



"Stories" - Part 7 [Finale] (Justin Worden: My Story of Faithfulness)

Tupos SM – November 16, 2011 – Wednesday Night Live

I. The Stories Of Our Lives

a. The Conclusion Of This Story

- Tonight we wrap up this series with a story that is a little closer to home (for me especially).
- We've heard video stories from some godly students and adults, we've heard your stories (that have been written & read), and now I'd like to share my story.

b. The Theme Of Each Story

- Jon Abel (God's Instrument), Jeremiah Anderson (Failure to Chaos), Nicole (Priorities Rearranged), Aaron Stone (The Turning), Ky Martin (Go), and Jud Heald (Directed to Skate)...
 - ...all leading to a deeper/more real **faith!**
- The purpose of our circumstances doesn't make sense sometimes, but the purpose of our story is to bring us to more faith in Christ!
- "Faith is not a distant view but a warm embrace of Christ." (John Calvin)
 - Let me share our warm embrace...



II. The Story Of Our Journey (2010-2011)

a. God's Faithfulness To Us

- I've always believe that God is always with us
 - "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Dt. 31:6, NIV)
- I've always believed faith is what saved me
 - "Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see." (Heb. 11:1, NIRV)

- I've always believed that God is in control
 - "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." (Jer. 29:11, Msg)
- ...but sometimes the journey of faith is tough!

b. Our Faithfulness To God

The 4 Main Events In Our Recent Journey:

- May 2010 = Finally pregnant (after trying almost 4 years) / Miscarriage in 1st 6 weeks
- July 2010 = Feel God calling us to begin adoption process (shared at Summer Camp...heartfelt, tiki torch lit beach time)
- November 2010 = Complete adoption classes & about ready to finalize adoption stuff and wait for a baby / We're pregnant! What? (Same week)
- July 2011 = Ethan William Worden arrives (picture on screen)



- It's been a roller coaster... but looking back, now we see how God was writing this part of our story.
- "Everybody kept saying & still says we got pregnant because we began the adoption process and just relaxed about trying to get pregnant so hard... but it truly was just our faithfulness to God and His faithfulness to us that brought Ethan into our lives." (Summer Worden)
- When God called us to adopt, we didn't understand why, we just trusted Him and began the process.
- It's almost like He said... "Okay, you followed me here, now I will bless you." And He did!
- That's what **faithfulness** can do!

c. What Is Faithfulness Anyway?

- Faith is so often talked about in church, but so often misunderstood... what is it really?

Hebrews 11:6 = "Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him." (NLT)

- Faith defined = **confidence, trust, loyalty, devotion**
 - Without trusting in & being devoted to God, we can't **please** Him... we probably disappoint him then
 - How do we trust Him? (Come to Him, draw near to Him)
 - "Draw me closer to You..."

- “The word ‘comes’ (*draws near*) is used repeatedly in Hebrews to refer to the privilege of drawing near to God (see 4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22). Faith is mandatory for those who approach Him (10:22).” (Compact Bible Comm, pg. 901)
- Once we draw closer to Him, we see Him more and we will be **rewarded** by Him more...
 - Don’t give up or give in, the story goes on:

d. It’s Not Over For You

- We thought we were at the end of our road and we still chose to listen to God!
- Even when you think it is over... think again:

Video = “It’s Not Over” (Visual Reality, Vol. 6, 3:26)

- “The only thing that is over is hopelessness.”
- These 4 stories all ring out with 1 message... it’s not over, even when it’s over!
- It wasn’t over for me and my family either...

Special Music = “Safe and Sound” (Written by Matthew West; Performed by Justin & Ethan Worden, & Daniel Moore)

- God’s all we’ll ever need... He is here with us now.
 - We are safe and sound!

III. The Best Part Of Our Stories

a. Our Father Is The Author

- Listen to this promise from **Romans 8:15** = “...you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, ‘Abba, Father’.” (NLT)
 - “Abba” = Daddy / a true Father!
- Not only is He our living Father, He is the Author of our story (through the good and bad chapters).
 - **Acts 3:15 (NLT)** Jesus = “the author of life”

b. We Are His Children

- If this adoption process has taught me anything... it is the importance of what adoption is.
- We are “**adopted**” by God (**permanent**)
 - Not something that can be divorced, like some parents do of their kids today.
- You are God’s child... there’s nothing better!
 - So, what’s your story? And how will you share it with others now?



Color code = blue (commentary/video), red (copyrighted quotes/story)
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Tupos Student Ministries

Small Group Life Application Sheet



Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Lesson Theme: Faith

Lesson Objective: God is writing a powerful story in each of us, and tonight we’ll learn more about part of Pastor Justin’s story (through the miscarriage, adoption, and pregnancy process). This conclusion of this series should be a powerful night, encouraging true faithfulness.

Lesson Text: **Hebrews 11:6** = “Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him.” (NLT)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it so hard sometimes to trust God’s timing?
2. How strong or weak would you say your faith is right now?
3. What does it mean to you to be “adopted” by God?

Prayer Time: Pray for a stronger faith in the Father. And ask Him to help you understand how awesome it is to be his “child”.



"Stories" - Part 7 [Finale] (Justin Worden: My Story of Faithfulness)

Tupos SM - November 16, 2011 - Wednesday Night Live

I. The _____ Of Our _____

a. The _____ Of This Story

b. The _____ Of Each Story

- "Faith is not a distant view but a warm embrace of Christ." (John Calvin)

II. The _____ Of Our _____

a. God's _____ To Us

- Deut. 31:6, Heb. 11:1, Jer. 29:11
- Sometimes the journey of faith is tough...

b. Our _____ To God



- It's almost like He said... "Okay, you followed me here, now I will bless you." And He did!
- That's what faithfulness can do!

c. What Is _____ Anyway?

Hebrews 11:6 = "Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him." (NLT)

- Faith = _____

d. It's Not _____ For _____

Special Music = "Safe and Sound" (Written by Matthew West; Performed by Justin & Ethan Worden, & Daniel Moore)

III. The _____ Of Our Stories

a. Our _____ Is The _____

- Romans 8:15
- "Abba" = _____

b. We Are _____

- We are "_____ " by God!
- So... what's your story?





