



A Heart Story

Text: Romans 3-10

Care & Bridging Pastor Dan Slagle

1. Pastor Ken kicked off our Shareable series last week with the “why” of sharing our faith. Before we move onto the “how”, let’s review the “why”. How would you summarize the urgency, necessity, and the motivation for sharing our faith with those who do not yet know Jesus?
2. If and when you have attempted to share your faith in the past, what models, techniques, or strategies have you found helpful?
3. Dan was able to identify a story from his life that provided a helpful analogy for the gospel message. Identify a story from your life that you could use in the same manner. Fill in the chart below by reading the Scriptures of the Romans Road which teach the four fundamental truths of the gospel message and how one can receive salvation, summarizing each truth in your own words, and then writing out the four parts of your story which correspond to those truths. Then spend time sharing your example with your group.

Romans Road Scripture	Foundational Truth	Your Story
Romans 3:23		
Romans 6:23		
Romans 5:7-8		
Romans 10:9-10		

Challenge: Your most important and most powerful story is your Christ story. One way to prepare and share your story is to answer three simple questions: 1) What was my life like before I knew Jesus? 2) How did I come to know Jesus? 3) How is my life different today? Craft a simple story around these three questions so that you can be prepared at any time tell someone why you are a Christ follower. It doesn’t have to be long and involved, overly dramatic, or theologically sophisticated. It just needs to be honest and it needs to be your story. After you have written out your story, find a time to practice by sharing with your spouse or a trusted brother or sister in Christ this week.

Prayer: Father, we have life changing news resting at the cusp of our breath and because of what? Fear? Lord, cast out the fear and let the Holy Spirit reign in our hearts to share the story of Jesus. Give us a boldness to proclaim that this isn’t some distant folk’s tale but a true, living and breathing heart change narrative where we were once dead and made alive through Christ Jesus. Father, we pray for divine appointments, that you would intersect us with the lives of others who desperately need to know Jesus, that our story through Christ’s sacrifice would resonate in a personal way. Let every word glorify You. In Jesus, Amen.

STUDY DEEPER

3 Ways to Talk to People About Jesus

In the 19 years that have passed since Jesus Christ ambushed my life, choosing to talk openly about Him and my journey of faith has been a huge help in keeping the flame of faith alive.

While there is nothing easier than preaching to the choir and nothing more difficult than having a meaningful, mutually beneficial conversation with someone who doesn't consider themselves a Christian, here are a some things to consider that will help you to draw others into a sacred conversation:

#1 Remember where you came from.

Most people already have a perception of what Christians are about. In other words, you're probably not the first person to fish in this hole. This is part of the reality of living in a post-Christian culture – they've either heard the message before or at the very least, think they have.

Some common perceptions non-believers have of believers is that we are “know-it-alls”, rule followers, or over-intellectuals who are divorced from real life (or at least theirs). Despite our best efforts, we come across as though we have what they need, whether they know they're looking for it or not.

So as a starting point, remember where you come from. Remember that you, too, are a recipient of grace, that you too are a sinner in need of a Savior. When these realities are internalized and digested, you will find yourself on a level playing field, more humble, and less tempted to judge. It will no longer be a “you need something I have” conversation wherein people feel patronized, or talked down to, or even worse, like an object being “mobilized” or “evangelized.” Instead it will be a “we're more alike than we are different” conversation that can lead to dialogue, rather than one-way preaching.

#2 Ask Questions & Listen.

Someone once said, “The first duty of love is to listen.” We often think we need a lot of the right words or precise formula to win others, but in reality, people are more willing to tell you exactly where they are spiritually if we are willing to listen to them. I call this a “ministry of presence.” Asking questions communicates that you’re not assuming you know what they believe or what they need. Genuine questions about their life experience, their trials, and their family go a long way in building trust and respect. In fact you may not talk about anything “spiritual” for weeks or months in getting to know someone. Eventually, we can ask, “Do you have any spiritual belief at all?” or “What is your understanding of Jesus?” People pay thousands of dollars every year for professionals to listen to their problems. Wouldn’t it be great if Christians became known as great listeners, as people who seek first to understand before offering a three-point plan for their salvation and happiness?

#3 Lighten Up and Share Your Story.

Try not to take yourself too seriously, and don’t be so worried about being right about everything (I think only God fits that description anyway, right?). If you have truly come to Christ, then you have experienced the joy and freedom of being loved unconditionally, as you are and not as you *should* be. You have experienced the most intimate and fulfilling peace imaginable. Given this reality as a child of God, when you share your story, let others hear and see a glimpse of this as well. Authentic joy and compassion speak volumes. People recognize sincerity when they see it.

St. Teresa of Ávila, the 16th-century Carmelite nun and reformer, spoke out against a kind of deadly serious Catholicism. She once said, “From silly devotions and sour-faced saints, good Lord, deliver us.” St. Francis of Assisi was another “fool for Christ” who let the joy of the Lord flow through him. They reached thousands in their lifetime for Christ and continue to do so today.

As you share your story, recount what happened when you encountered Jesus and how He intervened, guided, healed, spoke to, or touched your life. Share why He is the reason for your peace, for your hope, for your confidence in life. If you have asked questions and listened, you’re sure to have a listener in return. God will take you up on your offer to be his instrument if you ask Him. He will open doors to faith conversation and place you in situations you wouldn’t have imagined. There may be no greater way to grow in your faith this summer than to give it away to someone else.

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