

My Story Inspires Faith

Week 2 | Pastor Jordan Biel | Kinsman Campus

Revelation 19:10

WATER BAPTISM - JOJO DAVIS

My story inspires faith.

My story inspires faith in God for you to believe!

This sermon is cowritten with my mom, Pam Biel. She did a great job teaching on this.

My first half of this message will be on the story of Simon Peter, the fisherman who wanted to be “God’s Man” the “man of the hour” and then we’ll talk about the importance of telling our story. **We’re going to start with Nolan and Destiny sharing *their* story** of God becoming more real than ever before. So let’s give Nolan and Destiney a warm welcome (**MY STORY title graphic stays on screens**)

PETER’S STORY

Becoming God’s Son more than “God’s Man”

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 3:18

As you read that scripture you can almost see the smile in Peter’s eyes. He’s older now and he’s writing it knowing that His friend and Savior, Jesus, had forgiven him so many times. The more he grew in the knowledge of Jesus, the more grace He understood Jesus to have. You and I will notice the same for our own lives. We’d be wise to also pray “Lord, help *me* to grow in the *grace* and *knowledge* of You!” To know Jesus is to love Him. The more you know Him, the more you love Him.

THE PROMISE PETER RECEIVES

Jesus sees Peter fishing and calls out to him... “Peter, I will make you a fisher of men.” Peter receives a promise from Jesus that He will make him more than he is.

If you haven’t seen The Chosen yet, you need to. In particular the film creators hit it out of the part on this scene. Here’s Pete trying in all his might to make ends meet, fulfill his bombastic promises, charm his skeptics and make enough money fishing to stay sane ... and possibly married!

Jesus knows his internal battles of course and speaks to His frustration. Jesus knows that Pete just wants his life to count - to not be wasted. He just wants his life to ... matter. Jesus knows this about Peter.

A few things stand out to me about this short scripture. We often focus on the “fisher of men” part and rightly so. But often we miss the part where Jesus says “I will...” Here Jesus speaks of the process. Jesus knew it would take some time and some effort to get Peter from where he was to where He wanted him to be. He was willing to take that journey with Peter. And He’s willing to take that journey with you. GOD makes him into the man he has the potential to be. AND THAT is the same for you and me.

I gotta be honest, Peter reminds me of myself sometimes. I can be a big mouth. Some pastors are introverts and truly they are. They like to be quiet and alone and really only speak up when suddenly the anointing comes upon them in the pulpit. I suppose maybe that was John the Beloved’s personality, but we all know Peter was the loud, quick to act, slow to think disciple who only took his foot out of his mouth to put the other foot in. Yeah... that’s me. Anyone relate?

I remember once a time a new couple came to the altar area for prayer after service. He looked about 25 and she looked about 65. I shook the young man’s hand and said “Hi, I’m Jordan.” He said “My name is ...” and without thinking (like Pete) I asked ... “And is this your mom?”

His face changed quickly as his eyebrows dropped. Her face went to shock, then slowly to anger. He says “No. This is my wife.” That’s when my face when to shock ... and then to ...shame.

Friend, I kid you not! Let’s just say my prayer was very, very short and... I never saw them again.

So trust me, I’m a lot like Peter. I got a big mouth! I’m so thankful God gives us grace and uses us despite our personalities and character flaws! He teaches people like me to be quiet and listen. I’ve only been in ministry since 2005 and the older I get, the more I listen and the less I speak. I think Peter had to learn this same lesson again and again and again.

Even though Peter was given a promise by Jesus Himself, He would have to face reality to step in the next stage of his story. He would have to give up his fishing occupation. His fishing nets represented his identity, income and security. So when Jesus asked Him to lay down his nets, this was a big ask! We know that this being Jesus, had to be an incredible moment, yes. The anointing and presence of God likely came over Pete in a powerful way compelling him to follow, yes. But we can’t ignore that Pete’s fishing nets represented his entire way of life. He certainly had to think for a moment, if I lay down my nets and follow Jesus, I may not be able to provide for my family.

When Pete said “Yes” to Jesus, he said “No” to the security of a fishing trade that had put food on the table for years. When Pete said “Yes” to Jesus, he said “No” to the familiar. He faced reality.

I can stay here and live the status quo, boring life I’ve been living and be “ok” or I could step into the unknown with Jesus!

His reality was to be a fisherman just like every other fisherman.