"Stories" - Part 6 (Jud Heald: Directed To Skate)

Tupos SM – November 9, 2011 – Wednesday Night Live

Video = "Directed To Skate" (Visual Reality, Vol. 5, 4:14)

I. Directed Through Tragedy

a. Jud's Story

- Jud "Farmboy" Heald
- Knew the Lord... but he said: "I wasn't really trying to work for Him like I should be."
- God will use something tragic to get our attention:

b. Jud's Tragedy

- 1995 = broken neck, snowboarding accident
- Following his injury, Jud visited a chiropractor who unknowing pressed down on his head hard enough to do fatal or paralyzing damage.
- We've had some tragedies around here recently: Cassidy Knight & Cody Svendsen ([show obituary clippings from paper](#))
 - Tragedies suck sometimes! & they hurt!

c. Jud's Response

- 1st response = Why wasn't I dead?
- How did He respond to his tragedy?
 - Got into the Word
 - Sought after the Lord
 - Asked God to "show me, open the door"

II. Directed To Skate

a. Skateboarding For Jesus

- Catch the eye of the crowd and share his testimony
- God humbled him to get him to a place where He could be effective for Him and do what He wanted me to do
 - Humility is a tough thing sometimes!

"In the summer of 1986, two ships collided in the Black Sea off the coast of Russia. Hundreds of passengers died as they were hurled into the icy waters below. News of the disaster was further darkened when an investigation revealed the cause of the accident. It wasn't a technology problem like radar malfunction--or even thick fog. The cause was human stubbornness. Each captain was aware of the other ship's presence nearby. Both could have steered clear, but according to news reports, neither captain wanted to give way to the other. Each was too proud to yield first. By the time they came to their senses, it was too late." (**Closer Walk, December, 1991**)

b. What About Your Story?

- Think of a time in your life when God has used a difficult tragedy (no matter how horrible at the time) to show you something important you had to learn!
- Sometimes just following God and putting yourself out of the way is the best bet!
 - Like D.L. Moody once said, "Be humble or you'll stumble."

c. The First & Foremost

- Humility brings us to the place we should have been in the first place... following God more than "me".
- Jud's situation brought him to this understanding:
 - "It's not about what they think or we think... it's about what the Lord thinks."
- Have you ever wondered if your life (your story) would be easier if you just left God (the Author) write it for you (instead of you trying to write it)?
- What if... (before everything we do) we said this:

2 Chronicles 18:4 = "But first let's find out what the Lord says." (NLT)

- How would your life be different? ([Students share](#))
- Putting what God wants before what you want is so important! We call this idea GOD'S WILL!

III. Directed To God's Will

a. The Bottom Line

- Did you hear how Jud finished this interview? Profound statement:
 - "Bottom line is... you've gotta put the Lord first" (Jud Heald)
- Putting Him first means putting yourself last:

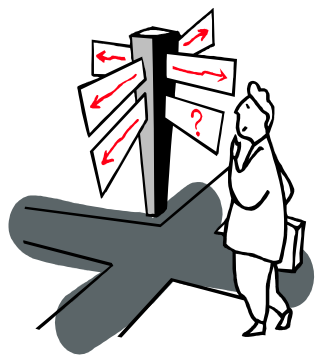
"You've heard of the Tour de France, the famous bicycle race in Europe. But you've probably never heard of the world's shortest bicycle race in India. All of the racers line up at the starting line, ready to go. They've got their riding pants, helmets, water bottles, numbers on their backs, corporate sponsors—the whole bit.

The starting pistol goes off and the racers jump onto their bikes. But nobody goes anywhere. They all stay put. You see, the object of this race is to see who can go the shortest distance possible within the specified time limit. Racers are disqualified if their bike tips over or if their feet touch the ground. The cyclists inch forward just enough to keep their bikes balanced. They can't go backward.

At the end of the race, when the gun goes off, the cyclists who have gone the farthest are the losers. The racer closest to the starting line—which, in this case, is also the finish line—is the winner.” **(Hot Illustrations 1.0, The First Shall Be Last)**

b. The Will of God

- This can be a wild concept sometimes... so hard to understand. What is God's will? How do I know God's will? How long does it take to figure out God's will? Am I living in God's will? (Can drive you crazy)
- Here's some ideas on being directed by God's will:
 - i. Stay Close & Clean (if you want to hear from the Father, you need to stay near Him, and you need to stay pure before Him)
 - ii. Trust Where You Are Right Now (even if it may not seem right, you are there for a reason) = "When God bolts the door, don't try to get in through the window. The will of God never will lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you." (Anonymous)
 - iii. Find Accountability (find God-fearing, growing people to surround yourself with so they can bring you up instead of being around those who bring you down)
 - iv. Listen To The Author (even in the silence, He wants to direct you).

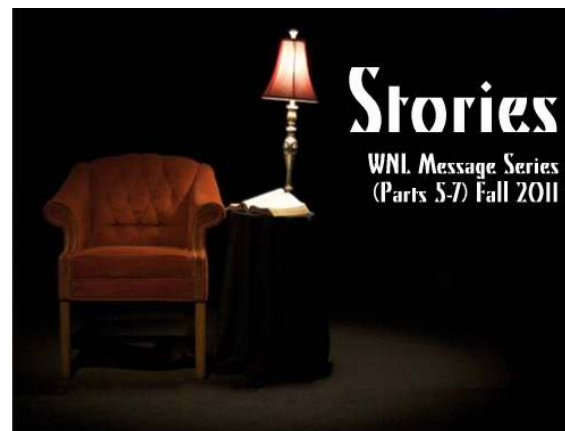


1. **2 Chronicles 18:4** = "But first let's find out what the Lord says." (NLT)

c. Where's He Directing You?

