

How to Share Our Story “Come and see”

There is a narrative that is being written of God’s redemptive work that we are a part of. This story has been going on for over 19 years. This story has already touched 1000s of lives and impacted a city / surrounding area and even Guatemala. BUT, it’s not enough to simply be part of a story. We must share our story. We have a responsibility to share with others the great things God is doing. We cannot be silent.

How do we go about this? How do we share this narrative with others in a way that God captures people’s hearts?

Today we are going to answer this question.

I know when you come to Foothills, you’re looking for hope / encouragement / something to help you make it through the week. Maybe you’re looking to be challenged / maybe you’re needing some answers. You’re looking for something for your family. Regardless what it is you’re needing, Jesus has been meeting people here at their point of need for years. How can we keep something so precious to ourselves? If our lives have been altered by this experience, how can we not share this with others? We must share our story.

The word of God gives us a very simple example that I believe captures the very essence of how God wants us to grow in this. With our new space almost complete and our role in the community getting even more public, now more than ever we need to be sharing our story. People need to hear the real story not a false narrative.

Summarize John 1. As Jesus began His ministry, there were plenty of stories circulating about Him. Who was this Jesus guy anyway? John 1 gives us a great example how to help clear up the various narratives being shared.

John 1:43-46 “The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Come, follow me.”⁴⁴ Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter’s hometown.

⁴⁵ Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, “We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.”

⁴⁶ “Nazareth!” exclaimed Nathanael. “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

“Come and see for yourself,” Philip replied.

Let me share with you some simple story-sharing principals from this example in the Bible. How can we share the story of what Jesus is doing here effectively?

1. We have experienced Jesus first hand

“The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Come, follow me.”

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Philip had a life-changing encounter with Jesus. Jesus found him and asked him to follow. We know that Philip became one of Jesus' 12 disciples. Philip's life was forever changed by this encounter.

- Authentic life change precedes sharing with others

There is something very powerful about sharing our real experiences. Sharing about something you experienced is first very easy and second, it is hard to argue with.

- Listening to authentic experiences is compelling to the listener.
- The reason so many believers in Jesus often have no motivation to share with others is they have yet to have a life changing encounter with Jesus.
- Experience not knowledge precedes sharing our story. It's our experiences that make up our story. Without this first hand experience with Jesus we have no story.
- I remember getting trained to do "Evangelism" (When I was in HS and in College) – Share stories.
- I had memorized great information but had yet to have a life changing encounter with Jesus for myself.

- Sharing without this authentic experience has no influence

Without first hand experiences with Jesus we simply share facts / information / arguments / data / but there is nothing about life change.

- People can disagree with your arguments / your information / your step by step approach...BUT rarely will someone disagree with an experience you've had.

Testimony: I want you to listen to one of these people who's life has been changed (video)

When we have a genuine, first-hand experience with Jesus sharing becomes much easier.

2. We share this experience with those in our everyday circle

Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."

- Authentic experiences compel us to share

The first thing Philip did was go find his friend and tell him about his experience with Jesus. Nowhere do we see Jesus telling him to do this. It was instinctive. It was automatic.

- How many of you when you have a great experience, you feel compelled to share it with someone. In fact, many of you share it with 1000 of your closest friends on Facebook.
 - Vacation experiences
 - Wedding and anniversary experiences
 - Healthy lifestyle experiences – going to the gym / a specific lifestyle change / losing weight / essential oils /

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- When something has impacted your life in a profound way you instinctively share it with others. It's just a fact, no one has a profound, amazing life experience and goes silent and keeps it to themselves.
- Real experiences trump your fear of what others think. That's why there is a compulsion to share. The power of the experience obliterates the power of the fear. Now, you don't care what people think.
- **For example:** Many of you have gone to Guatemala with us. How many of you were embarrassed to talk about it when you came home? My guess is you had no trouble even sharing with your non-religious co-workers. WHY? Because the experience made a difference in your life.
- We all have no trouble talking about meaningful experiences. The question is this: Is following Jesus merely a religious experience or a very meaningful personal experience?
- If you have trouble sharing about what Jesus has done in your life with your immediate circle of people, then maybe there is a lack of experience in your relationship with Jesus.
- Some of you have no problem talking about hunting / fishing / shopping / politics and world events. BUT, it's hard to share where there is no story. What is the story of how Jesus is changing your life?
 - Let me talk for a moment to those who think they don't have much of a story to tell – I used to be in this category – grew up in church – didn't have some dark past that Jesus delivered me from. What story do I have?
 - Then Jesus started getting very real. He showed me my pride was as black as any addiction / my selfishness would destroy my marriage / my self-sufficiency would hinder everything He wanted to do at Foothills. My need for Jesus became very real and then Jesus became very real.
 - The problem with many believers who grow up in church is you have yet to see your desperate need for Jesus and your need to be completely transformed. You have yet to discover how much you need to be delivered. This is why you have no story to tell. How can you have a story if you don't really need Jesus?
- Sharing begins with those closest to us
 I just love that the first thing Philip did was go and find his friend. Jesus just called Philip to follow Him and now he is off to find Nathanael. He didn't want to have this experience without his friend.
 - Haven't you found this to be true? When you experience something meaningful, you want those closest to you to experience the same thing.
 - You should go to Guatemala too!
 - You should see this movie / read this book / visit this amazing place.
 - You should try this restaurant. The food is amazing!

