



DATE	August 26, 2018
SPEAKER	Pete Schwalm
TITLE	The Power of Story
SERIES	The Bible has a lot to say to each of us. Different verses speak to us at different times, but often, there are a few highlighted verses we keep coming back to. Let's hear from our pastors about the verses they live by and why they're so meaningful.

Unlike many of his friends, the Apostle John lived to be an old man. He had seen it all, so to speak. His writings are full of concern that we would remain true to Jesus and not cave to the pressures of the world before our story is complete.

Warm-up questions :

1. Pastor Pete mentioned that every person is a living story. All of us experience life-changing turning points. What are some of your life experiences that led to discoveries about God? How has He used those experiences and discoveries in your life?

In John's first story, the Gospel he wrote, he explained his reason for writing in chapter 20, verse 30 & 31. The first life-changing discovery: know/believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One of God, for you.

2. Do you know/believe that Jesus is the Anointed One of God, for you? Why and how did you come to that belief?
3. Worship is giving focused, concentrated attentiveness on who God is and what He has done in history. Why do you think John chose to focus on these 7 miracles Jesus performed by Jesus? (See Footnote listing these miracles.)
4. In John's day, almost everything in the daily life of the Roman empire would have portrayed the emperor as supreme authority. John wrote the gospel to remind his readers who the real King is. How does our daily life test our allegiance to Jesus?

John's next story was from the letter, 1st John. The second life-changing discovery: embrace the triple AAA solution. (The "triple AAA solution" is Agree with God, Admit your responsibility and Affirm your forgiveness.)

5. In 1 John 1, the word "we" appears over 17 times. What truths was John getting at with so many plural pronouns? (Pastor Pete notes that John includes himself in his writing. This shows humility as he confesses that he is also a sinner.)
6. What actions in your life show that you agree with God, that you have accepted responsibility for your life, and that you affirm your forgiveness? In what ways do you confess your sins?
7. How do you embrace the AAA solution? Do you take ownership, confess your sins and ask for forgiveness?

The 3rd story is the early parts of Revelation, chapters 1-11. John is a very old man now. Having stayed the course, he refused to compromise and has been exiled to a prison colony for his faith. The third life-changing discovery: Share your story of personal forgiveness.

8. Discuss some possible connections between God's big, big story in Revelation, the wrap-up of world history in the coming of Jesus, and your personal story of God's forgiveness in Jesus. (Refer to Rev 5:9-10 or Rev. 7: 9-10)
9. Do you have a personal story of forgiveness? What steps are you taking to deal with sin? How could your story give hope to others if you shared it? Is there a next step for you?

In the 4th story, Revelation 12-20, John's story unfolds many trials and tribulations on the earth preceding the final establishment of the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. The war between good and evil calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people (Rev. 13:10). The fourth life-changing discovery: Learn to own your trials.

10. What does it mean to "own" your trials?
11. How does suffering change your perspective on the cares of this life? Do you find good in your trials?
12. Where does our patient endurance come from? What are choices you can make to lay hold of patient endurance in the midst of daily trials?
13. Discuss the self-examination question Pastor Schwalm asked: "How near to God in your daily practice do you choose to live?" What is this question getting at?

Wrapping it up:

14. Of the 4 Life changing discoveries from John the Apostle, which speaks to your heart the most? Why?
 - Know Jesus;
 - Confess your sin;
 - Share your story;
 - Own your trials.
15. John wrote his writings to keep us from falling, to present us to the Lord without fault in love and with great joy, and to bring the Lord the glory. How can you share with others your personal story of how our Great Deliverer, Jesus, has loved you, forgiven you and given you the gift of eternal life by grace through faith in Him alone?

You might want to close by reading aloud the scripture Pete used for his benediction, from Jude 24-25: "To Him who is able to keep you from falling [*Pete added, when the trials come*] and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore. Amen!"

Footnote – 7 miracles of Jesus in the Gospel of John:

1. Turned water into wine (John 2:1-11)
2. Healed the royal official's son (John 4:43-54)
3. Healed at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9)
4. Fed 5000 (John 6:1-5)
5. Walked on the water (John 6:16-25)
6. Healed a man born blind (John 9:1-41)
7. Raised Lazarus from the grave (John 11:1-44)