- God used something creative Jud was good at and allowed him to use it for God's glory.
- Where are your skills? (sports, drawing, music, speaking, writing, praying, babysitting, building, etc)
- Now... how can you use those for God?
 - Jud was directed to skate... what are you directed to do? Figure it out & do it!

Tupos Student Ministries Small Group Life Application Sheet



Date: Wednesday, November 9, 2011

Lesson Theme: Humility / God's Will

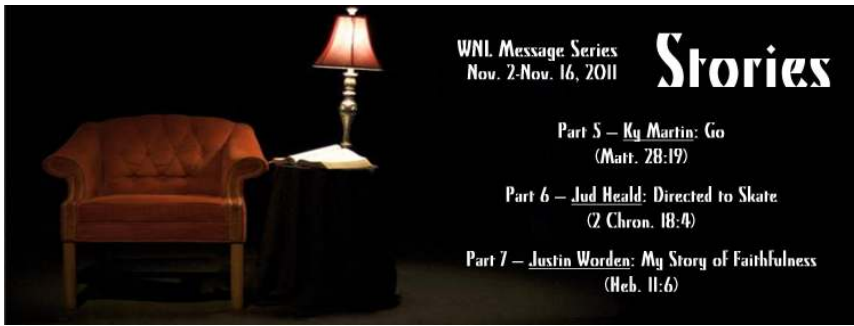
Lesson Objective: As we continue our "Stories" series, we look at another powerful story of a young man by the name of Jud Heald, who was directed by God to skateboard for Him, using his talents to bring God glory. It's amazing what happens when you put the Lord first.

Lesson Text: **2 Chronicles 18:4** = "But first let's find out what the Lord says." (NLT)

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever had something happen to you that made you stop and really think about life? Share with us.
2. What should somebody do to seek God's will and direction for their own life? What about you?
3. Tough one: how do you know God's will for your life?

Prayer Time: Seek His will for your life, especially before you own.



"Stories" - Part 6

(Jud Heald: Directed To Skate)

Tupos SM - November 9, 2011 - Wednesday Night Live

I. Directed Through _____

a. Jud's _____

b. Jud's _____

c. Jud's _____

- Got into the _____
- Sought after the _____
- Asked God: _____



II. Directed To _____

a. _____ For Jesus

- _____ is a tough thing sometimes!

b. What About _____ Story?

- When has God used tragedy in your life to teach you something you needed to learn?

c. The _____ And _____

- "It's not about what they think or we think... it's about what the Lord thinks." (Jud Heald)

2 Chronicles 18:4 = "But first let's find out what the Lord says." (NLT)

- How would your life be different?

III. Directed To _____

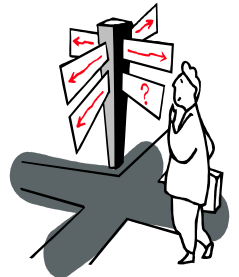
a. The _____ Line

- Bottom line is... _____

b. The _____ of God

- Stay _____ and _____
- _____ where you are right now
- Find _____
- Listen to the _____

c. Where's He _____ You?





"Stories" - Part 5 (Ky Martin: Go)

Tupos SM – November 2, 2011 – Wednesday Night Live

I. Stories... We've All Got 'Um

a. God's Writing Quite A Story About You

- As we continue this series, I ask again if you have you ever thought about your life in terms of a storybook? (like this children's book)
 - There was a beginning (your birth)
 - There is a middle (being written right now)
 - There will be an end (only God knows...)
- Some of the chapters are filled with drama, some with suspense, some with love, some with heartbreak, and some may just seem boring...
 - But God is writing them all (ultimately)
 - Acts 3:15 (NLT) Jesus = "the author of life"
- Whether you know it or not, He is using the situations you face in your life to write this story of your life (an on-going process)

c. What You Do With Your Story

- Knowing that God is writing a story through your life, He doesn't just want you to keep that story to yourself...
- So, what are you going to do with your story of life? What are you going to do with your life??
- Listen to the heart of a young man named Ky, and his take on serving this Author of life on mission...

Video = "Go" (Visual Reality, Vol. 7, 4:45)

- Hear his philosophy? = "not to stay until God tells him to go, but go until God tells him to stay."



Matthew 28:19-20 = "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (NLT)

II. Stories... We've Got To Go

a. Therefore Go...

- Living a life for God is not an option according to Jesus... it is a command! We've got to GO!
- Like Ky, maybe you've never really thought about missions/doing missions until someone invites you
- The word "Go" here, in the original Greek, actually means "as you are going"... we should do missions as we live our lives! (Praying, Giving, & Living)
 - "The average Christian in America gives less than \$.20 a week to foreign missions." (Larry Lutz, Partners International, 1987)

b. ...Make Disciples...

- Don't just make "Christians" (a name or title)... make disciples (followers of Christ, dedicated ones)
- This requires living a life of true Christianity out!
- Ky talks about "undercover" Christians (in this closed country he visited). They had to be undercover.
 - What's your excuse for being an "undercover Christian" in this country?
- Sometimes making disciples just means planting seeds until the time is right

d. ...Of All Nations...

- No matter if you are here or there, Ky is right: there are 2 different kinds of people:
 - So many who have never heard the name of Jesus (not too frequent around here)
 - So many others who have heard and had seeds planted, but just need someone to water those seeds or need someone to cultivate those seeds (that may be you)
- So... how are you giving your life (your story)?
 - What's your echo sound like?



One day an angry little boy ran around his village shouting, "I hate you! I hate you!" No one knew quite how to respond to him.

Eventually the little boy ran to the edge of a steep cliff and shouted into the valley, "I hate you! I hate you!" Back from the valley came an echo: "I hate you! I hate you!"

Startled at this, the boy ran home. With tears in his eyes, he told his mother that there was a mean little boy in the valley who shouted at him, "I hate you! I hate you!"

His mother took the boy back to the cliff and told him to shout, "I love you! I love you!" When he did, back came the reply: "I love you! I love you!" From that day on, the little boy wasn't angry anymore.

