
Go, Tell What God Has Done For You!

A sermon by the Rev. Canon Salmoon Bashir
The Second Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 7, Year C

I came here today to tell you what God has done for me.

Earlier this year at our staff retreat, we shared our favorite movies. I mentioned *Forrest Gump*, because in many ways, I feel like my life has unfolded in unexpected ways, full of moments that only God could arrange. A Christian from Pakistan, who by God's grace has come through some very difficult times. There have been moments when I've witnessed both the darkness and the light of God's presence. There have been times when I've sensed His presence so clearly, I could feel it with every fiber of my being. I carry many stories of His faithfulness, the goodness of God. If you ever asked me what God has done for me, I think I could talk for hours... or even days!

That said, I know each of you carry your own stories of how God has moved in your lives. Since joining the Cathedral, I've heard many of your stories—around dinner tables, in cafés, and on Sunday mornings. Each one powerful, holy, and full of faith. We all encounter God in different ways. Christ meets us in our grief, in our joy, in our tombs, in our cities, in our loneliness, and in our communities. And by sharing these stories, we bear witness to His work among us. It's important to remember not every story needs to be dramatic or earth-shattering. Often, it's the simple, everyday experiences that carry the greatest power.

Stories have power! Stories can bring people together. They have the power to shape the future of many generations and build communities. They can open the door for us to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

I never had the chance to meet any of my grandparents. My father lost his parents while still in school, and my maternal grandparents passed away when I was just a year old, too young to remember them. I never experienced sitting with grandparents, hearing their stories, or learning from them directly. But my parents, now reunited with theirs in heaven, often told us stories about them, especially about their journey of faith. My father shared how his parents came to Christ after someone shared with them stories of God's mercy, love, and compassion in a way they had never seen or known. Through that sharing, my grandparents came to faith. Thanks be to God for the courage of that person whose story changed their lives and shaped the generations that followed.

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When Jesus told the man in today's Gospel, go home, tell your story, "*Go home and tell what God has done for you,*" I imagine that man understood, in the depths of his soul, the power of sharing his story — first with his family, then with his community, and eventually with everyone he met, even with those who were scared.

This was a man who was utterly alone in his suffering. The powers of evil had driven him from his family, from his community, from his home. He lived not among people, but "among the tombs" likely caves which in ancient times were used for burial. The demons drove him into the wilderness, a living death, cut off from human connection, compassion, and love. I imagine for years he had not known mercy. He became voiceless as demons took over his body and voice.

If we look in the wider context of Luke's Gospel, this story marks an important turning point. We see that Jesus' healing power extends over nature, over cosmic forces, over evil spirits. He crossed over to the other side of the lake, He went out of His way to encounter and deliver this man, a man who was probably a gentile. It

moves across boundaries, from Jews to gentiles, from men to women, from leaders to outcasts. Healing and restoration ripple through the community, far and wide. The man once possessed and isolated went on to share his story with all who would listen: Jesus of Nazareth has overcome evil!

As we near the end of this story, we read that the man was "healed." The Greek word used here is *sozo*, which means not only healed but saved, delivered. Jesus restored him in body, mind, and spirit — reconnecting him with his family and his community. Jesus saw him with the loving Gaze and made him whole. He did not just receive healing; he became the bearer of good news! The first one in his region to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. Telling people what God has done for him. From voiceless naked body shackled in chains, this man became an evangelist of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Storytelling helps us understand who we are and who God is. It helps shape our identity. Stories give us voice. Stories unite us and heal us. Storytelling invites people to radical hospitality. It can make people see each other as beloved children of God and invite them to become neighbors. Through stories our souls connect. They bring us to the feet of Jesus and shape our identity as His followers. It is a joy to tell others, through our stories, about God's greatness. That's why I'm not going to give you three steps or five techniques of your favorite word 'evangelism' today. Instead, I simply encourage you to be yourself. Share God's mercy, love, and grace as you have experienced them, in your own words.

Each of us, at some point in life, has experienced God's mercy, God's radical love, and God's compassion. So why not share that through the lens of stories? Whether in big or small ways — in our homes, in our friend groups, in our ministries, in our workplaces, we can tell the story of God's goodness. Sharing the good news of Jesus doesn't always mean standing on a street corner with a microphone. Sometimes, it's the subtle ways: a word of encouragement, a story shared over coffee, a moment of truth offered in love. When you share your story, you invite others to share theirs too. When you speak of God's mercy, others are drawn to tell their own encounters with grace.

Just think how many of us are quick to tell others about a great book we read, a movie we enjoyed, or a Netflix show we binged. We share these things because we want others to enjoy them too! In the same way, like the man in today's Gospel, we too can share what God has done for us. Maybe we haven't had dramatic, life-changing miracles like this man, but we have known the joy of experiencing Christ. And surely, we want others to experience that same joy, the joy we know when we gather here in the house of God.

Stories hold great power! They can heal, transform, and inspire both individuals and communities. And finally, storytelling is the way of Jesus. In every sermon, Jesus spoke to the crowds through stories: "There was a rich man, and a poor man named Lazarus... There was a widow seeking justice... There was a man who had two sons..." You know what I'm talking about. The whole Bible is full of stories!

So, if you haven't heard anything else I've said in the last 10–15 minutes, just remember this: Following the way of Jesus is simple — TELL STORIES! Like the man whom Jesus healed and commanded to share his story with others, we reclaim something powerful when we tell our stories. Because someone shared their story with my grandparents, I am here today. Because a man once set free from evil shared his story, lives were changed.

So go, tell what God has done for you. Follow the way of Jesus! Tell your story! Amen!