

# MY *Jesus* STORY

## FILM SCRIPT

# KNOWING YOUR STORY

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## SESSION ONE

### 1.1 - Introduction

*“There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup>The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, <sup>3</sup>but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.*

*<sup>4</sup>“Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.” (2 Samuel 12:1-4)*

How does that story make you feel?

If you're like me, you feel angry and frustrated at just how awful that rich man was. And your heart probably went out to the poor man. The man who seemed so kind and gentle in raising this lamb almost as member of the family.

I suspect, in just a few sentences, you have created a whole picture in your mind. You've created characters and emotions. And you even have an emotional response.

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This is a story that God's prophet, Nathan, told King David right after he slept with Bathsheba – another man's wife – and then had her husband killed. We are told that when David heard this story, he burned with anger. That is, until he realised that the story was about him. Because of that story, David's eyes were opened to the awful things that he had done. You can read all about it in 2 Samuel 12.

Humans love stories. We love hearing them. Whether it's watching a movie, reading a novel, a comic, playing a video game, or perhaps through a song or a poem.

Stories capture our imaginations. We love the action, the drama, the resolution, the plot twists, the hero, and the emotional experience of hearing a story. Stories can make us feel all kinds of things. They can make us laugh. They can bring us to tears. They can provoke us to action. They can change the way we look at the world.

Stories are so much more interesting than facts. In that story I shared earlier, Nathan could have just told David he was wrong. But instead, he tells a story. Because a story is not only more interesting than a fact. It is also much more powerful in creating change. Stories are one of the most powerful teaching tools that we have.

And stories are also personal. We each have our own story. Now, it may lack some of the drama of a blockbuster movie. But it is still your story. And it is still being written.

We may wish there were more exciting and compelling moments in our story. And I suspect, deep down, most of us hope our story will be significant. That it will matter. That it will be part of a bigger story.

The good news is that there is a bigger story. Of all the stories that humans have told through generations, there is one story that rises above them all. The greatest story ever told. And it's not a work of fiction. It's a true story. It is God's story. Revealed in the Bible. And it all centres on the person and work of Jesus.

You and I, and every person on this planet, is invited to enter into this story. Our little stories are invited to join the story of Jesus, who is the hero of God's story.

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And that's why this course is called 'My Jesus story'. It is about telling your story as part of Jesus' story. 'My Jesus story' is all about how Jesus' story connects with my story.

The Bible encourages us in the letter of 1 Peter:

*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. 1 Peter 3:15*

One way you can be prepared is to know how to tell your Jesus story. And I hope over these three sessions, you will be equipped to do just that. But before we get to your story, we first need to be clear on Jesus' story.

## 1.2 - My Story

Did you know that you are the only person with your story? No-one else in the world has the exact same story as you. That is part of what makes your story so powerful. It is unique to you.

There is great power in being personal. It can instantly build a connection with those who are hearing your story.

I could tell you about my three daughters, Emily, Kaitlyn and Zali. We have fun building castles together out of Lego. And every time there comes a point when the youngest decides they have had enough. And, as you can imagine, destruction and tears are the result.

Now, with just a few sentences in that personal story, you now know several new things about me. At least one of them will likely have made you feel a little more connected with me.

Maybe you relate to being a parent. Maybe we share a love of playing with Lego. Or maybe you sympathise in managing the sadness and frustration of others.

I might not have connected with everyone with that story, but I suspect most of you found some common ground in at least one part.

And if you and I were sitting face to face having a conversation, I would be looking to see which part connected with you and steer the conversation that way. Or if you got in first, you

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would make a comment about either parenting or Lego or destruction – whichever part connected with you. And the conversation would go from there.

This is how most conversations work. Of course, we tend to do it without thinking much about it.

But this is what makes your personal story so powerful. As you tell your story, your listeners are likely building connections and common ground without even realising it. And it is through sharing your personal story that you can help people to see afresh the true power of Jesus' story.

And so I'm going to ask you to reflect on your story, which only you can tell. And then consider how your story has been impacted by Jesus' story.

## **1.3 - Conclusion**

Well, the pieces are in place. Hopefully, you have had a chance to clearly articulate Jesus' story. And, you have a good idea about your own story.

So how do we bring these together?

There are many different ways you could tell your story.

The idea behind 'My Jesus Story' is simply this: to use your story to point to Jesus' story.

Ultimately, Jesus is not a part of our story. Rather, we are a part of his story.

In our next session, we will explore how to tell a good story. And we will suggest a useful framework for how to tell your story in a way that points to Jesus' story. I'll see you then.

# TELLING YOUR STORY

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## SESSION TWO

### 2.1 - Introduction

I love watching movies.

Whether it's being taken into another world as I watch a new movie, or getting nostalgic and re-watching an old favourite. There's nothing quite like being captured by a brilliant story.