"God is just dropping you in the middle of an ancient work that He's been doing since way before you were born, and it's something that after you leave, He's going to continue to be working there and working on people's hearts..."

Jesus said, "Give, and it will be given to you...for with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38). Paul put it this way: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Corinthians 9:6).

This principle has withstood the test of time. What we do and say will come back to us like an echo. If we want to be treated with respect, we must learn to be respectful. If we want to have friends, we must learn to be friendly. Nobody owes you anything. You only get what you give. **(Hot Illustrations 1.0, The Echo)**

- Let's start sharing our story and start living on mission for God... here or over there.
- But, before you can share your story, you've got to know your story. *(What's He been writing in you?)*

III. Stories... We've Got To Know It

a. It's Time To See How God's Writing Your Story

- We wanna know your stories (we've all got 'um)
 - **SEE HANDOUT (Stories)**
 - Take the next few minutes to journal about a situation you have been faced with recently (good or bad) and share about what you believe God has taught you through it all...



*Stories can remain anonymous or write your name on them
Find a private place somewhere in the sanctuary & go!
Fold up your story & bring it to this box (if you will) as we close in a few...*

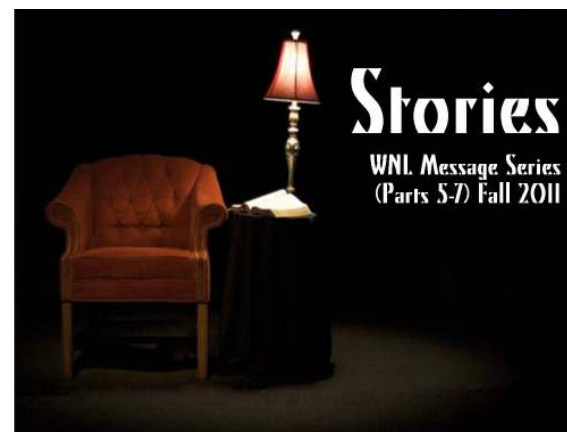
b. It's Time To Realize This Is Who You Were Made To Be

- If you are ever struggling with why this Author of life made you like He did... never forget that you are exactly how He wanted you to be.

Closing Video =

"Fearfully Made" (Church Fuel, 1:44)

Tupos Student Ministries Small Group Life Application Sheet



Date: Wednesday, November 2, 2011

Lesson Theme: Missions

Lesson Objective: Tonight we pick up where we left off this summer, looking at how God is the "Author" of our lives and is writing a story within each of us. We'll hear Ky's story and his take on being a missionary for the Lord.

Lesson Text: **Matthew 28:19-20** = "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (NLT)

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever been on a mission trip? Please share.
2. Do you have to go overseas to be on mission? Why/Why not?
3. How could you be a "missionary" in your home, city, or school right now? Give examples.

Prayer Time: Ask the Lord to lead you to live a life on mission for Him!



"Stories" - Part 5 (Ky Martin: Go)

Tupos SM – November 2, 2011 – Wednesday Night Live

I. Stories... _____ All _____ 'Um

a. God's _____ Quite A _____ About You

- Acts 3:15 (NLT) Jesus = "the _____ of life"

b. What You _____ With Your _____

- What are you going to do with your story of life?
- Ky's philosophy on missions = _____



Matthew 28:19-20 = "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (NLT)

II. Stories... _____ Got To _____

a. Therefore _____ ...

- Go = "as you are going" (living your life)

b. ... Make _____ ...

- What's your excuse for being one of those "undercover Christians"?

c. ... Of All _____ ...

- 2 Different Kinds of People:

- Those who have _____
- Those who need _____



- What's your ECHO sound like?

III. Stories... _____ Got To _____ It

a. It's Time To See _____ God's _____ Your Story

- SEE HANDOUT (What's Your Story?)

b. It's Time To _____ This Is Who You _____

Made To _____

- Exactly how He wanted you to be!



"Stories" - Part 4 (Aaron Stone: The Turning)

Tupos SM – July 6, 2011 – Wednesday Night Live

Tonight, we conclude our series "Stories" as I introduce you to Aaron, who was a "preacher's kid" who tried to find his identity in anything but Christ, until God turned his world upside down...

Video = "The Turning" (Visual Reality, Vol. 11, 6:03)

I. Our Belonging

a. We All Want To Belong Somewhere

- As we finish this series about the stories God is writing in each of our lives (even tonight), all of us want to know that there is something special about our story, don't we?
- Aaron Stone (preacher's kid) was someone who believed in God but didn't want being a "Christian" to be his identity
 - Wanted to "fit in" / find a "cause"
 - Found his identity elsewhere (straight edge, concerts, partying, drugs)
 - He took the story God began in his life and started writing his own chapters...

b. We All Have An Identity Crisis Sometime

- Is that you tonight? Identity crisis?
- Identity = "uniqueness, personality, character"
 - Unique? = why fit it with everyone else?
- Are you asking yourself, like Aaron did, who am I? I don't know my identity!
 - 1 Peter 2:10 = "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." (NLT)
 - He found his identity 1 night, "his turning"

II. Our Turning



a. When There's Nowhere Else To Turn

- Sometimes God has to allow us to get to the point when we've got nowhere else to turn, *except to Him*
- For Aaron, it was the drugs that led to bad trip one night... thought his only options were that he would die or be brain damaged ("fried")
- Nowhere to go... only to God
 - Aaron's prayer = "Jesus, if You are God, just reveal Yourself to me"

b. Don't Miss Your Turning Point

- In a story, there is a turning point = climax, game changer, turn for the better, things lookin' up...
- One thing never changed in Aaron's life (his constant), did you catch it?
 - He said he never could completely deny God because of seeing his parents' personal relationships with Him
 - Do you have examples like that in your life?
- Maybe it's just time to come home to your "Dad"

III. Our Freedom

a. All Of Us Are Like The Prodigal

- You know the story of the prodigal son, right?
- Left home, did his own thing, failed miserably, and finally realized what he was missing... came home!