Or, he could follow Jesus! He could live adventure!

I can live an adventure! You can live adventurously trusting Jesus every step of the way! You can see miracles in the story of your life! You can see the dead raised! You and I can be apart of something eternal! Something amazing! **But it begins with trusting Jesus’ outstretched hand. It begins with believing Jesus when He’s saying “I will make you into something you aren’t yet. I will make you into someone you’d be surprised to meet!”**

Peter gave up his identity, income and security to embrace the next part of his story with Jesus. You might need to as well. Right before we step into our next season of learning with Jesus, we often face an attack of discouragement. I’ve seen this OVER AND OVER. Just this week I saw it twice. Right as God is on the cusp of doing something new in someone’s’ life, the enemy attacks and brings discouragement.

Are you facing discouragement - a battle in your mind of feeling inadequate and unable to do what you’re doing? GREAT! It’s a sign that you are on the cusp of God taking you one step closer to your destiny! All of us have a story and it’s uniquely ours. But don’t let the next stage of your story be delayed by fear. Embrace entering the unknown with Jesus. Faith is spelled R.I.S.K. We believe without seeing. We walk by faith!

This is how Peter felt. He didn’t know how to be a Rabbi! A healer! A Teacher! A minister! He knew FISH. Squirmy, stinky little creatures with gills. He knew their swimming habits. He knew how what lures to use in what places. He didn’t know people and ministry to people! He didn’t know grief counseling or pastoral ministry - or homiletics or communication etiquette. He knew FISH!

Peter faced many obstacles in following Jesus, first and foremost, the man in the mirror ... if they had mirrors back then.

Pete was what we’d called a “passionate” person. **He was never at a loss for words, just a loss for, let’s just say, the right words.** He had what I call “no filter” approach. Have you ever met someone with no filter? Like it just doesn’t exist. Words fly out of their mouth that are completely inappropriate and it’s like they don’t even know it’s happening? I have a good friend that’s a bit like that

and he somehow got put on the Greeters Ministry team at our church. One lovely late December Sunday morning, we had a guest, someone who had finally come back to church and it had been a long time. What does my friend say? “Christmas and Easter huh? Awesome.”

No. Joke.

The guy turns around and leaves and has never come back! Yeah, that’s what Pete was like. Whatever came to his mind, POP! It came out his mouth.

Have you ever read the story of Pete tagging along with Jesus up a mountain to pray? It’s hilarious. If you look at Matthew 17

Jesus is transfigured - revealed in His fully glory - glowing - glorious - His divinity revealed! Moses and Elijah are seen in the sky with Jesus! Moses represents the law there and Elijah represents the prophets btw. That’s why in Luke 24 on the Road to Emmaus Jesus said “All that is written in the law and the prophets testifies about Me.” So Moses and Elijah, PILLARS of faith and Jesus Himself is gloriously seen - probably some incredible music.

Peter responds to this moment terribly wrong. He’s like “Wait everyone! Let me build something like a monument or a tent.” Jesus is like “No. Peter we don’t need you to build anything.”

LOL

Now we know this is actually a beautiful moment when Jesus is signaled as the true Messiah being the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah) are meeting with Jesus as if to confer with one another. So Peter takes this incredible moment and immediately opens his big mouth with ... “Oh! Let me make a tent! I’m good a tents! I’ll build each of you a tent. Moses, one for you! Elijah, one for you! Jesus, one for...” Jesus is like “PETE! Hush child! I don’t need your little tent bro!”

Jesus is for a moment, being revealed in all His glory... and all Pete can say is “Ya’ll want a tent?”

Pete cracks me up! I wonder if Jesus just looks at me sometimes and shakes His head like “No man, I don’t need you to ...” I just want you. I just want your heart. I just want your presence right now. That’s all I need from you. Be in the moment. Don’t build. Don’t work. Just be. Just be in the moment and see Me for who I am. WOW.

Maybe Peter’s story is a lot like yours. In our story of faith, Jesus is more concerned with friendship WITH Him than what you can do FOR Him. Maybe you’ve had moments with God that defy logic and reason. Moments that Jesus was seen as so obvious and glorious, powerful and empathic to you. But ...

Like Peter, we can too easily forget the incredible moments we shared with

Jesus; we can start cave into compromise or apathy once culture makes it's demands.

Peter had to overcome financial security - the risk of having his bills not paid off. Peter had to overcome the bad habit of speaking before listening - that's a habit that is hard to break.

