

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

This is My Story

Based on Deuteronomy 6:1-9; 20-25

I would like to thank Mrs. Patty Farris, guest speaker at this year's Presbytery Retreat for her inspiration.

This time of the year, as the days grow shorter and the weather colder, my children, who are long past the stage of reading story books before bedtime, will sidle up to me in a quiet moment and say, "Tell me a story, Mom. Tell me a story about when you were little." And although they have heard these stories hundreds of times, they sit quietly, and listen once again, smiling and giggling as if they were toddler. I have come to realize that something deep and meaningful is happening underneath the retelling of the same old story. It's partly nostalgic. But perhaps also, is a deeper sense of "This is who I am. This is the story of me. This is what I will carry with me as I move towards tomorrow."

We all have a story to tell. As I scan over the faces of this congregation alone, I see a great variety of stories: growing up in the mid-west during the 'dirty thirties', working in exotic locations around the globe, transferring from post to post with the RCMP or the

military. I see quieter stories of homemakers who always had warm cookies from the oven ready after school, difficult stories of lives starting over, stories of working the land, grateful for crops of high yield, or gardens full of colour.

We all have a faith story to tell as well. Some of us are seasoned members of the faith, comfortable in our Christian shoes. Some of us are new to the Presbyterian tradition; others are tried and true Presbyterian blue! Some of us are new to this whole 'faith thing' altogether. You may not have the church words, or figured out how to find verse four of a hymn yet, but something within you knows somehow, that this is where you need to be right now.

Some of us have witnessed miracles.

Some of us perplexed by odd coincidences that seem just a little too good to be true.

Some of us warmed by the whispers of God in the flash of light that sometimes reflects off a butterfly's wings.

The truth of the matter is, though, that many of us struggle to find ways to tell our good news story to the world. Heck, we struggle to find an appropriate way to

share our story with those closest and dearest to us; let alone a stranger on the street corner, or a new colleague at work. And we all know from experience, that there are better ways, and not so better ways, to open up a delicate, yet meaningful conversation. As our guest speaker reminded us, "Turning to a stranger in the elevator and asking them if they have been 'washed in the blood of the lamb' is not likely to have the positive outcome you were searching for!"

Let's face it. From the outside looking in, we Christians must look rather strange. We are 'open for business' far fewer hours of the week, compared to a grocery store or the 7-11. The rest of the time, the lights are off and the doors locked. We open our doors on a Sunday, for goodness sake, right when football is on prime time. Isn't Sunday supposed to be a day off? It would seem that you need to dress up, at least a little for whatever goes on inside. And if you happen to hear any music coming from inside, you'll notice we sing from a book, not a YouTube video. How strange we must seem to someone peering in our windows.

Yet, from ancient times, the challenge to share our story

has been a command from God.

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deut. 6:6-9)

That is the challenge before us these days: finding ways to tell our story to the world; to a world that often, has not heard our story before. And in order to do that, we need to know what our story is, to be comfortable with our story, to find a simple way to share our story with people we trust, and then, be ready for the opportunities (which will come) to share that story to the world:

...to a grandchild who asks, "Why do you go to church, Grandma?"

...to a friend who is struggling with a personal problem.

...to a co-working who asks quietly at lunch, "I hear you go to church."

Are you ready for the question?

Do you have your 'Christian commercial' ready?

Not sure where to start?

been, or something quite different than before.

Step 3

Now, what does the church have to do with all this soul searching? Have you considered recently, "What is the real reason I am here?" Whether you are new to Knox or new to the faith, or been a steady face in the pew for years. Ask yourself, "Why am I really here? What do I get here, that I can't get anywhere else? What here, feeds my soul?"

Someday, unexpectedly, with little time to consider, and no time to write it down neatly, someone will ask you, "Who is God?" And like the writer of Deuteronomy, you will be able to say, "Let me tell you a story." It is a story about me. It is a story about One so much greater than just me. It is a story about love, and a story about how that Great One loves me."

This is my story, this is my song

Praising my Savior all the day long

~Fanny Crosby

Step 1

First, you need to figure out your own story. Who am I, really? Deep inside, what is important to me? What do I believe strongly? What am I willing to dig my heels in about? What am I passionate about? What stirs a fire in my belly?

Step 2

Then you need to figure out how God fits into the picture. Was He always just there, quietly travelling the road of life with you? Or did the Saviour come to you in a blinding flash, a dramatic moment, or a cry of desperation? And what place does God hold for you now? It may be the same as it's always