

Talks – Your Story – myfishbites.com

Tell Your Story

Jesus spoke in parables – stories with meanings. Today, many speakers also use stories. They may use them to illustrate their talks, or they may use lots of stories and make points from the stories (like J John does for example). Stories grab our imagination, because they are either real or real enough to make us think, laugh and cry. Stories are powerful. That's why people love movies, books and plays.

So what's your story? How do you tell it? Why should you tell it?

Your Story

If you are a Christian, you will have a story about how you met Jesus. Some people have dramatic testimonies (see the book 'Taming the Tiger' by Tony Anthony for example, or various stories of people who've come to faith from the Message Trust in Manchester as another great example). But many people have a story of how they gradually came to faith.

A family friend came to faith gradually and was recently baptised, aged 30. My brother said yes to Jesus in his life at one event, then he went to the front again at another event to make the same commitment. He said that he felt the first time he hadn't done very well! My story is of a dramatic change in my life, turning me from a life of boredom, some football violence, some drugs and some gang stuff – to changing me to work with young people, music and media to help build God's kingdom and do amazing things for God!

Moses and Jethro – Exodus 18.1-12

Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

2 After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her 3 and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have become an alien in a foreign land"; 4 and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."

5 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the desert, where he was camped near the mountain of God. 6 Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons."

7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. 8 Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them.

9 Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. 10 He said, "Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. 11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." 12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.

Moses and Jethro

Jethro was a Midianite. Midian was one of Abraham's sons (from a wife Ketura) – see Genesis 25.1-2. Joseph was sold by his brothers to the Midianites (Genesis 37.27-28). They worshipped a variety of strange and evil gods, including Baal-Peor. So basically Jethro wasn't exactly a full-on God worshipper!

In Exodus 2, we learn that Moses had fled from Egypt, having killed an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite slave. He then protected a group of women at a well from some shepherds. The father of the daughters was Jethro, who gave Moses his daughter Zipporah to marry. (Lesson here, get down the local well, or avoid the local well... depending on whether you want to get married LOL! The local 'well' doesn't mean the pub or the club every weekend either – church and Godly events are the place to go!)

So in Exodus 18, we learn how Moses' honoured his father-in-law, Midian (see verse 7 for example). This also teaches us a lesson about honouring and obeying our family, and about loving those around us who are not believers in God (in the right way). Many people feel a bit like screaming 'aaagh!!' when they hear their 'in-laws' are coming to stay with them!

Story – At a recent prayer event, a group of Christian young people came to lead worship and were prayed for and hugely encouraged. A group of local young people who know some of the team came in and played pool for a while. But they became a slight irritation to some people (not to us!!) and they were basically evicted. I went outside to chat with them and help calm them down. But one of the team who works with these young people weekly made a great point, saying *"we have to love these young people and pray for them, just as we love and prayed for the Christian young people – we are the only face of Jesus they will likely see..."* So be careful to love others well !

Moses Tells His Story

A key verse in Exodus 18 is verse 8:

Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them.

What did Moses do when he met Jethro? He told him about everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt. He went on to tell Jethro how God did this for the sake of his people, Israel. But he was also real – Moses spoke about all the hardships they'd had (and Moses had lots!) Then he went on to speak about how the Lord had saved them. So the

story was of how despite everything, God had brought them through. God was the key element, God was the one who got all the glory! What we mean by this was Moses gave God all the credit. He didn't say, 'yes you know, it was me Moses who God these people out of Egypt with my rod'. Instead he said, 'it was God who brought us out and saved us.'

Our stories and mentions of God to people around us, all in different ways, should do the same. We speak in a real way about our lives, our journeys, our struggles and good times. Then we point to God as the one who's in charge and the only answer! Don't be like the world of music and media where people love to take the credit. God gets the credit

When Moses had finished speaking in Exodus 18, we read the reaction of Jethro in verse 9:

Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. 10 He said, "Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. 11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." 12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.

So the end result was that Jethro was delighted. He then praised God! So Moses giving glory to God meant that Jethro then gave glory to God. Jethro went on to say that he now knew that Yahweh (The LORD) is greater than all gods and brought a sacrifice to God. The result was that Jethro joined the elders of Israel together eating in the presence of God!

God's heart is to bring people to know him. He asks us to tell our story and testify to who God is. God will do the rest. Sometimes it's a one-off thing, other times it's a longer haul and we need to have endurance (see Hebrews 10.36).

But tell your story and give God the glory!

End