Peter had to overcome his own pride and realize that he was chosen not so he could be famous but so that hey could die making Jesus famous.

These obstacles in his character are there to strengthen our resolve and ultimately make us more Christ-like. Obstacles allow us to be broken. Financial hardship allows us to be broken and dependent upon Jehovah Jireh our provider. Relationship problems makes us dependent upon the Holy Spirit, the one who can teach us to mend a broken relationship.

Romans 5:1-11 “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” ESV

When I let God do His transforming work through grace, when I allow myself to be honest about the character flaws I have, then I am formed into

the image of Jesus. Then I can be a messenger of reconciliation to others. That's when my story takes a powerful twist and a new meaning!

Why does God need us to be broken? Why does God “desire a broken spirit”... like the Word says?

Broken does not mean destroyed and ruined. Brokenness means you're submitted. It means you're submitted to God, your Master, ready to be used to accomplish His goals, His desire, His will.

Matt 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men that they see your good works and praise your father in heaven...”

Broken people shine. The light of Christ may be in you, but until you're broken and cracked, the light can't come out!

Wait, is Jesus confused here? I mean, wouldn't it make more sense for Him to say in the sermon on the mount, “Blessed are those who are healthy. Blessed are those who have no need. Blessed are those who are financially stable. Blessed are those who keep peace and make compromises to make everyone happy...” Instead He says “blessed are the weak... blessed are the poor, the oppressed... the downtrodden... for you will inherit eternal life... blessed are the meek....”

Wouldn't we say “I see you've been very profitable lately, you're blessed.” “I see you never seem to go through any grief; you must be blessed.” ???

But that's not how God sees things! God knows it's NECESSARY for us to go through difficulty, to identify with Christ in what it means to die to self and be broken for us to extend His Kingdom. **God sees being blessed as being a person in line with the character of God.**

Let me give you an example:

Carol Hetherington's story – I was talking with Carol Hetherington one day and we were getting to know each other better (Carol, wave at us so everyone knows who you are – my goal is to embarrass you right now =) ... so I asked “What's something difficult you went through but turns out it was God's plan after all?”

For being such a quiet woman, she had actually had quite a few stories! =) If you don't know who Carol is, she is the widow of Jim Hetherington, and they pastored this church years ago before my dad. I know pastoral ministry can be very hard at times. I watched in my parents life and I've certainly experienced in my own. Things you feel but simply can't say - being a shepherd in a church. So

I wanted to hear some of her “my story” and she was happy to share some with me.

Most of her stories being a pastor’s wife were funny ones and again – I had asked her to mention some of the difficult things she experienced and she listed a few - even working on a roof one time! But one story in particular stayed with me. She said that she and Jim moved up here from Florida IN FAITH, not having a job or home or anything, in fact their story was quite similar to my parents. THEY SAID YES to the CALL OF GOD without any financial security!

But they arrived here, found a home that wasn’t even for sale; they asked if they could rent it and part of their payment would be to fix it up and now Carol was tired of working and really wanted to just be a mom. She did NOT want to go back to work! But her husband had asked her to so she did. She was broken – in this sense I say that because it’s important for you to know that she was in submission to her husband and in doing so, she was broken and made useful to the Lord.

By a curious chain of events, she got this job as an administrative assistant at a Bible College – a job she DIDN’T WANT –

A few months into, her husband Jim felt during prayer that God spoke to him - that God wanted him to further his education and get a counseling degree. She happen to share this with her boss and he said “Well, since you work here at the Bible College, your husband’s tuition is completely free!” She had NO idea about that policy. She reluctantly took this job simply to be a submitted, honoring, helpful wife. But God looked upon her with favor because humility and honor was a party of her story - the identity she embraced.

You see God was ordering their steps because they were broken before Him. Brokenness before God prompts obedience and obedience is followed by favor. God supplied them with a financial miracle! They would’ve had a school loan for years if they weren’t being led by the Holy Spirit. They would’ve had a school loan that burned them down for years IF they hadn’t simply been faithful to take the next available step in their journey. **So often, we want the whole journey on GPS marked out and emailed to us when God just wants us to the next step in faithful, humble obedience.**

GOD has a plan for MY STORY and God has a plan for YOUR STORY! Trust Him. Be obedient in THE NEXT STEP. You don’t have to know all the steps. JUST take the NEXT STEP of obedience and God will work out your story.

