

THE CORE VALUE: We value _____ and expect the telling of it to
give _____ to _____ and _____ to _____.

1. Your story is _____

2. Your story is _____

3. Your story is _____

The Take-Off

In 1998, the University of South Carolina football team went 1-10, they fired the coach (Brad Scott) and brought in a new one. His name was Lou Holtz.

Holtz was a proven winner, a short man with a ton of dynamite in his personality, and if anyone could turn Gamecock football around, it was him.

In 1999, they went 0-11. Fans scratched their heads and wondered if Holtz had lost his touch.

In 2000, the Gamecocks went 8-4, demolished Big 10 powerhouse Ohio State in the Outback Bowl 24-7 and completed the 2nd greatest one year turnaround in college football history.

The key? Stories.

In interviews about how he turned the Gamecocks around, Holtz said it all started in the cafeteria. He realized that the one thing missing from his team was trust, and that knowing each other's story could help with that.

Each day at mealtime he had one member stand up and tell his story. The result? The 2nd biggest turnaround in college football history.

Today, let's take a look at why we value stories and what they can do when we tell them.

We value *your story* and expect the telling of it to give grace to others and glory to God.

1. **Your story is personal**
 - a. All stories are good, but the best story is the one you can tell about what Jesus has done for you.
 - b. John 9 tells the story of a man born blind who was healed by Jesus
 - c. Mayhem ensued because Jesus broke quite a few religious rules in the healing, and after quite a bit of investigation and questioning, the Pharisees asked the man if Jesus was a sinner (John 9:24)
 - d. The man's answer was short and pointed:
 - i. He refused to get caught up in the confusion (v. 25)
 - ii. He didn't try to answer questions he couldn't (v. 26-27)
 - iii. He simply said what had happened to him ("One thing I know. I was blind, now I see")
2. **Your story is powerful**
 - a. It helps us overcome our enemy (Rev. 12:11)
 - i. verse 10 makes it clear that our enemy's one tactic is to accuse
 - ii. Satan does all he can to make us feel guilty and hypocritical
 - iii. Accusing is his full-time job (v. 10)
 - iv. According to verse 11, there are only 2 things necessary for overcoming his barrage of accusations
 - a) Jesus' blood (which has already been shed)
 - b) Our story of the redemption of that blood (which is up to us to tell)
 - b. It helps us overcome our critics (Acts 4:14)
 - i. The religious leaders didn't want to believe what was being said about Jesus was true
 - ii. But the story of the man who had been healed silenced their criticism
3. **Your story is profound**
 - a. The first 2 points about your story are visible - we can see them
 - b. This last one is about something that you can't see
 - c. Hang in there, and it'll make sense in a minute
 - d. Your story - the testimony you have about Jesus - is not only personal and powerful, but it is also profound

- e. Webster defines profound as “extending far below the surface”
- f. Before we hear some stories, I want you to turn to Isaiah 6
- g. I need you to see what happens in the unseen when you tell your story
- h. In this chapter, Isaiah has a vision of the throne room of the Lord
 - i. He sees the Lord exalted and sitting on the throne (v. 1)
 - ii. He sees angelic beings (v. 2)
 - iii. He hears praise and experiences the shaking of the posts and thresholds (vv. 3-4)
 - iv. He sees smoke filling the temple (v. 4)
 - v. He falls on his face aware of his sin and is cleansed by a coal from the altar (vv. 5-7)
- i. Now, here is what we need to get
- j. The end result of this vision was Isaiah’s guilt being taken away and him being sent out in service
- k. But what opened the door for an outpouring of God’s power so mighty that it revealed God’s holiness and Isaiah’s need for cleansing was...
- l. The story of the seraphs!!
- m. I always thought they told the Lord He was holy, but verse 3 says clearly that they were calling to one another!!
 - i. They were testifying about the Lord
 - ii. Their testimony caused the shaking in verse 4 which is what caused Isaiah to cry out “Woe is me!” in verse 5 which is what caused the angel to get the coal and cleanse his lips in verse 6 which is what led to the atonement of his guilt in verse 7.
 - iii. It all started with the story about Jesus.

The Landing

- In just a minute, we’ll hear some stories from some of the people here at The Gathering, but before they come, let me share one word of warning with each of us about stories
- There is only one way that your story can lose its power, and that is when you make your story about you
- The best stories - in fact, the only ones worth telling over and over again - are about Jesus, because Hebrews 12:2 is clear that He is the One writing yours and mine, and Phil. 1:6 is clear that he will finish the book He’s writing
- He is the hero of our stories, and we are the tellers of them
- But when we tell them, something happens that we can’t see
- Something is released into the atmosphere that brings people to their knees and positions them to receive grace from Jesus