

Finding Story by Sam Duregger

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Slide 1 - Finding the Story: speaking, preaching, teaching, and fundraising

Introduction - You and I are backpacking through the wilderness, and we come upon an expansive aspen grove. Gazing upon this grandeur you may focus on the beautiful green tapestry, I may focus on the stark pale bark, and our healthy friend who couldn't keep up and is resting on a log a mile away may look up and see it as a single organism of aspen, clawing its way up the mountain side.

Each of our lives are a perspective, a story, no one in here will have the same story. We are a unique collection of experiences, a story that God has given us to tell. Today, I hope to awaken the storyteller within each of us, but first let's set our expectations... i've already said story 6 times, but we haven't really defined it yet so...

Slide 2 - What is story?

Slide 3 - Donald Miller

"a story is... a character that wants something and overcomes conflict to get it."

Slide 4 - Fundamentals of Story

Protagonist, Antagonist, Conflict, Resolution, Redemption, Happy Ever After

Salvation does not mean the end of conflict... if life is a three act play we are not done yet... the climactic scene is death and the Happy Ever After is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where Jesus will be popping open the fruit of the vine.

Slide 5 - Evolution of Story:

Oral

- Shared experience
- Community living
- Knowledge passed down by story by Elders
- Learning was done next to someone older (Relational)
- Relationship with God was wrapped up in metaphor and mythology

1436 - Print Age of Communication -

- the invention of the Gutenberg Press
- written word, peasants learn to read and write
- linear thinking, logical progression
- Emphasis on the Word
- Dissection of the text - God becomes something indentifiable
- Religion becomes a set of propositions

1950's - Broadcast Age of Communication

- invention of the television
- programming still in linear progression
- use of visual cues instead of auditory or written
- Communicator takes center stage (JFK vs Richard Nixon - 1960) Interesting to note that those listening thought Nixon won, those watching thought JFK won
- Abstract and metaphor come alive in movies and visual storytelling
- Religion becomes a program

1990's - Digital Age of Communication

- Internet becomes widespread through the World Wide Web
- information is accessible 24/7
- abstract begins to make a comeback
- Religion becomes a potluck
- Convergence/Upheaval
- our parents backyard was their world, our backyard is the world

Slide 6 - The Importance of Story is coming back around

In this age of convergence, where noise infiltrates our everyday, something is on the comeback... the importance of story to effect us rather than to affect us.

We have come to a place in history where Story has been used to entertain so much, it has lost it's life-changing influence on our lives. We have become a culture that is affected by news stories, blog posts, youtube videos, blockbuster movies, best selling books... but not effected by them.

The difference is subtle but increasingly important, Story has been neutered of it's power by excessive dramatization and visual exploitation. We don't believe a lot of stories that are out there because most of what we see isn't believable.

What was the last movie/book that Affected you?
Hotel Rwanda/Kite Runner

What was the last movie/book that Effected you?
Anvil: The Story of Anvil/The Last American Man

So, how can we be better story tellers...

Slide 7 - Speaking your story

Grab the person next to you...

1. Share the earliest childhood memory,
2. Share something random or funny that happened this week,
3. Share a present struggle,
4. Finally, share a dream that you have for the future.

When we speak from our experiences, from our present struggles, and from our dreams, we show ourselves. We become transparent and vulnerable.

When your speaking to a group, if you can find out as much about the group as possible... be contextual, use things that will relate to them. Sports, Culture, Politics, et cetera.

If I was going to talk to a campus ministry about story... i'd better have a story about campus ministry, or something that will help them identify with me.

Josh Lantz - story about sitting in a truck with him talking about girls and bike riding.

When speaking make sure you tell your story.

Slide 8 - Preaching our Story

Preaching is proclaiming the Good news. It is much more inspiration than it is information.

What worst way to teach? Bring in 20-1000 people sit them in uncomfortable chairs and talk to them in propositions and formula.

When you are given a chance to preach do so in a way that illuminates for them an alternate reality, a side of the kingdom that is hidden from their eyes.

A 10 yr old can preach just as good as a 60 year old pastor. It is about sharing what God is doing in our midst.

[POINT TO SOMEONE]

What is God doing or What has God done in your life this week?

1 Peter 3:15 - "but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,"

Slide 9 - Teaching in Story

The Gospel as Story

Only in embracing the full story of the Bible, can we fully discern the redemptive aspects of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. The full story of the Gospel encompasses all manner of conflict – tragedy, comedy and fairy tale – for each of these give a perspective of the Gospel that must be heard. For when we perceive only one aspect of the Gospel our understanding of truth is deficient; truth (like life) is a constant mixture of tragedy, comedy and fairy tale, and this is the fullness of the Gospel... the truth of life.