The Lord truly does order our steps! **Psalm 37:23 “The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives.”**

Let's turn our attention back to Simon Peter.

Now I'm sure that even Peter didn't imagine that it would be HIM preaching to a crowd of thousands on the day of Pentecost! As ambitious as he was, I'm pretty sure that he could've have seen this opportunity coming. But once it was there, he took it! People were eager and curious about all these people being filled with the Spirit and they were gathered to learn more.

Peter preaches his very first sermon and 3,000 people were saved! And in that day they counted only men so it's possible 5 to 10,000 were saved!

Now if that didn't give him the feeling of "success" I don't know what would've. He had been following Jesus for three years. He'd walked on water with Jesus. He'd seen miracle after miracle. He'd seen those that were tormented and demon-possessed set free. Now Jesus was in Heaven and he and his band of brothers were on earth and now they gotta do this thing Jesus trained them to do. It's their turn. He preaches with conviction, with passion and with clarity. And 3,000 people gave their hearts to Jesus Christ!

Peter experienced success with the disciples the minute they began ministering. Acts 5 tells us that person after person was healed as they were brought to these men - former fishermen and thieves, accountants and doctors - now suddenly transformed into ministers "pastors" "evangelists" WOW

In your story of walking with the Lord, I must warn you. The most dangerous part of seeing God begin to move through your life and impact others is the sin of spiritual pride. It happens all too often - especially in circles of charismatic churches and denominations where the gifts are celebrated. Rightly so btw.

Peter had to be tempted at times to think "I must be pretty amazing. I pray for people and they're healed. I preach and people repent. I am THE ROCK. Jesus told me so! Dwayne Johnson aint got nothing on me!"

I mean after all these people are healed and delivered of demons, the Sadducees, the religious leaders, were filled with jealousy and they "arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out! 'Go and stand in the temple courts and tell them about this new life!" WOW!

Can you imagine Peter!?! He likely started dancing and singing 'How you like me now!?"

Like our friend Peter, when we say to God “Ooh, Ooh, let me build you something” He might be like “Nah. No thanks.” lol
 And that’s OK! God wants our hearts more than our buildings. God wants our friendship more than our allegiance. He’s a Father, not a dictator. Yes you should fear Him; yes He should have all allegiance as Master ... and *in that place of brokenness and humility*, God will grant you friendship and holiness. But never just build something because you saw someone else build something. **Build something if God, your friend, in the context of friendship, tells you to build something.**

Psalm 25:14 “Friendship with God is reserved for those who fear Him.”

When I hear this verse, I think of Peter. Peter sees Jesus not just as Savior but as the friend who never gave up on him. To Peter, Jesus is “the friend that sticks closer than a brother” Jesus knows that Peter denied Him three times. This is why He verified Peter’s call to ministry three times over breakfast after He rose from the dead. Jesus wanted Peter to know “Hey friend, you’re still in. You’re still on God’s team of leaders ...and... You’re still my friend.”

IN OUR STORY, WHEN GOD IS ESTABLISHING A MILESTONE IN THE JOURNEY, SATAN, THE INTRUDER, WILL TEMPT US TO GO BACK TO OUR OLD WAY OF LIFE - THE ONE WE KNOW.

Now before Peter preaches and after Jesus rises from the dead, he tried to hide in shame and just go back to fishing. But Jesus came looking for him - just like He comes looking for you. GOD GOT A HOLD OF HIS HEART and reminding him of GRACE. God’s Spirit reminded him of the moment over breakfast where Jesus looked into his eyes and three times said “FEED MY SHEEP”

Oh the anointing of God’s Spirit that must have been felt in that moment. Isn’t it beautiful when you feel the Spirit - the anointing in a moment - in a conversation - in spoken word of prophecy that breaks the lies of shame and fear and brings encouragement and love!

Peter as you know, ended up writing a couple books in the Bible and God used His life greatly!

In fact in the book of Acts we see that it is Peter who healed man and preached with boldness.

It is Peter who established a church on the sea of Galilee that to this day thousands come every year to honor him and worship there.

What if Peter would’ve discounted himself & believed the lie: HIS STORY didn’t matter? Jesus didn’t discount Peter & He doesn’t discount you.

Jesus didn’t write off Peter and He doesn’t write you off. When you’re broken and honest and real with God about where you’ve blown it, He is more than faithful

to forgive you and set you back on the right course. He can then let His grace do it's work in your heart.