Luke 15:20 = "So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him." (NLT)

- Aaron knew it was time to quit this life away from God, but he was addicted & couldn't quit on His own... we He came back to God (came home), he found freedom in Christ!
- Almost like God was saying... "Welcome Home!"

Music Video = "Welcome Home You" (Brian Littrell, 3:02)

b. Christ Offers That Same Freedom To Us

- Are you looking for freedom tonight?

Back in the 1800s, a young Englishman traveled to California in search of gold. After several months of prospecting, he struck it rich. On his way home, he stopped in New Orleans. Not long into his visit, he came upon a crowd of people all looking in the same direction. Approaching the crowd, he recognized that they had gathered for a slave auction. Slavery had been outlawed in England for years, so this young man's curiosity drew him to watch as a person became someone else's property. He heard "Sold!" just as he joined the crowd. A middle-aged black man was taken away.

Next a beautiful young black girl was pushed up onto the platform and made to walk around so everyone could see her. The miner heard vile jokes and comments that spoke of evil intentions from those around him. Men were laughing as their eyes remained fixed on this new item for sale.

The bidding began. Within a minute, the bids surpassed what most slave owners would pay for a black girl. As the bidding continued higher and higher, it was apparent that two men wanted her. In between their bids, they laughed about what they were going to do with her, and how the other one would miss out. The miner stood silent as anger welled up inside of him. Finally, one man bid a price that was beyond the reach of the other. The girl looked down. The auctioneer called out, "Going once! Going twice!"

Just before the final call, the miner yelled out a price that was exactly twice the previous bid. An amount that exceeded the worth of any man. The crowd laughed, thinking that the miner was only joking, wishing that he could have the girl himself. The auctioneer motioned to the miner to come and show his money. The miner opened up the bag of gold he had brought for the trip. The auctioneer shook his head in disbelief as he waved the girl over to him.

The girl walked down the steps of the platform until she was eye-to-eye with the miner. She spat straight in his face and said through clenched teeth, "I hate you!" The miner, without a word, wiped his face, paid the auctioneer, took the girl by the hand, and walked away from the still-laughing crowd.

He seemed to be looking for something in particular as they walked up one street and down another. Finally he stopped in front of some sort of store, though the slave girl did not know what type of store it was. She waited outside as the dirty-faced miner went inside and started talking to an elderly man. She couldn't make out what they were talking about. At one point the voices got louder, and she overheard the store clerk say, "But it's the law! It's the law!" Peering in, she saw the miner pull out his bag of gold and pour what was left of it on the table.

With what seemed like a look of disgust, the clerk picked up the gold and went in a back room. He came out with a piece of paper, and both he and the miner signed it.

The young girl looked away as the miner came out the door. Stretching out his hand, he said to the girl, "Here are your manumission papers. You are free." The girl did not look up. He tried again. "Here. These are papers that say you are free. Take them." "I hate you!" the girl said, refusing to look up. "Why do you make fun of me!"

"No, listen," he pleaded. "These are your freedom papers. You are a free person." The girl looked at the papers, then looked at him, and looked at the papers once again. "You just bought me...and now, you're setting me free?" "That's why I bought you. I bought you to set you free."

The beautiful young girl fell to her knees in front of the miner, tears streaming down her face. "You bought me to set me free! You bought me to set me free!" she said over and over. The miner said nothing. Clutching his muddy boots, the girl looked up at the miner and said, "All I want to do is to serve you—because you bought me to set me free!" (**Hot Illustrations 1.0, Brought To Be Freed**)



- "You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God..." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NLT)
- You were PAID IN FULL by Christ... live free!

Aaron's turning point = "God didn't just want to save me, but wanted to use my life for Him... When I finally gave up my will power, God's grace came in"



4 Part Series (June 15 – July 6)

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"Stories" - Part 4 (Aaron Stone: The Turning)

Tupos SM - July 6, 2011 - Wednesday Night Live

I. Our _____

a. We All Want To _____ Somewhere

- Don't you want to believe there is something special about the story of your life?
- How are you trying to "fit in" or find your "cause"?
- _____

b. We All Have An _____ Sometime

- Identity = _____
- 1 Peter 2:10 = "Now you are _____ people."

II. Our _____

a. When There's _____ Else To _____

- Aaron's prayer = "Jesus, if You are God, just reveal Yourself to me."

b. Don't Miss Your _____

- Turning point = _____
- Maybe it's time to come home...

III. Our _____

a. All Of Us Are Like The _____

Luke 15:20 = "So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him." (NLT)

b. _____ Offers That Same _____ To Us

- Are you looking for freedom tonight?
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- You were _____ by Christ!

Aaron's Turning Point = "God didn't just want to save me, but wanted to use my life for Him... When I finally gave up my will power, God's grace came in"

What About You?





"Stories" - Part 3 (Nicole: Priorities Rearranged)

Tupos SM - June 29, 2011 - Wednesday Night Live

Tonight, we continue our series "Stories" as I introduce you to Nicole...

Video = "Testify" (Visual Reality, Vol. 9, 3:58)

I. The Selfish Vs. The Selfless

a. When Our Story Takes An Important Turn

- Like many of us here tonight, Nicole allowed God to rewrite her story as a teenager. It took a turn for the better...
- What changed? = like my story, it was when:
 - God used friends (to get me to church)
 - God used youth pastors (to teach me)
 - God used summer camp (to change me!)
- You see... the Lord (**Acts 3:15, NLT = "the author of life"**), writes these people into your story to get your attention.
 - Who has our Author written into your story that changed your story for the better?
 - a. (Students share)
 - b. Mine = Brian Hook, Forrest Head, Coach V, Chris Bishop, Summer W
- Oftentimes our stories seemingly get messed up because we're trying to write them ourselves and not letting the Author do the writing.
 - That would be called = Selfishness!
 - a. Selfish = "self-seeking, egotistical"
 - Are you're a selfish person? Don't lie!!!



