. Whatever will be, is. That’s how it always is with God.

Esther 2:15

¹⁵ When it was Esther’s turn to go to the king (Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had adopted her as his daughter), she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king’s eunuch in charge of the harem, had recommended. Esther, just as she was, won the admiration of everyone who saw her.

Esther 4:12-14

¹²⁻¹⁴ When Hathach told Mordecai what Esther had said, Mordecai sent her this message: “Don’t think that just because you live in the king’s house you’re the one Jew who will get out of this alive. If you persist in staying silent at a time like this, help and deliverance will arrive for the Jews from someplace else; but you and your family will be wiped out. Who knows? Maybe you were made queen for just such a time as this.”

Esther 6:12-13

¹²⁻¹³ Then Mordecai returned to the King’s Gate, but Haman fled to his house, thoroughly mortified, hiding his face. When Haman had finished telling his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his knowledgeable friends who were there and his wife Zeresh said, “If this Mordecai is in fact a Jew, your bad luck has only begun. You don’t stand a chance against him—you’re as good as ruined.”

Esther 7:3

³ Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor in your eyes, O King, and if it please the king, give me my life, and give my people their lives.

Romans 6:1-2

¹⁻³ So what do we do? Keep on sinning so God can keep on forgiving? I should hope not! If we’ve left the country where sin is sovereign, how can we still live in our old house there? Or didn’t you realize we packed up and left there for good? That is what happened in baptism. When we went under the water, we left the old country of sin behind; when we came up out of the water, we entered into the new country of grace—a new life in a new land!

Quotes

“The Gospel is an announcement—it is good news—that God has WELCOMED us back into His kingdom through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son, not because we earned it or deserved it, but by means of His glorious grace. That announcement, properly understood, provides guidance for living and being in the world.” – Mike Cosper in *The Stories We Tell*.

“The Gospel also tells us that the world is a fallen place (the Gospel of the Cross), and the stories we tell are no exception to that rule. Enmeshed with the good is the bad. If we tell stories (as many argue) to know who we are, then our stories reveal that we are indeed creatures of glory and depravity. Our world desperately needs a Savior willing to sacrifice everything for us.” – Mike Cosper in *The Stories We Tell*.

I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY

Written by Katherine Hankey, composed by William G. Fischer, and performed by Alan Jackson

I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and his glory,
Of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story,
Because I know 'tis true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do.

[Refrain:]

I love to tell the story,
'twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story,
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'twill be the old, old story
That I have loved so long.

[Refrain]

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What's your story?

RECEIVING YOUR STORY

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The Story of the Gospel > An Invitation of WELCOME! – Continued.

3. The Gospel of **Grace** = The Gospel tells us that God saves us by grace. However, the last thing our knowledge of our security in Christ should do, though, is call us to some kind of indiscriminate license (Romans 6:1,2). Grace shapes us by two important encounters:
 1. **SAFETY** > Nothing will ever harm you eternally!
 2. **MOTIVE** > Motivating you to better things, better standards, better ways of thinking about whatever you encounter.

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