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- We want to pull others who are close to us into the very same experience we have had. We want to share the same experiences. WHY? Shared experiences are powerful. We are relational beings and we bond with one another through shared experiences.
- Shared spiritual experiences are some of the most relationally bonding experiences you can have with another person. Following and experiencing Jesus is great, but it's even better together.
- Who do you need to share your story with? Do you have people close to you who have never heard how Jesus is changing your life? Have you ever explained why you even come to Foothills? Why you serve?

3. We invite people to share this experience for themselves

“Nazareth!” exclaimed Nathanael. “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

“Come and see for yourself,” Philip replied.

- Don't be surprised at people's skepticism

“Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

- Philip was from Bethsaida as was Nathanael more than likely. Philip as with Peter and John were fishermen. The name Bethsaida means “house of fishing”.
- Obviously, Nazareth had some type of bad reputation. Maybe it was poor / seen as morally bankrupt / whatever the case, it was seen as less than. It surprised Nathanael anything good could come from there.
- When we share about what God is doing in us and what God is doing collectively through His people here at Foothills, don't be surprised if you get some skepticism from others.
- When God is moving it can be difficult to believe. When I get to share about what God is doing here at Foothills, I often get a response like this. Molalla? Are you serious? Nobody expects anything great coming from Molalla. YET, God does things like this on purpose all the time.
- It is a remarkable story!
 - Resource center to date:
 - Backpack buddy ministry last Spring was 250 kids per week
 - Loving Hearts Preschool has begun another school year
 - Adult Center
 - Purchased our building last July 2016
 - Just finished a 22,000 sq. ft. remodel
 - Expanding ministries
 - Developing new ways to reach out into our community
- We are involved in a remarkable Kingdom narrative in the town of Molalla where it leaves people scratching their heads. SO, yeah...expect some skeptics. Rural communities do not typically produce churches like this.

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- Invite people into an experience with you

“Come and see for yourself,”

What a beautiful, non-threatening response from Philip. It’s as if he acknowledges Nathanael’s reservations at the prospect of Nazareth being the place to experience the Messiah. Therefore, instead of trying to convince his friend with any type of argument, he simply says, “Come and see for yourself.”

- Over the years, I have heard many reasons why people don’t share their faith with their family and friends. Most often I hear; “I just don’t know what to say.” Well here is your answer to that question. “Come and see.”
 - Why do you go to that church? Why do you go to Foothills? “Come and see.” Invite them into the experience with you. The pressure is not on you. Your job is to simply invite them into the environment where Jesus resides and allow Him to do the rest.
 - Foothills is an environment where Jesus resides. When people are exposed to this environment where they are loved / accepted / embraced / valued / given hope / they hear Jesus call them by name and lives are changed.
 - This is what happened to Nathanael. As he approached Jesus, Jesus called him by name. “You’re Nathanael”...and his life was never the same.
 - For some of you this is your story. You showed up here at this church and eventually, you heard Jesus call your name and you have not been the same since.
- As another Fall is upon us, can we grow in sharing our story personally and collectively as a church? Who do we need to share our story with? Who do we need to ask to simply “Come and see” what God is doing here?
 - We cannot be silent about what God is doing any longer. We must steward our influence God has given us as a church better.
 - Can you imagine what would happen in this next year if we all brought someone to Foothills to meet Jesus? Would you be willing to make this your goal? Lord, use me to bring one person to you!
 - Write the first name on the blue card. (You will pray for this person and you will ask them to “come and see”).

Prayer time

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