



THANKFUL FOR...

“My Story”

Acts 26

November 2, 2014

“Giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Ephesians 5:20 (NRSV)

1 Important Perspective: Giving Thanks

2 Important Phrases

- ✓ At All Times
- ✓ For Everything

1 Important Person: God the Father

We All Have a Story – The Story of Our Life

“Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony of God in them.” 1 John 5:10a (GWT)

- ✓ Everyone’s Story Is Varied
- ✓ Everyone’s Story is Valuable
- ✓ Everyone’s Story Verifies the Most Important Story

We Are Challenged to Be Thankful for Our Story

“O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; For You have worked wonders, Plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness.” Isaiah 25:1 (NASU)

We Are Confident That the Lord is Writing our Story

“We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him. They are the people he called, because that was his plan.” Romans 8:28 NCV

“I know what I’m doing. I have it all planned out — plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.” Jeremiah 29:11 (MSG)

We Are Compelled to Live Our Story Purposefully

“For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible...everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him.” Colossians 1:16b (MSG)

“Let every detail in your lives — words, actions, whatever — be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.” Colossians 3:17 (MSG)

We Are Called to Share Our Story

“When the governor made a sign for Paul to speak, Paul said, “Governor Felix, I know you have been a judge over this nation for a long time. So I am happy to defend myself before you.” Acts 24:11 (NCV)

“You were chosen to tell about the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

1 Peter 2:9 (NCV)

“...Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, 16 but do it with gentleness and respect...” 1 Peter 3:15-16 (TEV)

- ✓ What My Life Was Like Before I Met Jesus Vs 2-11
- ✓ How I Realized I Needed Jesus Vs 12-14
- ✓ How I Committed My Life to Jesus – Vs 14-18
- ✓ The Difference Jesus Has Made in My Life Vs 19-23

Our Challenge Today

1. Thank God For Your Story
2. Write Out Your Story This Week
3. Practice Sharing the ABC’s or Answer Tract & Your Story with Someone this Week
4. Pray and Ask the Lord to give you courage to share your story with someone.
5. This Month Share Your Story with 1 Person
6. Pray for that Person continually that You shared with and then follow up with them – invite them to church

THANKFUL FOR...

My Story

Acts 26

November 2, 2014 AM Worship

It's that time of year, Fall is here, Halloween – thank goodness!! – is over and we are waiting for Christmas to come and sometimes this season of Thanksgiving can be overlooked or simply relegated to one day a year. We must have a different view than that of the world.

1 Important Perspective: Giving Thanks

It is really a choice that we have to make really each and every day.

The call is clear in Scripture that we are to give thanks all the time and for everything. Look at what **Ephesians 5:20** tells us *“giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (NRSV)

2 Important Phrases

Two big words that we want to focus on for just a moment and then let's talk about what are we thankful for. I want us to go outside the normal and every day, easier things to quickly identify that we are thankful for. They are certainly important and necessary, but often we simply stop there. Our Family, our Parents/Grandparents, our children/grandchildren / our spouse Our other family members and friends, our home, job, food, a place to live, etc. So during the month of November we are going to talk about these things we are and should be thankful for : Our Story; Our Support (Church and other Believers); Our Season to Share; Our Savior & His Sacrifice; and Finally Our Success & Our Sorrows. I pray that from this series we will be more thankful and live a more thankful life and it would show in our everyday lives.

The two words I want us to focus on briefly this morning and really will inform the rest of this series and then we will pursue it in a later message

✓ **At All Times**

✓ **For Everything**

1 Important Person: God the Father

The really most important thing – what is the focus of our thanksgiving – though we can certainly be thankful to people and that is good, we must be thankful to the Lord for all things and at all times. This focus help us

understand how we can do that.

This morning, let's go back and pick up where we left out from last week – time didn't allow us to pursue this passage of Scripture, but I want us to look at it today and really pick up and carry forward this idea of living a Transformed Life in our everyday lives as a part of this new series.

Let's look at Acts 26 and see Paul share his story and that will be the focus of our message.

Let's look at these 5 truths together this morning and how they should change our lives.

