

HIS STORY—Part 1

(1Jn 1:1-4)

UNDERSTANDING JESUS REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING STORIES

- Humans love stories. Our stories are repositories of meaning. They provide a framework for making sense of life
- God also loves stories. His stories are revelation. They contain truth *about God from God* that point us *to God*
- The Gospels are filled with Jesus *telling* stories and stories *about* Jesus
- Our new series is a series of stories entitled, ***Jesus: His Story***
- Our faith exists primarily in the form of stories
- The primary purpose of these stories is to bear witness to Jesus

From the very first day, we were there, taking it all in—we heard it with our own ears, saw it with our own eyes, verified it with our own hands. The Word of Life appeared right before our eyes; we saw it happen! And now we're telling you in most sober prose that what we witnessed was, incredibly, this: The infinite Life of God himself took shape before us. We saw it, we heard it, and now we're telling you so you can experience it along with us, this experience of communion with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Our motive for writing is simply this: We want you to enjoy this, too!
(1Jn 1:1-4, *The Message*)

QUOTES OF NOTE

The Christian faith is first of all a story to be experienced, not a creed to be defended. (Barsotti and Johnson, *Finding God in the Movies*)

It is possible to think of the Gospel and our preaching of it as...a speaking of the truth about the way things are. And it is possible to think of that truth as tragedy, as comedy, and as fairy tale. The Gospel is bad news before it is good news. It is the news that man is a sinner, to use the old word, that he is evil in the imagination of his heart, that when he looks in the mirror all in a lather what he sees is at least eight parts chicken, phony, slob. That is the tragedy. But it is also the news that he is loved anyway, cherished, forgiven, bleeding to be sure, but also bled for. That is the comedy. And yet, so what? So what if even in his sin the slob is loved and forgiven when the very mark and substance of his sin is that he keeps turning down the love and forgiveness because he either doesn't believe them or doesn't want them or just doesn't give a damn? In answer, the news of the Gospel is that extraordinary things happen to him just as in fairy tales extraordinary things happen.... Zacchaeus climbs up a sycamore tree a crook and climbs down a saint. Paul sets out a hatchet man for the Pharisees and comes back a fool for Christ. It is impossible for anybody to leave behind the darkness of the world he carries on his back like a snail, but for God all things are possible. That is the fairy tale. All together they are the truth. (Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth*)

Each incident in the life of Jesus as it is taught or proclaimed in the tradition has the possibility of bearing a valid witness to Jesus apart from and independent of any other event. That is precisely the nature of each Gospel as a whole and of each unit within the Gospel tradition—to bear witness to Jesus of Nazareth. (Barker, Lane, & Michaels, *The New Testament Speaks*)

A kind of fatalism in which one's life is seen as fundamentally out of control, in which one is a victim of time, is rendered impotent by a narrative construal, which allows one to integrate one's misfortunes into an ongoing framework. (Stanley Hauerwas, *Naming the Silences*)