

Andy's testimony

That is what this psalm is about – sharing our stories. The psalmist begins by reminding us of the many different times and ways God has rescued us. When we were attacked by our enemies, God protected us. When we were exiled, God brought us back. When we wandered in the wilderness, God showed us the way. God fed us when we were hungry and quenched our thirst when we were parched. God answered our distress calls, providing a safe place to live. And, because God has done all these things for us, the psalmist reminds us to be grateful.

The psalmist also instructs us to tell others what God has done for us: “Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has redeemed you” (v.2-3). Tell others your story. Share your testimony. Why does the psalmist want us to tell others? Why do we share our stories?

We share our stories so others can know the goodness of God too. We don't keep it to ourselves. Remember, it doesn't feel good to feel lost or hopeless, not knowing what we're missing, not knowing how to get better, not understanding that there is a real love out there, that there's a real God who loves us and can rescue us. We share our stories of God's love, so they can stop feeling this way and experience God's love too.

Paul says in Romans 10:14: “How can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?” I know it's really, really hard for us to share our faith stories. We may be afraid that people will laugh or debate our beliefs. Not

everyone will welcome or be open to hear the good news. But, “faith comes from hearing the good news,” (Romans 10:17) and if we don't tell them, how will they know?

We tell others by sharing our stories because it's the best opportunity for them to hear the good news. When we share our stories, we are making a connection with the listener. We open ourselves and build trust. That's why “sharing your testimony” is the time-tested method of sharing the gospel. We are real and honest and others relate to our story. They see themselves in our similar stories. When we share our stories, our gratitude and praise to God drowns out misery and despair, and they hear the good news.

Sharing our stories through personal connection is the best way of hearing and much more effective than using a bullhorn. [Illustrate using a bullhorn.] Do people really listen when a bullhorn is blaring at them?

On our vacation in June, we were in Hollywood for a day. There was a huge crowd with cell phones raised, recording Tom Holland, the new Spider Man, on top of bus. Cameras were filming him doing Spidey movies for the upcoming premiere. On one street corner, there are two people holding a huge sign above the crowd of a bloody fetus. The two people tried to talk to passersby, but everyone ignored them and wouldn't listen. Guilt and condemning people is not the way to share the good news. Bullhorn evangelism lacks connection or trust, so people don't tend to listen.

Davonna Allison shares: “The West African country of Senegal has a tradition

called ‘storying’ where storytellers relate important tales of national or personal history through words, actions, and singing.”¹ This is especially useful since “only forty percent of the population can read.”² We also love storytellers. The best musicians tell stories set to music. Even children love to get in a circle for Story Time. We relate to stories. We connect to stories. We listen to stories.

In Senegal, trying to convert someone to a religion carries great risk of persecution, so Christian Senegalese women discreetly meet together to learn how to use this traditional form of storytelling to share the good news. Despite the risk, they want to share their stories of Christ’s love, so that others can experience it as well. They want to share their gratitude for all that God has done for them, to assure them that there is a God who loves them. After all, if they don’t tell them, how will they know?

¹ Devonna R. Allison, *Disciplines 2019*, p. 252.

² Ibid.