Turn in your Bibles to 2 Kings 4:1-7

The passage of Scripture that we are going to use as our text comes from 2 Kings 4:1-7. I am sure many of you are very familiar with this Old Testament account ... **2 Kings 4:1-7**

"One day the widow of a member of the group of prophets came to Elisha and cried out, "My husband who served you is dead, and you know how he feared the Lord. But now a creditor has come, threatening to take my two sons as slaves." "What can I do to help you?" Elisha asked. "Tell me, what do you have in the house?" "Nothing at all, except a flask of olive oil," she replied.

And Elisha said, "Borrow as many empty jars as you can from your friends and neighbors. Then go into your house with your sons and shut the door behind you. Pour olive oil from your flask into the jars, setting each one aside when it is filled." So she did as she was told. Her sons kept bringing jars to her, and she filled one after another. Soon every container was full to the brim! "Bring me another jar," she said to one of her sons.

"There aren't any more!" he told her. And then the olive oil stopped flowing. When she told the man of God what had happened, he said to her, "Now sell the olive oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on what is left over." 2 Kings 4:1-7

So here she is, she's older now. Maybe sitting alone in her house while her sons are out in the field. Can you picture it?

Her hands have more wrinkles. Her purse has less money.

She's done everything she can to scrape up enough money to get by since her husband died. She's a single mom trying to make ends meet.

But in that culture there wasn't subsidies that could provide the bare minimum so her kids can stay with her. In that culture, the sons had to be "sold" in a sense - there was a requirement for them to go away to work to pay off the mortgage, the debt - the loan she and her widowed husband had incurred.

She didn't plan on him dying.

No widow does.

She's alone in her grief. She's alone in her questions. She's desperate.

She's right where she needs to be to experience a miracle!

She thinks about approaching Elisha, the great man of God. But she doesn't want to *bother* him! She must have thought ...

After all, just because my husband served Elisha and did ministry together it doesn't mean I can just go up to him and demand a miracle! God, you must be crazy. I can't just go up and say to Elisha "DO SOMETHING"

Yet, that's what she did. She went looking for the man of God.

"Elisha. You know my husband served you well. Now me and my sons are dying. Do something! We have no way to pay our debt! They're going to take my babies!"

Elisha gave her an illogical reply. "Get as many jars of oil as you can."

You see, we often expect God to speak to us in the context of our understanding but He is outside of our understanding and can do WAY more than we can imagine so obedience is the key to breakthrough in my story and in your story.

As we read, once she and her sons obeyed the word of the Lord that came through the prophet, God supplied a miraculous provision, thousands of dollars in our day.

DON'T SELL YOUR INSTRUMENTS

I want to share another part of my story with you - a moment that changed me forever. I was 20 yr old in Bible College and had used every dollar I had saved up. I had worked at Wendys for 39.5 hours a week in addition to being full time at school. I'd go to school at 7. It ended at 3 and I'd go to Wendys at 4 and work till 1:30am. Next day start over. 2 years in, I was OUT of money. I had to quit Wendys bc I was falling asleep in class and knew this wasn't sustainable. For a month I could NOT get a job.

I was forced to sell my bass guitar and bass amp and I was REALLY upset about this. I was teaching myself bass in any free 10 min window of time that I had and I was just so bummed about this. \$200 rent was due and I had \$225 in the bank. I posted my bass and amp in the newspaper without my name - just my cell number. An elderly lady came up to me on Sunday and said "The Lord wants me to tell you to not sell your instruments that He will use them for His glory. He also says that He will always provide the money you need." And she handed me \$200! I was broken. I was fighting tears. I couldn't believe GOD WAS THAT THOUGHTFUL. THAT GOD KNEW ME. GOD CARED ABOUT MY NEEDS.

Maybe you're desperate today. Maybe you're at the end of your rope, in need of a miracle. Maybe your marriage is on the brink and you need a miracle to save

it. God can save it. God can provide. God can bring the healing and the oil and the wisdom and the finances and whatever it is you need!

HER SONS LEARNED A LESSON THAT DAY.

Now let's draw our attention to the widow's sons.

In this passage of Scripture we could say, "Her sons had a front row seat on how their mother played her hand."

It has been said of the prophet Elisha, that he represented God's compassion. In many biblical accounts God used him - miraculously - to bring a solution to a problem - by offering acts of compassion to individuals for a specific need.

