

The Department of Church Growth and Development

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church



A Secret Tool for Successful Faith-Sharing

John 4:4-26

Believe it or not, you already have a very effective tool that will help you point people to Jesus Christ. That tool is your personal story. You have a powerful story.

Every believer has a story, and when you tell how Jesus encountered you and changed your life, it yields powerful results. Just think about the woman Jesus met at the well on that hot afternoon in Samaria. Jesus had a nice conversation with her about the “living water” that only He could give her. Then He exposed a dark part of her life, some things about her that no stranger could know. Her life was a wreck. She had been married five times. She was living with a man who wasn’t her husband. The women in her little village ostracized her. She was hurting deeply. But in all of her pain, Jesus offered hope — a clean heart and a new start.

After her encounter with Jesus, she ran back to her village and said, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”, (John 4.29 ESV). The whole town came out to see Jesus, simply because of one woman who encountered Jesus and was changed. Her story had such a powerful effect that we read later, Many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did,” (John 4.39 ESV).

The story of how you met Jesus is often called your personal testimony. Just as a person may give a testimony in a courtroom as to what he has seen and heard, when you give your personal testimony, you are sharing about your personal experience with Jesus and how He changed your life. I like to call it your “Christ story.” It’s the story of how you met Christ, and that is a powerful thing.

In (Revelation 12.11 NLT) there is a picture of believers in heaven who, against all odds, defeated Satan and led many people to Christ. It says, “And they have defeated him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony.” Think about it. Your story is so powerful that Satan himself can’t stand against it!

Why is it so powerful? One reason is that your personal story can’t be refuted. People can debate you all day long about intellectual arguments for the faith, but they can’t refute your personal experience. Your personal experience with Jesus and how He changed your life is above debate. Some may try to explain it away or excuse it, but they can’t deny the fact that your life is different because of Christ.

In addition, your testimony demonstrates God’s power. When a person says, “I was living an immoral life — living with a man who wasn’t my husband — and I was hopeless and alone until I met Jesus, and now I’m a totally different person.” How can such a change be explained? There is something significant that happens when people see God’s power at work in another person’s life. It’s undeniable.

Another reason your “Christ story” is so powerful is that it’s real. People can spot a fake. We all seem to be hardwired with intuitive sensors to detect people who make religious claims but actually aren’t any different than anyone else. When you share what Jesus has done for you, there is a genuineness and authenticity that is palpable.

You may be thinking, “I don’t have a dramatic story.” I remember hearing about a church that was having “testimony night” and invited people to stand up and share what Jesus had done in their lives. One old granny made her way to the microphone and began speaking in a soft voice. “I want to thank Jesus for all the things He delivered me from in my life. He delivered me from alcohol and abuse. He delivered me from sexual immorality and drug addiction. He delivered me from a life of crime and a heart filled with hate.” As she continued to list off all the things God had delivered her from, the crowd sat in disbelief. “How could this sweet old lady have done all these things?” Then the granny said, “Since I gave my life to Jesus at an early age, I didn’t fall into any of these things. He delivered me from all of them!”

Maybe your story is like this granny — you came to Christ early in life, and He delivered you from all those things. Then praise God for that! Don’t be afraid to tell how Jesus came into your life even as a young child. We are so accustomed to hearing the stories of people like rock stars, athletes and gang members who came from really dark places and experienced a huge change in their lives, that sometimes we can feel that if our story isn’t very dramatic, then it isn’t worth telling. But the opposite is true. Your story is powerful because it happened to you!

Your story is powerful because it displays God’s power in your life in a genuine and real way. Your story is powerful because there is someone else out there just like you who needs to hear it. Many people can’t relate to dramatic stories, but they will relate to you. So don’t bury your story; put it out there for everyone to see. Tell what Jesus has done for you, and then let the Spirit do the rest.

One hot afternoon in Samaria, a wayward woman met Jesus. Because she simply shared her story, many in her village came to know Jesus in a personal way. Just think what could happen if you share your story with the people God brings into your life!