"Native hunters in the jungles of Africa have a clever way of trapping monkeys. They slice a coconut in two, hollow it out, and in one half of the shell cut a hole just big enough for a monkey's hand to pass through. Then they place an orange in the other

coconut half before fastening together the two halves of the coconut shell. Finally, they secure the coconut to a tree with a rope, retreat into the jungle, and wait.

Sooner or later, an unsuspecting monkey swings by, smells the delicious orange, and discovers its location inside the coconut. The monkey then slips his hand through the small hole, grasps the orange, and tries to pull it through the hole. Of course, the orange won't come out; it's too big for the hole. To no avail the persistent monkey continues to pull and pull, never realizing the danger he is in.

While the monkey struggles with the orange, the hunters simply stroll in and capture the monkey by throwing a net over him. As long as the monkey keeps his fist wrapped around the orange, the monkey is trapped." (**Hot Illustrations 1.0, How To Catch A Monkey**)

- The opposite of selfishness? = Self**LESS**ness!!

b. Where Are My Priorities

- When you understand what your priorities are in life, things in your story seem to make more sense.
- Nicole's life changed when her priorities changed, when she decided to live more for God & for her faith, than for herself & her friends.
 - Her priorities were rearranged! Like this:

Matthew 6:33 = "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need". (NLT)

II. The Priorities of the Selfish

a. Nicole's Life "Before"

- Here's what Nicole's life looked like before this story-changing experience (this climax event)!
 - Climax = "high point, peak, highlight, best moment, changing part"
- Nicole living for Nicole (selfishness)
 - Church 2-3 times a year
 - Did good things, "wasn't a bad person"
 - "Hole in her heart"... always trying to fill it
 - Friends... not interested in the church thing
 - Not ready, "God will always be there"

b. Our Lives "Before"

- Some of us have not come to this point of this life-changing experience yet... you are missing out!
- Why haven't we felt like God is "real" to us? Why haven't I had a life-changing experience with Him?
 - Your story isn't there yet...
- Maybe your priorities aren't what God wants them to be for you!?! (You wanna know what He [the Author] thinks, don't you?)
 - Your priorities = Video games over devotional readings, Sports over worship,



texting friends over praying to God, Gossiping over sharing about Jesus, Loving that boy/girl over falling love with Jesus!

- We seriously need some rearranging!!!
 - a. Less of me means more of Him
 - b. "He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less" (John 3:30, NLT).

III. The Priorities of the Selfless

a. Nicole's Life "After"

- Things changed at a summer camp experience in her life, and her priorities shifted from her to God!
- Nicole living for God (selflessness)
 - Priorities in the wrong place... God first!
 - Didn't know what to pray... prayed anyway
 - Finally understood God's forgiveness (of all)
 - Afraid friends would call her a "hypocrite"
 - Shared testimony with friends (without reservation) = knew what she felt was true
 - Didn't regret the change in her life
 - Church more, worshipping more, praying more, reading her Bible a lot more!
 - Why put it off... God loves me so much

b. Our Lives "After"

- Do you see the importance of Matthew 6:33?
 - If we seek God's Kingdom above everything else (family, school, sports, friends, "toys", etc), and we live how He wants us to live, He gives us ALL we need!

c. What Will Your Percentage Be?

- So... how about you? Are you living more for self or for God? What are your priorities? How will your life be spent?...

Someone has calculated how a typical lifespan of 70 years is spent. Here is the estimate: Sleep = 23 years (32.9%), Work = 16 years (22.8%), TV = 8 years (11.4%), Eating = 6 years (8.6%), Travel = 6 years (8.6%), Leisure = 4.5 years (6.5%), Illness = 4 years (5.7%), Dressing = 2 years (2.8%), Religion = 0.5 years (0.7%), Total = 70 years (100%) **[Our Daily Bread, November 25, 1992].**

- Set your priorities straight (giving God 100% of you) and you'll end up with one great story about your life someday soon...



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"Stories" - Part 3 (Nicole: Priorities Rearranged)

Tupos SM - June 29, 2011 - Wednesday Night Live

I. The _____ Vs. The _____

a. When Our Story Takes An _____ Turn

- Who has our Author written into your story that changed you for the better?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Selfish = _____
- The opposite of selfish is _____!

b. Where Are My _____

Matthew 6:33 = "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need". (NLT)

II. The Priorities of the _____

a. Nicole's Life " _____ "

- Climax = _____

b. Our Lives " _____ "

- Maybe your priorities aren't what God wants them to be for you?!?
- John 3:30 = "He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less" (NLT).

III. The Priorities of the _____

a. Nicole's Life " _____ "

- Priorities in the right place = _____ first!

b. Our Lives " _____ "

c. What Will Your _____ Be?

- Set your priorities straight and you'll end up with one great story about your life someday soon...



Priorities!



"Stories" - Part 2 (Jeremiah Anderson: Failure to Chaos)

Tupos SM – June 22, 2011 – Wednesday Night Live

Video = "Chaos on Wheels" (Visual Reality, Vol 13, 4:11)

I. When You're Feelin' Like A Failure

a. Falling Down Is Part of the Story

- As God writes the story of your life, don't forget that He writes the good and the bad times. Sometimes we fall down (feeling like a failure).
- Did you hear what Jeremiah Anderson said?
 - Failing is usually when we're doing everything in life for the wrong reasons
 - Chasing after success on our own part and not how God wanted me to be successful

b. Failing Leads To Succeeding

- It may even feel successful until we see it through God's eyes... our failure = God's success in us!
- Chaos On Wheels = "What God has given us... a way to do ministry, not just make money"
 - But when we do fail or fall, we know the One who will always pick us up:

II. When You're In Need Of A Rescue

a. Our Rescue Leads To His Honor

- This stunt bicyclist described our lives as riding a stunt bike = Fall down, get back up a few times...
- Jesus is like that ambulance or paramedic that comes to pick us up and get us well again = He is our RESCUE

Psalms 86:12-13 = "With all my heart I will praise you, O Lord my God. I will give glory to your name forever, for your love for me is very great. You have rescued me from the depths of death." (NLT)



