

Faith Stories™ A personal perspective: Pastor Ken Holdorf

There are a lot of stories that have been told and written throughout the years. Many of them are put into a collection of stories which we then call as history books. The dictionary indicates that history is a chronological written picture of time. One might call the Bible as a history book. But it has a very unique picture of not just history, but His story, namely, the His Story of how God created the universe and all creatures and how he brought meaning and life to people through revealing Himself in the person and work His Son, Jesus Christ. This His story also gives a picture of the end of time and a glimpse into the picture of eternity. We are very thankful that God has revealed Himself in His story.

History is not just His story, but it also becomes My story as one is born into this world and become a part of His story. And as a person lives out his or her years here on earth, human beings become a part of the His story of God. My story can be written down in an autobiographical or biographical book. So we come to this question, "What is Your story from the time you were born to the time that you are now reading these words? As a creation of God, and as a child of God through faith in Jesus as Savior from sin and Lord of life, and as a servant of the Lord Jesus with a purpose in living, what kind of book can we write that would be called "My Faith Story?"

This Faith Story can be communication in any number of ways:

1. By using words that come out of our mouth. We can tell the story.
2. By using pen and paper to write down our story. We can write the story.
3. By drawing pictures to communicate our story. We can draw the story.
4. By putting our story on tape so that people could see and hear the story. We can tape our story.

But why would it be important for one to communicate your story?

1. Because your story is a part of history.
2. Because your story is a part of His story.
3. Because it is a way that you can celebrate Your Story in His story.

Your story could be viewed in two different ways:

1. It is just my own story. Like when I was born, what I looked like, what I did, where I worked, and a host of other facts about your life.
2. But it can also be much more than just your own story. Rather than calling it my story, we could call it a Faith story. This would involve questions like: How did God bring me to faith in Jesus?

What interests, passions and gifts has God given me. What purpose does God have for my life?

How is my faith going to get me through the struggles of living on this earth? How has God taught me to trust and rely on Him for all things and get through those tough times? How has God taught me to live

with a sense of peace and joy and significance? All of these questions become a part of my history or should we really say, part of His Story.

How does God view the concept of your faith story?

1. Our God may not use that particular working, but He would say it this way, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses," which means, "You shall be my faith stories."
2. The Scriptures record many faith stories of the people of God. Here are a few faith stories recorded in His Story book: Hebrews chapter 11, Psalm 23, II Corinthians 12, Philippians 1.

How can God use Faith Stories?

1. Faith Stories of God's people are used by God to communicate who He is and how He has revealed Himself through the person and work of His Son, Jesus. His use of our faith stories is clearly communicated in Romans chapter 10. The Holy Spirit uses the faith stories of God's people to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that others might come to know that there is salvation from sin and death through the cross of Jesus and the open tomb of His resurrection.

I Timothy 2:1-7 indicates how God uses faith stories to carry out His desire that people come to know and believe in Jesus for salvation.

2. There may be some times when a person may realize just how God is using your faith story. There may be other times when you are not aware of how your faith story is being used by God. Your faith story may have an immediate impact on people or it may be months or years later. But it is our primarily task to simply communicate our faith stories and let the Holy Spirit work.

We are to just give our witness of how God has been at work in us and the Holy Spirit will use our faith story to work faith in others.

What should be included in a faith story?

1. Basically, only one thing: It should include the story of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior from sin and death. It is a belief that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and rose from the death to give me the sure hope of eternal live. That John 3:16.
2. Your faith story, however, will be very different that anyone else's. There is really no set structure or outline to follow. The Holy Spirit will guide you in your own faith story.
3. Your faith story may be short or long. It could be called a short faith story. Or it could be called a lengthy faith story. It could be a short conversation or it could be book length. The length of your faith story may be determined by just how much time you have or the situation in which you find yourself.

4. Here are some thoughts as to what might be included in your faith story:
 - a. How you were brought to faith in Jesus as your Savior.
 - b. How someone encouraged you in a tough time in your life.
 - c. A time when you failed at something and learned how great is God's forgiving love.
 - d. An experience of tremendous joy.
 - e. Dealing with the lose of a loved one.
 - f. A milestone in your life that was very significant.
 - g. God's gift of a close friend.
 - h. A situation in which God was at work in restoring a broken relationship with someone.
 - i. Perseverance in relying on God's presence and power to get through a difficult time.

So you can see that you may have more than just one faith story, but God has given you many faith stories to share.

What kind of media can be used to deliver a faith story?

There is no set one way in which a faith story may be communicated. Here are variations in how faith stories may be delivered:

1. Words coming out of your mouth in daily conversation with people.
2. Writing down your thoughts and printing them in a booklet, a note book, a journal, or book.
3. Putting your faith story on an audio tape.
4. Putting your faith story on a video tape.
5. Including a faith story in your will.
6. Sharing your faith story to any kind of group of people.
7. Telling your faith story in your family with individuals or in family gatherings.
8. Sharing your faith story in a worship service.
9. Putting your faith story in the form of a poem
10. Putting your faith story in a musical song.
11. You might find other creative ways to deliver your faith story.