

Storyteller

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH

Matt VanCleave
September 6, 2020

GROUP ICE BREAKER

What are your thoughts on death? Is this a topic you tend to avoid?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- Now that I'm aware of a pattern of sin in my life, I'm making a decision to change.
- I will acknowledge the truth that I cannot control my sin on my own.
- I'm saying "No More!" to a destructive pattern of behavior.
- I will bring this destructive pattern into the light by confessing it to a trusted friend or counselor.
- I will find someone to hold me accountable.
- I will make turning around a top priority that I arrange my life around.

THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

The truth is, we're all going to die. We don't like to think about that or talk about that, but it's true. So what happens after you die? I want to suggest three things that will happen. First, you will be wide awake. In the parable in Luke 16, both the rich man and Lazarus immediately woke up on the other side. There was no delay. Secondly, you will be filled with either tremendous gratitude or enormous regret. You will not be neutral. Heaven will be a perfect, uninterrupted community with God and people- complete and intimate love and joy. Hell is a place of enormous discomfort, a place of memory. God paid the ultimate price so that people could be saved from Hell. The third point we learn from this parable is, you will be able to reflect back on your life with great clarity. I guarantee when you die one of two things will be true: you are either going to deeply regret you didn't enter a relationship with Jesus Christ while you had the chance, or you will look back and you will say that receiving Jesus Christ into your life was the best decision you've ever made. If you've never trusted Jesus Christ with your life, I can't think of a better thing for you to do today. Simply say to God, "I want to trust You as the way to Heaven." You can do that today. Just tell him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jesus frequently uses stories to share his messages. Why is this an effective strategy in getting his message across? Explain the difference between a parable and a story.
2. In Jesus's parable, the beggar and the wealthy man both die and face eternity. They are awake, and have clarity of feeling enormous gratitude or enormous regret for the way they've lived their lives. What factors affect those emotions for these two?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT)

3. What images do we have from the media about heaven and hell? Read Revelation 21:1-8. What does the bible say about these two places?
4. The wealthy man wants Abraham to send Lazarus to fetch him some water and later, to warn his relatives. Is the wealthy man missing a major point here?
5. What is the meaning of Mark 8:36: "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?"
6. Some will have enormous regret over the missed opportunities that they had during their lifetime to respond to God while they had the opportunity to do so. What are some of the things you need to change or do, to adjust things in your own life?
7. What is the significance of God sending Jesus to earth to die for us? How does our relationship with Jesus aid us in the afterlife (1 John 5:13)?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

- I made a decision to trust Jesus with my life.
- I'm signing on for this teaching series.
- I will read The Reason for God by Tim Keller.
- I will invest in people.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Luke 16:19-31
- Mark 8:36
- John 3:17
- 2 Peter 3:9
- 1 Timothy 2:3-4
- 1 Corinthians 2:9
- 2 Corinthians 5:8
- Luke 23:43
- 1 John 5:13

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BECOMING A STORYTELLER

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“Stories are the creative conversation of life into a more powerful, clearer, more meaningful experience. They are the currency of human contact.” Robert McKee

Stories move us. They inspire us. Stories are a way to touch the heart and inspire greater understanding about life. Life with God. Life with each other. There’s power in our story. Stories create connection, and that’s why we want everyone to have an opportunity to tell their story.

Being in community with others is really getting to know them, which usually entails knowing their story and them knowing yours. The idea of telling your personal story to others may make you a little uncomfortable, but it doesn’t have to be a big production nor comprehensive. It’s simply to give the others in your group a sense of what makes you uniquely you and what God has done in your spiritual journey.

WHAT PARTS OF YOUR STORY TO TELL

When you think of your story, it’s probably centered around people, places and events. Those three categories capture how we interact with the world around us.

One way to organize your thoughts is to use the space provided on the reverse side to identify people who have played significant roles in your life, places that are special to you, and events that have affected you. It’s really as simple as that.

You probably can’t talk about all the people, places and events you write down as your story should only be five to ten minutes max, but this will give you a place to start. From here, you can think through the parts of your story that are the most important to emphasize. It’s your story and you are free to share what you want to share.

Above all, remember this. You may think the other members of your group aren’t interested in your story, but that’s not true. Most of us are curious about the people around us, and we’re predisposed to empathize and connect with others. Your story will help draw the other members of your group closer. You’ll also be amazed at how many people will relate to parts of your story.

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BECOMING A STORYTELLER

KEY PEOPLE

KEY PLACES

KEY EVENTS

(Events can be turning points, something that took you from one chapter to the next, or plot twists, something that moved your story in a completely unexpected direction.)

You can keep this paper with you when sharing your story. The point isn't to be a perfect public speaker. The point is for your group to get to know each other and create or deepen authentic community. Our stories give background and context to our conversations each week and will enhance our time together. So as difficult as sharing your story may be, it's worth it! It'll give us a deeper understanding of each other as we all journey through this part of our stories together. And that's a good thing.