

Testimony

Week 4

We are in the series Testimony this summer

Stories of when God Showed up

- How we have seen God's Faithfulness even through hard times
- The TESTs that lead to a testimony.

It is incredible when God uses other peoples' stories to challenge and inspire us in the middle of our story.

If you get in a spot where you don't feel like God is faithful

- HEAR how he proved himself in someone else's life
 - Builds our faith!!

Jesus changes things....Makes a difference...Impact in our lives

Jesus's story is the greatest story ever

- Life changing!!

His story is literally called "Good News"

Good news because His story Impacts Our story

- He changes our lives

This series is about what God has done in our lives

- Something powerful happens when we share our Testimonies
- Hear some of the Pastor's and Missionaries share their story

Today I want to share how God has been faithful for Abby and I over the years.

My Calling

I want to start way back

I grew up with amazing parents

- God loving
- Kind
- Loved us kids

We were at church Sunday AM/Sunday PM, Wed,camps, all of it!!

- I started a relationship with Jesus at an early age
 - I grew up knowing of God's love
 - I think that is the greatest gift a parent can give!!

One of the milestones that I turn back to

- God's Faithfulness is when I was in Middle School
- I was 12 years old & reading the Bible before school
 - I read a verse & felt God's call to be pastor

Think that's cool....because you have known me for the past 12 yrs here
As Pastor Jeff!!!

In grade school....I struggled in school to keep up

- I had a reading tutor to help me not fall behind
- I also had a bad stutter
 - So I wasn't a super confident Kid
 - On top of that have blessed with a "HUSKY BUILD"

I didn't really get style and still kinda don't
I just wanted to wear what I liked, not what was cool

This kid that looks a little off, can't really talk, and struggles to read....
Says God wants me to stand in front of people and speak and Pastor

The morning I felt called I went and told my mom and she was like...thats nice

- Later they encouraged me to have a back up plan
 - I don't blame them!

Abby and I actually went to the same middle school dated in HS

- I always say that she ignored me in MS because she was a cool kid
 - She says I had my head down staring at the floor
 - I was so shy, how would she ever know me??

So this Sounds Like PASTOR MATERIAL!!!

God's Equipping

I was convinced....

- I did not follow my parents advise for a back up plan
- I didn't even take my ACT or SAT because I was already in the program

They said what if

- And in my heart there was no what if

Seems stupid now if I look back

- I burnt the boats
- Not turning back

HERE IS THE KICKER

IF CALLS HE EQUIPS!!!

He is faithful, that is who he is!

- I stayed focused on him
 - Sought after him
 - Studied
 - Prayed
 - Grew up

God somehow equipped me

- He was faithful!!

Sometimes we don't trust in God's faithfulness

2 paths could have derailed my calling

- I could have doubted the calling and not tried
- I could have tried to change who I am.....

God Called me

- but not just as I am
 - Surely he wants me to be more!!

Crazy Story in Scripture that illustrates this perfectly

Genesis 25:27-31 NLT

Issac and Rebekah had twin boys Jacob and Esau-

27 As the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter. He was an outdoorsman, but Jacob had a quiet temperament, preferring to stay at home. 28 Isaac loved

Esau because he enjoyed eating the wild game Esau brought home, but Rebekah loved Jacob. 29 One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry. 30 Esau said to Jacob, “I’m starved! Give me some of that red stew!” (This is how Esau got his other name, Edom, which means “red.”)

31 “All right,” Jacob replied, “but trade me your rights as the firstborn son.”

Genesis 27:18-19 NLT

**Issac was old and ready to bless his first born..sent Esau out for food
Jacob with Rebekah’s help made some soup and put hair all over his arms**

**18 So Jacob took the food to his father. “My father?” he said.
“Yes, my son,” Isaac answered. “Who are you—Esau or Jacob?”
19 Jacob replied, “It’s Esau, your firstborn son.**

Issac said WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

- Or in other words who are you?

Jacob tried to get a blessing by being someone he wasn't

- Sometime we think we need to be “Someone Else”
 - God can’t use me, he is leading me to this but...
If I'm going to do that then I have to change!
- Don't try to change or fake to make a blessing happen
 - Or to fulfill a calling
 - God knew what he was doing when he called you
When he put that thing on your heart

Trust his faithfulness and his equipping

- There is always someone that looks more qualified!!

GOD’S BLESSING FOLLOWS OBEDIENCE

- Including obedience to who he made us to be
 - Even after Jacob stole Esau's blessing, he still wasn't happy!

Genesis 32:24-27

**Years later Jacob was heading back home
He was anxious because he was going to see his brother who he wronged
He needed some alone time...sent everyone ahead of him.**

This is when Jacob wrestled with God. Look what god brought him back to...

24 This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. 25 When the man saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob's hip and wrenched it out of its socket. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!"

But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

27 "What is your name?" the man asked.

He replied, "Jacob."

Blessing was given to Jacob when he embraced who he was

- Not who he was pretending to be

When I started ministry

- Insecure
- Scared
- Unworthy
- Unfit

I felt pressure to be like so and so, superstar pastor

- Started Ministry in Indiana when I was 20
 - I went to be an assistant youth pastor

I showed up and the pastor said, "Do what you do"

- I didn't know, but he had visited our youth group when I was a volunteer
 - He saw me talking to people, praying for students, worshipping

You know who I was being?

- ME!!
 - God gave me love for students

HE EQUIPPED ME!!!

To this day, am I super smooth?

- No

Dress cool?

- Not likely

Do I speak eloquently?

- No

Do I mess up the words I read?

- All the time

Does God still find a way to help me spread his message?

- Good news YES!!

Why?

Because he is faithful

- He called you, put something on your heart
 - Trust him, he will be faithful!!

My Test

Trusting God doesn't mean that life will be without its challenges

In Indiana we faced some of our toughest challenges

God led us there we followed his call

- It wasn't long and we were smacked

ABBY IS GOING TO COME SHARE

God's Faithfulness

Time and Time again through the TEST

- We had a TESTIMONY!!

We have seen God's Faithfulness

- It is who he is!

2 Timothy 2:13 (NIV)

if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

In other words, this is who he is

- He can't help but be faithful

Deuteronomy 32:4 (NIV)

**He is the Rock, his works are perfect,
and all his ways are just.
A faithful God who does no wrong,
upright and just is he.**

**Psalm 33:4 (NIV)
For the word of the Lord is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.**

**Psalm 111:7-8 (NIV)
The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.
They are established for ever and ever,
enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.**

WELL that is OLD TESTAMENT

**1 Corinthians 1:9 (NIV)
9 God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ
our Lord.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:3 (NIV)
3 But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil
one.**

HE IS FAITHFUL>>> WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSE TO DO WITH THAT?

**Hebrews 10:23 (NIV)
23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is
faithful.**

He is Faithful that is who he is
In the middle of the test

- Remember who he is
- HOLD UNSWERVINGLY
- This test will be your testimony!!

