

## So, What's Your Story?

Last week I wrote about the beginning of my journey as a young teenager going to Church. I love to hear the stories of how people came to their faith. For some it was easy, everything just fell into place, for others it was harder, perhaps they fought against it. The best stories are from Pastors. I love to hear their stories. For most the journey was not easy, some fought against it, like Jonah when God told him to go to Nineveh. One Pastor told me years ago that he kept hearing the call but was sure God did not mean him, finally there were so many stumbling stones placed in his path that he surrendered. For one Pastor it was a beautiful girl in choir and his own faith that led him to his journey and then an illness that defined that journey for him. For another it was a kind woman who saw in him something that he did not and led him to church after the death of his mother. Others, like John Wesley were raised in a strict Christian home, son of a Pastor and a mother who was deeply religious but even John Wesley did not feel his faith blossom until that defining moment when he "felt his heart strangely warmed." Faith is personal, for some it is a quiet acceptance for others a moment of clarity, for others it is like a lightning strike. I was sitting in church as the Pastor served communion and uttered those words, "Christ's blood shed for you," and I thought, but I am not worth it. The words came to me "God says you are." I understood in that moment that Christ died for each of us, even me. That was 20 years after I first entered that small Methodist Church, I am a slow learner. The Walk to Emmaus was another defining moment when I was able to lay down the hurts and anger that had impacted my life. One of those Pastors mentioned was the instrument God used to accomplish that. I will be forever grateful to the Pastors that have touched my life and grateful for the stories that led them to Christ.

Paul told his story:

Galatians 1:13,15-16, 21-24 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. But when God who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace was pleased to reveal his son in me so that I might preach him among the gentiles, I did not consult any man. Later I went to the churches of Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report. "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.

Lord, we thank you for the stories of faith found that led us to you. Be with us Lord, be with those who are ill and those who grieve. Be with our Church may we truly be the hands and feet of Christ as we seek to serve you. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and watch over him and his family. Be with our Staff and Leaders, bless them and guide them. We thank you Lord for the blessing of each day, for the food on our tables, the shelter of our homes, the blessings of our families and your love that sustains us. In the name of Jesus, we pray.  
Amen

Grace Epperson