- When we call out to Him for our rescue... calling "Jesus 911", He saves us and He is praised (honored)!
- In this story called "You", do you need rescuing tonight? Rescuing from yourself?
 - To rescue = "save, free, release, let go"
 - "Let Go & Let God!"
- Rescued from what? The Bible calls it "from the depths of death" (v.13)
 - Relationships / Finances / Temptation / Hopelessness / Feeling like a failure?
- You are not alone... we all need rescuing:

III. When The World Needs To Know

a. He Rescues Us Because of Only 1 Thing

- Do you know what that is? = HIS LOVE!
- See it in the text... v.13
 - "You've always been great toward me— what love! You snatched me from the brink of disaster!" (Msg)
 - "For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths..." (NIV)
- "Love" or "Mercy" = "Mercy is the 'loyal love' of the Lord... David describes the Lord as mercifully delivering him from certain death" (Compact Bible Comm, pg. 397)
 - This is real love, not quite like the love I had or understood in school...

Since I was a little shy when I was in high school, I didn't ask many girls out on dates. So my friend came up to me one day and said, "Hey, I've lined you up with a great date for Saturday night. It's all set."

"Who is it?" I asked. It turned out to be his cousin Doris. I had never met her. In fact, I had never met any girl named Doris. "Oh, no," I said, "I'm not going on a blind date."

"Hey, don't worry about this one," my friend said. "Doris is a terrific girl. And trust me—she's a real looker. But if you don't believe me, I'll tell you how to get out of the date if you don't like the way she looks. This is what I do: I go to a girl's front door to pick her up, and when she opens the door, I check her out. If I like what I see, then great, we're all set. But if she's ugly, I fake an asthma attack. I go 'Aaahhhggggg!' (Hold your throat like you're having trouble breathing.) The girl asks, 'What's wrong?' And I say, 'It's my asthma.' And so we have to call off the date. Just like that. No problem."

"Well, I don't know...but okay, it sounds easy enough. I'll do it," I said. So I went to pick up Doris. I knocked on the door, and she came to the front door. I took a look at her, and to my surprise, my friend was right. She was beautiful! I stood there not knowing exactly what to say.

She took one look at me and went, "Aaahhhggggg!"

Chances are you've also been rejected by other kids because you weren't good looking enough, or athletic enough, or rich enough, or "cool" enough—whatever that is.

God doesn't look at us that way, though. When he takes a look at us, he thinks we're beautiful. He accepts us the way we are. God isn't concerned with how we look on the outside. He's much more concerned about what's inside: "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7b). God wants us to have a heart like his—one that reaches out and loves all people, regardless of their looks. **(Hot Illustr. 1.0, Blind Date)**

- More than the love of a girl or guy (from a blind date) is God's love for us. His loyal love (mercy)!
 - It is God's "Kindness"

b. Next Time You Feel Like a Failure...

- Remember His rescue is real, His mercy is unfailing, & even in the chaos of the world, God's love still remains...

Video = "Chaos" (Igniter Media, Vol 4, 3:40)

c. The Best Part of the Story

- If you were to ask me tonight, what's the most important thing you have learned in your 29 years of life, in your 13 years of being a Christian, in your 4 years of ministry... I would simply sing that ol' children's song to you:
 - "He's got the whole world in His hands"
 - ...Even when I fail, even when I fall, even when I need some serious rescuing... He's got the whole world in His hands!



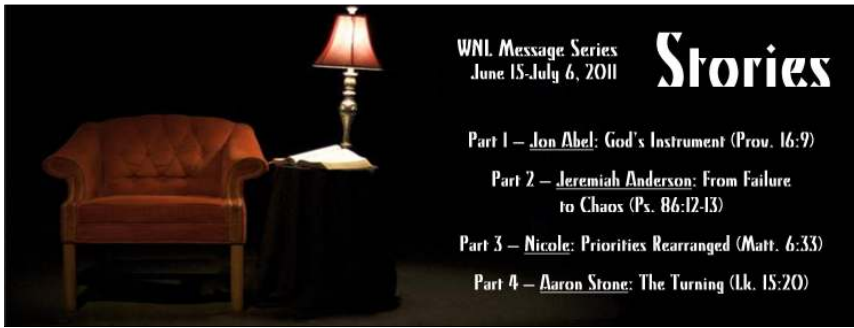
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"Stories" - Part 2 (Jeremiah Anderson: Failure to Chaos)

Tupos SM - June 22, 2011 - Wednesday Night Live

I. When You're Feelin' Like A _____

a. _____ Is Part of the Story

- Did you hear what Jeremiah Anderson said?
Failing is usually when we're doing everything in life for the _____ .

b. _____ Leads To _____

- Chaos On Wheels = "What God has given us... a way to do ministry, not just make money"

II. When You're In Need Of A _____

a. Our _____ Leads To His _____

Psalm 86:12-13 = "With all my heart I will praise you, O Lord my God. I will give glory to your name forever, for your love for me is very great. You have rescued me from the depths of death." (NLT)

- In this story called "You", do you need rescuing tonight? Rescuing from yourself?

- To rescue = " _____ "

- Rescued from what?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

III. When The _____ Needs To Know

a. He Rescues Us Because of Only _____

- Do you know what that is? = _____ !

b. Next Time You Feel Like a _____...

c. The _____ of the Story

"He's got the _____ in _____"





"Stories" - Part 1 (Jon Abel: God's Instrument)

Tupos SM – June 15, 2011 – Wednesday Night Live

I. Stories... We've All Got 'Um

a. God's Writing Quite A Story About You

- Have you ever thought about your life in terms of a storybook? (like this children's book)
 - There was a beginning (your birth)
 - There is a middle (being written right now)
 - There will be an end (only God knows...)
- Some of the chapters are filled with drama, some with suspense, some with love, some with heartbreak, and some may just seem boring...
 - But God is writing them all (ultimately)
 - Acts 3:15 (NLT) Jesus = "the author of life"
- Whether you know it or not, He is using the situations you face in your life to write this story of your life (an on-going process)

b. Your Story Will Have Good & Bad Parts

- Unfortunately, we've gotta go through the tough times in life (breakups, parent's divorce, death of loved ones, trouble in school, friendships wounded, hurt, anger, loneliness) for God to teach us that He is bigger and that He cares
- His story wasn't all that pretty either... but our "Author" encourages us to keep going!
 - "...Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the **author** and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2, NASB)
- Trust the "Author" / trust the One who carries you...