“The Preaching of the Gospel is a telling of the truth or the putting of a sort of frame of words around the silence that is truth because truth in the sense of fullness, of the way things are, can at best be only pointed to by the language of poetry – of metaphor, image, symbol – as it is used in the prophets of the Old Testament and elsewhere.”

- Frederick Buechner; Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy and Fairy Tale

What are Jesus' Parables?

Let's dig into the Scriptures... can we find 3 different parables?

Tragedy

Comedy

Fairy Tale

A word on tragedy:

We do our faith a disservice by avoiding the darkness of life, as we speak of Jesus' redemptive act, we misplace the climax of the story in the conversion of the sinner, as opposed to where it truly lies in death – the final act. In speaking truth about the Gospel (about life) we cannot continue to avoid the tragedy. It can no longer be overlooked as a postscript in our attempts to persuade someone to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. It must be boldly proclaimed, we must be transparent in our display of the broken life found in Christ. In this transparency truth is allowed to ruin our perception, and turn our tragic life into a beautiful stained glass window where brokenness and diversity come together to allow the glory of the Lord to shine through and illuminate the dreary day!

A word on Comedy:

In this sense comedy is communal — it is shared relief at the passing of danger. Laughter is a coping mechanism allowing us to recognize the danger of life and yet not be paralyzed by it... Just as tears of sorrow are outward release of our inward pain, the joy of laughter liberates us from the tension in our gut and lightens our shared reality.

So. In embracing the comedy of the Gospel, we are not making light of it, rather we are fervently endorsing the truth of it. Hope is the wellspring of laughter, faith is the expectation of the impossible and love is the root that binds us together. A threefold cord is not easily broken, and if our goal is to entwine our lives to these Gospel truths, we must see our life as comedy.

A word on Fairy Tale:

An observation: when we talk of God to the unbeliever we most times talk of a formula in which a relationship can be rationally deduced to a repeated prayer and a assigned text. Hear me, I am NOT under emphasizing the importance of the reading Bible and spending time in prayer, but I am pleading with the proponents of a linear gospel to stop preaching Christ as a solution to the problems of this world. Instead let's begin to recapture the imagination of the lost, to invigorate the senses that have become rusty from inactivity.

Tell the story of the Gospel, and don't leave out the parts that seem unreal or unbelievable. Tell of the darkness and decay that has overrun the beauty of our world, don't omit the mystery of winged gods that do battle for our souls in the invisible night, and please don't exclude the promise that we are prince and princesses with access to the majestic throne of grace. Proclaim to us that in a world of tribulation and adversity, there is joy to be found and a lasting hope that darkness will be overridden and the blood from our wars will water the flowers of the field and produce a harvest of souls that float on the wind like dandelion seeds into eternities bosom.

Slide 10 - Fundraising by Story

So we've talked about the elements in a effectual story, we've talked about the importance of sharing your story, and the difference in Preaching and in Teaching.

The final piece of the story is some practicalities, some new avenues, or old ones that we must be aware of and use.

When fundraising the biggest mistake people make is forgetting to share the story behind the impact. We are quick to share numbers and figures... we had this many salvation's, rededication's and baptisms last year - up 13.6% from the same time last year.

In doing this we miss an opportunity to preach to new donors... Each time you meet with a new donor or a prospective donor - HAVE A FEW STORIES.

I'm not talking about a canned story but something recent, something relevant, something that will inspire and give the prospective donor a glimpse into what your ministry is all about.

Don't forget about the monthly donors who have been given religiously for years, they need to be reminded what they are giving to, what they are apart of!

Slide 11 - Practical Applications

The next few slides are going to give you some new ideas utilizing multiple forms of media... Don't get excited about technology and forget that face-to-face interactions with your donors is still the best way to build a relationship.

Think of these as ancillary fundraising techniques utilizing story and giving donors a shared narrative to be apart of.

Slide 12 - Carlos Whittacker

Slide 13 - My day in 90 seconds

Somebody asks you... so really what do you do in a day? Show them how hectic your life can be.

Slide 14 - Time Outside

Slide 15 - A mini-documentary

This was done by a friend who is in film school at OU. Who do you know that needs to hone their gift in visual story telling... or photography... or whatever. Utilize artists who need opportunities and will usually love to be apart of your ministry in that capacity.

Slide 16 - Twitter, Blog, Facebook, lifeshare event

Make sure your donors know where they can find you online... a Digital Business Card with links to your social media sites, blogs, et cetera. Engage your audience, with questions, opportunities to volunteer, and user generated content.

Slide 17 - your turn

God has given you a story to share with the world. Go and share it.