The ministry of Elisha foreshadowed the compassionate ministry of Jesus.

This widow was in danger of losing the protective support of her two sons. Under Mosaic Law, a creditor had the right to do this in exchange for a debt that was owed.

If the prophet's ridiculous solution that he had proposed didn't work out - their lives were about to change, for the worse - to put it mildly.

So let me add another hook to this story: How their mother played her hand, would affect them greatly.

I am sure we can agree, life has a way of dealing all of us some difficult hands, from time to time.

I wonder if the widow in our story was holding a few cards close to her chest - around her boys and her friends and neighbors - as she went from house to house asking them for jars, knowing, she only had a thimble-full of oil to pour into them?

Think about it ...

- She had to be really scared!
- She was probably battling her faith as the prophet's instructions were questionable, at best.
- Undoubtedly, she was fearful for her son's sake ...
- And they were right in the middle - watching their mother respond to her circumstances.
- **Your children are watching your story unfold. How you respond to inconvenience. How you treat your spouse - with a hug, a kiss and kind words or with complaints. How you speak about your boss. Whether you're reading your Bible and praying or not. They see your story unfolding and much of your story will become their story.**

But the text doesn't say she was sobbing, wringing her hands, raising her voice, saying things like:

- Come on Elisha, pray again! Maybe God will give you a better idea!

- She didn't say to her neighbors, "*I know this seems silly*, but the prophet told me to ask you if I could borrow your empty jars ..."
- She didn't say to her sons, "This probably isn't going to work out"
- You see the tone and message of our words reveal to us where our faith is

In spite of what this desperate widow must have been *feeling* - but not revealing - this is what the Bible said she did:

She obeyed the prophet of God and did what he told her to do. She went to her friends and neighbors and collected jars. Then she he went into her house - with her sons - and shut the door.

Like we said earlier, **When we want our life story to be amazing, we can't just assume things of grandeur in the future, we simply need to be faithful in the present - in the little things and in the big things - one step at a time.**

In the "my story" of so many people we love in God's Word, they're often asked a question "What do you have?" The boy with the loaves of bread a few fish. David with a few stones in his pocket. Moses with a staff in his hand. God can always work with what we have. God looks at what we have and says "I can work with that."

Her sons brought her the jars – and she began to pour oil from her flask into them - setting each one aside when it was filled, one after another. Verse 6 said, you may remember: Soon every container was full to the brim! "Bring me another jar," she said to one of her sons. "There aren't any more!" he told her. And then the oil stopped flowing.

- She allowed her sons to participate in the miracle God provided.

Can I tell you, kids are smart enough to know when you are "not OK." If you believe that is a true statement - let me ask you:

- Do they see you seeking God for the solution to your needs?
- Do you provide a safe environment for them by protecting them from your fears and emotions?
- Do you include them in your prayers and actions - providing opportunities for them to participate in, and see, God's provision?

Your kids need to see you praying and HEAR YOU PRAY - ASKING GOD for WISDOM and PROVISION. YOUR FAITH can become THEIR FAITH!

JESUS IS ABLE TO HANDLE IT! God looks at what we have and says "I CAN WORK WITH THAT."

Elisha's ministry foreshadowed the compassionate ministry of Jesus.

The miracles that occurred under Elisha's ministry put needy people in touch with the one-and-only, **all-powerful** God. **What God did for Elijah and this widow, God can do for you! What God did for me, He can do for you!**

I called

As we read the Gospels we see Jesus concentrating his efforts on specific needs of people He encountered – demonstrating God's powerful, yet personal, caring nature.

Jesus' approach, on many occasions, was like Elisha's, which was to ask **questions – involving the person - activating their faith, using what they had - even if it was the smallest contribution – He often does the same with us.**

He asks us in moments of silence before the kids get up out of bed “Are you going to trust me with this issue at work?” Or “I know you aren't healed yet, but will you trust Me that in Heaven, all be will be made new?”

Or “I want to heal you now. Do you believe Me? Do you want to be healed?”

OR “That person at your Life Group that's hard to love - shoot - he's hard to even like - just know that I really love him and I love the way that you're patient with him. Thank you for showing him My love.”

Remember he said... **"Now sell the olive oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on what is left over."**

The miraculous provision of oil not only provided payment of her debt, but it supplied **more than enough** for her ongoing livelihood.