We All Have a Story – The Story of Our Life

“Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony of God in them.” I John 5:10a (GWT)

✓ **Everyone's Story Is Varied**

Different Personalities, Perspectives, Life Experiences, Families, Locations, etc. We certainly may have some things in common but we all have things that make our stories unique and different. The things we share allow us to connect and relate to others and help others. We see that we are not alone nor was our story in vain because we can help someone else.

✓ **Everyone's Story is Valuable**

Nobody's story is better, more important, or more valuable, everyone's story is amazing and wonderful to see how the Lord has done a great work in your life. Our story is our story and what the Lord has done in our lives. Each story is valuable because the Lord created our stories!

✓ **Everyone's Story Verifies the Most Important Story**

ILLUS: The Church and our lives are the Window Shopping for the Gospel – yes what we share as what we talk about in a moment is important but what we don't say but how we live, love each other, forgive each other, support one another speaks volumes to a lost and dying world that our story is true and the Lord is real and can do the same in their lives! **ILLUS: Mt. Vernon Groundbreaking today**

We Are Challenged to Be Thankful for Our Story

“O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; For You have worked wonders, Plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness.” Isaiah 25:1 (NASU)

Are you thankful for your story? – Paul certainly was and we should be to and it should motivate us. Not I wish I had their story or I didn't have my story and that this or that didn't happen or I wish this or that happened. And those two Phrases remind us that we to be thankful at all times no matter what's happening in our world, what's going on in your life, whether you like it or not –and for everything the good and the bad (we'll specifically tackle these phrases that in another message later this month – because let's be honest, this isn't easy to do and in fact we can't do it in own our strength!)

One overview of this – how are we thankful for our story – we focus on the perfect faithfulness of our God and what He has done before in the lives of others like Paul and others in the Bible and even folks like what we saw last week and others who have seen the plans formed long ago come to pass in our lives. Which leads us to the next point...

We recognize the one who is writing our story.

We Are Confident That the Lord is Writing Our Story

It is one that the Lord is writing and it is a glorious unfolding.

“We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him. They are the people he called, because that was his plan.”

Romans 8:28 (NCV)

“I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out — plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.”

Jeremiah 29:11 (MSG)

We are talking about this on Wednesday nights in our ReFuel as we look at the life of Joseph and it is a matter of looking at our lives from God's perspectives and trusting in Him as He writes our story. Why can we trust Him? Because He created this world, He created us, He is in control of this world, He loves us and has a great plan for us and when things go awry in our lives the Lord promises to work it out for our good!

ILLUS: The Glorious Unfolding by Steven Curtis Chapman.

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“For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible...everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him.”

Colossians 1:16b (MSG)

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the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.” Colossians 3:17 (MSG)

2 important Scriptures that also give us perspective that we don't live our lives haphazardly, randomly, but instead we are called to live on purpose, live for the Lord and not for ourselves. We will never really live our story if we are not finding our purpose in Him and then that we find that everything we say and do must be done for Him – it is then we can live a thankful life and be thankful for our story because we aren't living for ourselves nor having to be in control of it, but resting in the Lord as we live for Him!

We Are Called to Share Our Story

Well I'm not Paul, I can't share like that – oh yes you can – all Paul was doing was sharing his story. No one can really share your story but you, and the impact that it can have is tremendous – that's why Chris' testimony and the cardboard testimonies are so powerful and meaningful and connecting – I could have shared all those stories, but when they share them – oh man how powerful is it? You tell me?!

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✓ **What My Life Was Like Before I Met Jesus** Vs 2-11

✓ **How I Realized I Needed Jesus** Vs 12-14

✓ **How I Committed My Life to Jesus** – Vs 14-18

The ABC's – 3 Circle – Answer Tract

✓ **The Difference Jesus Has Made in My Life** Vs 19-23

Another way to think about it: **I Share What He Did For Me What He Did In me What He is Doing Through Me**

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5. This Month Share Your Story with 1 Person – preferably someone who is lost but even if not, many of you have never told your story.
6. Pray for that Person continually that You shared with and then follow up with them – invite them to church