Have you ever thought about what makes a great story?

There are lots of important parts – the setting; the characters; the genre; the author or actors. If any of these aren't right, it can ruin an otherwise great story. But here are two things that I think are crucial to telling a truly great story.

Firstly, a great story needs a **personal hook**. This is where the story allows you to relate to the characters in some way. If you can't relate to the characters at all, it makes it very hard to get involved in the story.

Great stories help you sympathise with the characters. You want them to succeed.

It may be a shared attribute – you've been in the same situation, or felt the same feelings. You might be asking the same questions that are being raised. Or you might share their desire for adventure.

Most often, we relate to characters through sharing a personal struggle.

It could be a struggle to find purpose and meaning in life. Or a desire to find your identity and work out who you really are. It could be the struggle of coping with a significant event, such as a tragedy, sickness or death. Or a struggle with a question that you just can't seem to find an answer to.

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Great stories have a personal hook that allows you to quickly and personally connect with the character.

Secondly, a great story falls flat without a **meaningful ending**. I am sure you can think of stories that you loved right until an ending that was underwhelming or disappointing.

A meaningful ending doesn't have to wrap everything up neatly. But the most powerful stories are those whose ending helps us to see the world in a new way. It might cause us to rethink our choices or preferences. Or give us a renewed thankfulness for what we already have.

Meaningful endings invite us to change in some way.

Two important elements that make great stories: a personal hook and a meaningful ending. Here's an example of this from the life of Jesus.

In chapter 4 of John's Gospel, he records the story of Jesus meeting a Samaritan woman at the well just outside of the local town.

As the conversation goes on between them, Jesus reveals the dark and sinful past of this woman. She has had five husbands, and is currently sleeping with a man who is not her husband. And it becomes clear that she is not exactly best friends with everyone in town. In fact, we're told that all this happened at about midday, which would have been very hot. And the only reason you would be drawing water from the well at that time is if you were an outcast from the town.

As Jesus and the woman continue talking, Jesus reveals to her some very powerful truths about who he is and what he has come to do.

So what does this woman do? We are told that she left her water jugs and ran back to town to tell people the story of what just happened.

Now we don't get to hear the whole story she tells, but John records for us two very short and powerful lines. Firstly, the woman says:

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<sup>29</sup> *“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”*

There are two great personal hooks here. The people might be drawn in because it sounds like an amazing magic trick. Or they might be interested to find the Messiah – God’s promised king. Either way, they probably want to know more.

John tells us the result of the woman’s story a few verses later:

<sup>39</sup> *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.”*

Notice the power of this woman’s story. Many in that town believed in Jesus because she told the story of her encounter with Jesus. Her story changed the way others saw Jesus.

A great story with a meaningful ending.

The truth is, your Jesus story is just as powerful. You may not think you have a very interesting or dramatic story. But there is no such thing as a boring Jesus story. Your Jesus story is powerful, not because it’s about you, but because it’s about Jesus.

## 2.2 Telling the wrong story

When a Christian tells the story of how they came to follow Jesus, we usually call it their ‘testimony’.

I hope that you have heard people share their stories before, and been deeply encouraged by them. It’s always remarkable to hear how God has worked in the lives of people from many different backgrounds and through vastly different means.

But I’ve also heard people share their story in such a way that it just didn’t feel right. What they said may well have been completely true. But I suspect they ended up telling a different story than the story they wanted to tell.

There are three common mistakes I think people can make when trying to tell their story. It’s very easy to fall into any of them. And I suspect we probably do it without even realising it. Let’s take a look at some examples, and see if you spot the error.

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I used to go out partying all the time. I would go out every weekend with all of my friends. We'd go on Friday night, we'd go on Saturday night, sometimes even Sunday night. And we'd go out dancing all night and drinking so much. There are so many stories that I shouldn't and won't tell you, but we had the best time. We'd come out after dancing and the sun would be up and we hadn't slept and it was the best. It was so much fun.

And then I came to a time in my life where I got to know Jesus, and I stopped doing all of the fun stuff. Didn't see my friends. And I didn't go out anymore. And now I go to church and I go to Bible study and I've built on my relationship with Jesus.

One of the most common mistakes people can make when sharing their story is to **glorify sin**.

It is amazing hearing the massive transformation that God can work in a person's life. And I think we are drawn to stories of people rising from the darkest depths to the light of Jesus. It can be a really powerful story.

The danger is when we speak about our old life in such a positive way, that Jesus can end up sounding rather boring. Imagine saying "I used to do all this cool and crazy stuff and it was so much fun and I have so many memories and friends from that time. But then I found Jesus and I don't do that anymore."

The first mistake is that we glorify sin. We make life without Jesus sound better than it was. Now, see if you can spot the second common mistake.

When I became a mum, I found myself with these really difficult children. And I was having a hard time, and I started to go to church and I heard what Jesus had done for me.

And I started to realise that I wasn't actually a very good parent. So I started reading books and I did a parenting course. I actually became a parent coach. I joined and created different Facebook groups around parenting and I starting doing yoga with all the mums. And now I've become this really awesome parent to my children.

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Did you spot it? The second common mistake is to **be your own hero**.

Your life had some kind of challenge or problem. You recognised sin in your life. And the hero who rescued you from that life was... you. You solved the problem. You fixed yourself. You made the decisions to be a better person. You made and achieved a great plan to get your life back on track. Whatever it was, you were the hero.

And, of course, if you're the hero, that leaves very little room for Jesus. Instead of talking about what Jesus has done for you, or how his Holy Spirit changed your heart – well, you end up just talking about yourself.

Okay, one more common mistake.

I have a really demanding job. I have a lot of responsibilities. I'm in a position of leadership, and I have a large team below me. And I found this was really, really stressful. Really challenging. Really taxing. And then I met a friend who took me to church, and I got to know Jesus.

Since that time, I don't have any work stress. Work's never on my mind. Life is just smooth sailing. And while I still have a lot of responsibilities and lead a large team, I just breeze on through with life because I met Jesus.

Did you hear how they described their life, now that they follow Jesus? Did it sound too good to be true? The third common mistake is to **pretend life is perfect**.

It's a mistake because it's just not true. If you have been a Christian for more than a week, you will certainly know that life still has its challenges. And if we pretend otherwise, then our story loses its power as quickly as it loses the truth.

Now, sometimes God does an amazing work in a person's life. Overnight you could give up an addiction, or become a completely different person. Of course God can do that. And they are wonderful stories to hear.

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But even the most dramatic transformations that happen overnight will still result in a life that is less than perfect.

If we tell a story that says we don't have struggles anymore, we will probably end up discouraging the people who hear our story. They might be left wondering if their struggles mean they don't really know Jesus.

Following Jesus can result in so many positive changes. It can change your perspective. It can give you great peace. It can provide power to overcome enormous challenges. We don't need to pretend life is perfect to make the story sound better.

Well, there are three common mistakes people can make when telling their story. You can glorify sin. You can be your own hero. You can pretend life is perfect.

So how do we avoid those and tell the right story?

Here are two ingredients you will need to tell your Jesus story:

Firstly, **make Jesus the centre**. If you have some great personal anecdotes about life growing up, that's great. Feel free to use them. But, ultimately, your Jesus story is more about Jesus than about you. It can be easy to talk about how I changed and what I did. The focus of your Jesus story is about what Jesus has done through you.

The second ingredient is to **make Jesus the hero**. When you tell your story, I should be more impressed by Jesus than by you. Of course, you're great. But Jesus is even better. So tell me how Jesus is the hero of your life.

With those two simple ingredients, you will go a long way to telling a very powerful Jesus story.

# SHARING YOUR STORY

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## SESSION THREE

### **3.1 - Introduction**

Perhaps you're wondering why you should go to the trouble of writing and sharing your story? Let me share three reasons why I think this is an exercise worth doing.

Firstly, it shows how God has worked in our lives. As you reflect on your Jesus story, I hope it might renew your thankfulness to God. But more than that, your Jesus story is a statement that shows that God can and does work in the lives of ordinary people. Telling our story reveals an important truth about God.

Secondly, preparing your Jesus story can be a great way to talk about Jesus with someone. It's not often someone will want to hear me ramble for 30 minutes about my life. But if I have carefully thought about the way I tell my story, I can tell the important points in just a couple of minutes. Your Jesus story might be a great way to respond to someone who asks 'Why are you a Christian? Why do you believe all that?'. And if you're feeling bold, you might even use it to strike up a conversation without being asked.

Thirdly, your Jesus story encourages others to treasure Jesus. You are telling me why Jesus is so important and amazing in your life. Why he is so precious to you. And as I hear the difference Jesus has made for you, I am inspired to remember or discover that same truth about Jesus for myself.

I hope that has given you enough motivation to get writing. In this final session, you will have time to continue writing and refining the way you tell your Jesus story. Once you've written your first draft, you might go back and consider if you've avoided some of the common mistakes that are easy to make. Is there a relatable hook to draw people in? Is Jesus the hero of your story?

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Finally, if you are writing these as part of a group, it would be great to make some time to share your stories, even if you haven't quite finished.

I hope you have found this material to be a useful tool in thinking about, shaping and writing your Jesus story. I look forward to hearing many wonderful stories of how Jesus has continued to work powerfully in our lives. So let's get to it.