In a similar way, Jesus, not only paid our debt of sin – but we read in Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, **“This same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.”** (Chapter 4:19)

To the church at Ephesus Paul wrote, **“By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.”** (Chapter 3:20)

Can I tell you, **some people can meet some of your needs – but only Jesus can meet your greatest need.**

Elisha operated under the Law of Moses, which couldn't save anyone.

Romans 8:3-4 says: The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us.

Simply said: **What the Law demanded; Jesus supplied!**

The Law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.

~ John 1:17

The root word for testimony doesn't mean to simply "talk about" what God did yesterday ...

The ancient, Hebrew word for testimony – in its origin – means to observe and/or **repeat** an action. 'edah, (עדה) [English] ~ 'ad (ayin, dalet) [Hebrew]

The word is derived from "observing" the door.

The door of a house is the most repeatedly used part of the whole structure. We constantly go in and out of the door. It is a repeated action - probably one of the most recurring things we do on a daily basis.

So, **When we share a testimony – or speak of what God has done in the past – we create an atmosphere of faith, that can affect - or change - something in the present or the future – to be repeated or reoccur. When we share our "my story" with someone, it inspires them to trust God in their circumstance. My story inspires faith! What God did then, He can do again!**

When we hear what God did for someone else, we're inspired to believe that God can look at us and say the same thing "I can work with that!"

All this sermon to remind us of what He can do for us.

I have been building your faith to believe - **What God did then, He can do again - TODAY!**

Isaiah 43:26 ... "Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case, that you may be acquitted."

JESUS loves it when we talk about what He has promised us - and when we believe Him to fulfill those promises.

Revelation 12:11 – which says, They overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

The reason why the followers of Christ prevailed at this time against all their adversaries was because they fought against the dragon in the armour of God. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb - by proclaiming salvation to sinners through Christ crucified. - ADAM CLARK

When they repeated the testimony of Christ's testimony over Satan at the cross – God gave them the same power over Satan that Jesus had!

When we repeat Christ's testimony over Satan - we have power over Satan too!

And there's MORE! When we testify of the RESURRECTED Christ - the same power that raised Jesus from the dead - now living in us - will raise us from the dead! God will do it again – for us!

Here's the bottom line: **When God is remembered for what He has done - the power of that testimony - creates an atmosphere of faith to believe Him to repeat an action and do it again!**

RESPONSE

Instead of us coming to the altar and asking for prayer for God to supply a need – like He did for the widow in our story – He wants us to give Him honor by sharing a testimony of when He showed up in all His power... and met a need. Our greatest testimony is our salvation, but in addition, God has given us many more reasons to testify about His great compassion and provision

You may be sitting here today in a desperate situation. There is no better time to praise Him for what He has already done.

Our children – the children who attend this house – our friends, our brothers and sisters in Christ, our community - really are in the middle. They really do have a front row seat - and they *are watching* how we play our hand in response to life's challenges.

Remember, you don't have to show everyone - every card you are holding, but you can build someone's faith – by sharing *something* God has done for you..

Maybe you lost your job and you were feeling so desperate – you were afraid, but you prayed, the whole church prayed – and you got a better job.... You were sick and God healed you... your prodigal child came home after years of wandering.... I don't know your testimony --- but I know you have one!

So in a moment, I am going to ask that we tell someone in the room / someone sitting around us – something God has done for us Tell them *YOUR MY STORY* - and ignite their faith to believe God to intervene in their lives.

Can you imagine Jesus listening to us do this? I can see Him learning over the gates of heaven, smiling, maybe even laughing - saying, **"I love it when you talk about Me!"**

Let's honor Him by filling this sanctuary with the words of our testimonies - and create an atmosphere that will allow our faith to rise up and believe God to do great things again ... in our lives and in the life of our church.

You can stay here in the sanctuary OR you can use the yellow room, foyer or Cafe. The Family Lounge, there's plenty of space to do this.

Extroverts I need you to adopt an introvert.

If you don't know how to spot them - they're the ones that right now won't make eye contact with you. LOL

Go find one and grab them by the hand and say... TODAY you're telling me your story and I'm telling you mine. Spend at least 5 min but no more than 5 before the other person share's there's. That way there's time. So extroverts - don't talk over the introverts! =) after you share, give them ample time to share and open up.

Let's honor God by filling this building with the words of our testimony!

Remember: We overcome - by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony!