

Wednesday Bible Study

July 10, 2023

Evangelism: Encountering & Experiencing Stories

Acts 3: 1-10

I. Introduction

A. Toni Morrison (1931-2019)

1. Nobel laureate in literature; author of 20+ pieces of literature inclusive of novels, plays, and editorial contributions.
2. Upon receipt of her Nobel Prize on December 7, 1993, she offered in her acceptance speech this oft. quoted statement: “*We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives.*”¹
3. What do you suppose this statement means?
 - *We die (as meaning of life):*
 - *We do language (measure of life):*
4. What feelings, thoughts personally come to mind as you hear these words?
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5. Morrison is primarily identified as a storyteller; she had the uncanny ability to bring stories to life. For the child of God, we experience life by the sharing of our stories.
 - In Relationship to Creation
 - In Relationship to the Creator
6. For the Christ follower, our story must be shared in light of “HIS story”, which is the work of God revealed to the world through Jesus Christ.
7. This is the very heart of evangelism, because if we take the command Jesus gave to us in Matthew’s Gospel to “*go ye therefore*”², our ability to share Christ is made real by our experience of Christ, or our story of how Christ has been active in our lives.
8. Now, like any story there are critical components to Evangelism:
 - Plot / Purpose
 - Characters Involved
 - Outcome

¹ <https://www.vulture.com/2019/08/toni-morrison-nobel-prize-speech.html>

² Matthew 28:19-20

II. SHARING THE STORY (EVANGELISM) ENCOMPASSES 3 REALITIES

A. EVERY PERSONAL STORY INVOLVES SOME CONFLICT

1. Vs. 1-2: Where is the conflict present?
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2. Since conflict always involves more than one party, if you place yourself in the beggar's shoes, where do you experience conflict in this scene?
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3. When we engage individuals to share "the story", we have to be sensitive to the fact that they are encountering conflict, even if they are not willing to share what that conflict is.
4. Why do you suppose this is the case?
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5. What are some of the conflicts that our local community experiences?
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6. In order to approach someone who is encountering conflict, we must be sensitive to our personal conflicts and how they inform our presence
 - Man was carried daily to temple gate: not all encounters were positive encounters
 - Man was placed at the gate called Beautiful: a paradox of what beauty actually is
 - Lame from birth: how we view people can dictate whether we pity them or empower them

B. EVERY STORY NEEDS A PRESENTER

1. In stories, each story is inclusive of a narrator. The narrator serves as a witness who gives testimony and tells the outcome (s)he has watched.
2. Within said role, what makes the narrator effective at their task?
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3. The task of the Christian narrator / storyteller, is to present the truth of "what is", "what was", so the focus turns to "what can be"
4. Vs. 4- 9: There are four layers of presentation in this passage; what are they?
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5. When we “tell the story”, we must present it in such a way that identifies the following:
 - “*Look upon us*”:
 - “*We don’t have silver and gold, but what we do have...*”:
 - “*...he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God*”:
 - “*...and they were all filled with wonder and amazement...*”:
 6. As the man encountered the crowds in celebration and excitement over the outcome, we must too engage others with excitement and celebration in our hearts.

C. EVERY STORY NEEDS / SERVES A PURPOSE

1. Vs. 10: “*And they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to them.*”
2. Notice the progression of the former lame man; what does he do upon healing?
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3. Why do you suppose he enters the temple instead of returning home?
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4. What do you suppose was Luke’s purpose in including the response of the crowd in the temple?
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5. Every story experiences a climax, or peak. For the world, the climax is the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.
6. In light of the overarching story, individually we experience the climax through personal transformation.
7. What is your point of celebration?
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8. The celebration of Christ’s work in our lives not only fulfills a purpose, but gives us purpose: to share with others that they too may experience personal transformation.