Video = "The Jon Abel Story" (Igniter Media, Vol 8, 4:34)

II. Jon's Story... God's Instrument

a. What Is God Most Concerned About?

- Did you hear Jon? = "The instrument He (God) is most concerned about is my heart."
- No matter how hard we try to impress God with all we can do... it all comes down to where our heart is.
 - Your heart may be in the right place and you have big plans to follow God in your life... but, remember that verse?

Proverbs 16:9 = "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps." (NIV)

Background = This verse begins a section that relates to kings... Because the nation rested in the king's hands, his first responsibility was to obey God. Even the king had to submit..." (Compact Bible Comm, pg. 434)

b. God Does The Directing

- Whether you are a king or a "peasant" (feeling like a nobody), don't forget that God is directing your life!
- Have you been looking for some direction lately?
 - Direction = "way, course, path, bearing"
 - 2 Samuel 22:32 = "Is there any god like God? Are we not at bedrock? Is not this the God who armed me well, then aimed me in the right direction?" (Msg)
- Like Jon Abel, sometimes we need to learn to trust Him more. Believe that His ways are better.
 - Like the verse I shared with our grads a couple of Sundays ago = Jeremiah 29:11 =
 - "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." (Msg)

c. God Uses Our Brokenness

- Jon responded to God out of his brokenness (he learned to rely more on God that way)!
- We have lost the sense of brokenness in our world today. (We just are not broken anymore)
 - Brokenness = "wrecked on my own"
- Why does He need our brokenness? So we'll **jump!**

A family was awakened by their smoke detector in the middle of the night to discover that their house was on fire. The father ran into the upstairs bedroom of his children and carried his eighteen-month-old baby in his arms while dragging his four-year-old son by the hand.

They were halfway down the stairs when the little boy remembered that he had left his teddy bear in the bedroom, so he broke free from his father's hand and ran back to the bedroom to retrieve it. In the furor and confusion, the father didn't notice that his son wasn't with him until he got outside. By now the little boy was trapped by the flames and smoke in his second-story bedroom. Smoke swirled around him and he coughed and cried out from the upstairs window, "Daddy, Daddy! Help me!" His father yelled from below, "Jump out of the window, Andy! I'll catch you!"

In the darkness and smoke, the little boy yelled back, "But Daddy! I can't see you!" Daddy shouted back, "That's okay, son. I can see you! Jump!"

There is a true saying that goes, "I don't know what the future holds, but I do know who holds the future." Do you worry about the future? Are you afraid of what you can't see? Does it seem dark and smoky? None of us can see what lies ahead, but God tells us to trust him and "jump!" **(Hot Illustrations 1.0, Jump!)**

III. Your Story... So, What Is It?

a. It's Time To See How God's Writing Your Story:

- We wanna know your stories (we've all got 'um)
- **SEE HANDOUT (Stories)**
- Take the next few minutes to journal about a situation you have been faced with recently (good or bad) and share about what you believe God has taught you through it all...



*Stories can remain anonymous or write your name on them
Find a private place somewhere in the sanctuary & go!
Fold up your story & bring it to this box (if you will) as we close in song...*

Color code = [blue \(commentary/video\)](#), [red \(copyrighted quotes/story\)](#)
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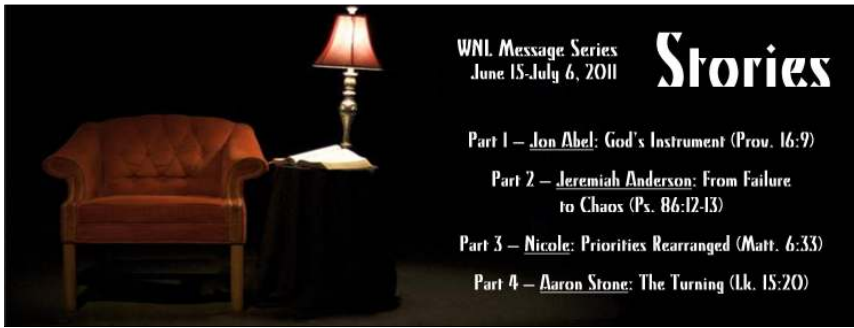
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"Stories" - Part 1 (Jon Abel: God's Instrument)

Tupos SM - June 15, 2011 - Wednesday Night Live

- I.** _____ ... We've _____ Got 'Um
- a. God's Writing Quite A _____ About You**
- Acts 3:15 (NLT) Jesus = "the _____ of life"
- b. Your Story Will Have _____ & _____ Parts**
- Hebrews 12:1-2

- II.** _____'s Story... God's _____
- a. What Is God Most _____ About?**
- i. "The instrument He (God) is most concerned about is my heart." (Jon Abel)

Proverbs 16:9 = "In his heart a man plans his course,
but the LORD determines his steps." (NIV)

- b. God Does The _____**



- Direction = " _____ "
 - i. 2 Samuel 22:32
 - ii. Jeremiah 29:11 = "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." (Msg)
- c. God Uses Our _____**
- i. Jon responded to God out of his brokenness (he learned to _____ more on God that way)!
 - ii. Brokenness = " _____ "
 - iii. Why does He need our brokenness? So we'll _____!

- III.** _____ Story... So, _____ Is It?
- a. It's Time To See _____ God's Writing _____ Story:**
- **SEE HANDOUT (Stories)**
 - Take the next few minutes to journal about a situation you have been faced with recently (good or bad) and share about what you believe God has taught you through it all...

Stories can remain anonymous or write your name on them

Find a private place somewhere in the sanctuary & go!

Fold up your story & bring it to this box (if you will) as we close in song...

