

The Power of Story

Dream Big, Think Small—part 3

January 20, 2019

DAY 1: What does a “witness” do?

1. If you’ve ever served on a jury, you learn a lot about the judicial process. There are very strict rules for the witness. He or she is not allowed to give “hearsay” testimony. You are allowed to repeat what someone said to you, but it is only admissible in court if the person is present.

2. You can relax as a witness of the court. All you are responsible to testify to is what you saw and what you know. You do not need to be a legal expert.

3. Jesus tells us we are also to be witnesses, but to Him. You do not need to be a theologian, a seminary graduate, a professional minister, a bible expert, or a Christian for a long time. We were called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

4. Jesus gave this command to His eleven disciples. In that group of men came from varied backgrounds. Included in that group included a handful of fishermen, a tax collector, and a political zealot.

5. None of the men had professional religious training.

6. When Jesus gave this command to this young band of Christians, He expected that they could do this command. I’d like to highlight three reasons for Jesus’ confidence in His followers to witness to Him:

a. A witness only needs to be able to say what He saw or experienced. Every Christian knows what Jesus has done for him.

b. Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will give us power to witness!

c. Jesus never gave a command that He didn’t expect that we could do.

7. What we witness to, is the most important thing anyone can know!

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 2: You have a “Past Story”

1. Let’s unpack your testimony.
2. Every Christian has three stories of being a Christian:
 - a. Your life before you became a Christian. This is your PAST Story.
 - b. How you became a Christian. This is your CONVERSION Story.
 - c. Your life since you became a Christian. This is your PRESENT Story
3. Today, we’ll look at your “past story,” your life before you became a Christian.
4. What were the factors in your life that helped bring you to Christ? Below is a list of common factors. Jot down your thoughts that are pertinent to any of the following:
 - * Life situation.
 - * Guilt/Forgiveness.
 - * Needed a new start.
 - * Pain.
 - * Need for peace.
 - * Need for joy.
 - * Emptiness.
 - * Purpose.
 - * Failing at something.
 - * Something missing.
 - * You saw something in others you didn’t have.
 - * Other: _____
 - * Other: _____
5. Why is your past story important to witnessing? People all around you deal with very similar things as are on that list, but we pretend we’ve “got it all together.”
6. When you admit that you dealt with one of these things, some people’s hearts begin to soften, or they can suddenly identify what it is they are searching for.
7. It is often your past story that catches the attention of a lost friend.
8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 3: You have a “Conversion Story”

1. It is important to testify as to **how** you became a Christian. This is your “conversion story”
2. Let’s start with the gospel in its simplest way, and then become more specific.

Mark 1:15 "... **Repent** and **believe** the **good news!**"

3. “**Repent**” is a Greek word that means a change of mind or a change of direction.

- a. “I once thought sin was good; now I believe sin is bad.

I once thought God was immaterial. Now I believe I need Him.”

- b. “I once did not believe I was a sinner. Now, I know I am.”

Once, I didn’t believe I needed to be saved. Now I am trusting God to save me.”

4. “Believe **the good news.**”

- a. The “good news” is that:

- (1) Jesus died for my sin!

- (2) Jesus paid for my sin!

- (3) Jesus can save me from hell.

- (4) Jesus’ death means I have entry into heaven.

1 Peter 3:18 (RSV) For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit;

Romans 6:22-23 (RSV) But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. “**Believe** the good news.” The gospel is something that is given. It is not earned.

Titus 3:4 (RSV) ...but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit,

Ephesians 2:8 (RSV) For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God -- ⁹ not because of works, lest any man should boast.

6. In the space below, write down your conversion story as simply as you can.

DAY 4: You have a “Present Story”

1. Your present story includes the ways Jesus is making a difference in your life since the time you were saved by Him.

2. Next to the items below, jot down how you have seen Jesus affecting these areas:

* Learning to love like Him -

* Life situation -

* Guilt/Forgiveness -

* Needed a new start -

* Pain -

* Need for peace -

* Need for joy -

* Emptiness -

* Purpose -

* Failing at something -

* Something missing -

* You saw something in others you didn't have -

* Other: _____

* Other: _____

3. This part of your story is the “satisfied customer” part of your story.

4. When you give your testimony to one of your friends, you rarely give your whole story.

5. Instead, as friend-to-friend, you may share ONE of these items at a time.

6. Sharing your faith is like eating potato chips. You rarely eat a whole bag of potato chips in one sitting. But you may have a few with your hamburger when you're out to eat.

7. The alert witness will look for opportunities to share one “potato chip,” either from your past story, your conversion story or your present story.

8. In the space below, jot down the top three things you've seen Jesus do in your life since your conversion:

DAY 5: The example of the most unlikely of witnesses!

1. I often feel fearful when I think about witnessing. Maybe I'm not qualified, maybe I don't know enough, and maybe I won't be able to answer their questions. When I think about these things, I become paralyzed, and witnessing is stopped in its tracks!

2. This is Satan's method of derailing us.

3. What is the lowest common denominator in being a witness? We'll look at the newest convert, with the most dysfunctional past, and the worst possible present situation. It was THAT man that Jesus called to be a witness!

4. In Mark 5, Jesus Christ met a man who was filled with demons. He was what we'd call a madman. The townspeople had given up on him. They had removed him to the hillsides, and chained him because he was uncontrollable.

5. Jesus cast the demons out of this man. The man came to faith in Christ. He had been a Christian for about 5 minutes when the following interchange occurred:

Mark 5:15 When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man--and told about the pigs as well.

¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him.

¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

6. What strikes you about the man once possessed by demons?

7. What strikes you about Jesus' attitude toward the man?

8. What did Jesus naturally expect the man would do when he went home?

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?