

Glory Stories: How to Tell Yours and Make Jesus Known

Nothing conveys God's love better than telling our stories of God's unfailing love. Our surrender to His on the Cross has become for us the threshold for a new creation; He broke our low ceiling and opened for us an eternal horizon. Yes, we had other options: gay selves and relationships, even 'gay marriages' and becoming another gender. His love summoned our surrender.

As we enter into the last few days of our 40-days of prayer, we realize we can become an answer to our prayers. We can make Him known by making known how He is actually setting us free.

Rocky Delgado and I had the privilege of sharing our stories for a large gathering of Catholic priests. As you may recall, Rocky's same-sex attraction devolved into him identifying as a woman, winning drag shows and nearly expiring in that culture of death. Christians stood in the gap for him; they prayed and fasted and included him in their community until he was ready to surrender to Jesus. At 20-years-old, he began the long road home that continues today. Rocky is not a Catholic. But as he shared, waves of mercy rolled out upon that sea of beloved black-robed men in a way that they perhaps had never experienced. A well-told testimony of mercy can be more effective than a scholarly catechism.

How do we best tell our stories? After 35 years of giving mine and training the 'Rockys' of this world, I offer you 10 points.

1. Use the Cross as your structure; ensure your story lines up with Jesus'. The irresistible love of the Father, surrender to the Cross (many variations here), then the new life that arose and is arising. If you are avoiding the Cross in your brokenness, please do not testify. We want to know Him more, not be confused by your artful dodging.
2. Tell your story only if the gains are time-tested. We are all vulnerable to relapse. Bear witness of self-control only if you have some. Otherwise, the enemy will successfully knock you off your public platform.
3. If you share about other persons, especially family members, make sure they know what you are saying about them. They may not agree on your take of history. But talking it out will soften any tendency to vilify others. You lose people when you speak in melodramatic ways of family members.
4. Balance the gory with the glory. Be clear about the brokenness in your life but do not amp it up. What is evil will speak for itself. Give the corollary of how Jesus is turning around foul things with His just, merciful love.
5. Be specific and share experiences that convey the essence of your pain and your healing. People remember well-told memories more than psychobabble and Christian lingo. This is an art. You will get better at it.
6. Describe a restoration that includes a variety of interventions. No one thing set you free. Consider the host of encounters and disciplines that helped you. Yes we know Jesus is healer. How did He heal you? Be specific.

7. Tell us the benefits of healing. What are you now free for? In other words, make a case for why I should go the way of the Cross with my brokenness.
8. Describe a process that continues to this day. You are never done becoming a good gift. You are saved and getting saved, chaste and becoming chaste.
9. Anchor your hope in Jesus with His body. Of course we all have experiences of the church's failure. But you would not have hope today if not for some Christians. They are the healing church for you. Unite Head and Body.
10. Tailor your story to context. Trim it according to time constraints. Be led by the Spirit to share snippets to someone in need NOW. You are good news.