

TELLING OURSELVES SMALL STORIES

Let me tell you a story of a week in February. It is a story of small.

- It was one where Pulse Youth Group had little pulse. In fact none of the youth turned up. We have been faced with less interest and lower numbers recently. After Christmas we tried to apply some CPR in giving out invites and encouraging youth back onboard!
- It was also one where Life Group had little life. We have relaunched Bible Study to support one another as we "do life with Jesus" and share life with one another. It has been a helpful and encouraging support for those who have been able to attend, which has been mostly team, but on this week (for good reasons) no-one could make it.
- It was also a week in which we hoped to chat together as a church about how we can raise our profile across this year. Yet there were very few people in church to discuss how we might do this, so we postponed it.

Now, being a lover of stories I am well able to tell myself a 'tall tale' which is actually a 'small tale' A story of small. To string together Pulse and Life group and Church and isolate to this week in February and this season we are in. As we reflected on this, I was asking God, "What kind of story is this?"

Telling ourselves a different story

I have been reading through Joshua currently and came across an interesting story about two tribes of God's people who were challenged to change the story they were telling themselves. It is found in Joshua 17.14-18. The fact is they are numerous (the irony is not lost on me) and their land is too small. Their story is they have not got enough space. They are squeezed in by forest land and Canannites with chariots of iron. They are discontent and only see what they lack. They are fearful and see strong enemies. Yet Joshua takes the same facts and tells a different story. They are numerous and powerful and are well able to clear the forest and to drive out their enemies. The enemies are strong, but God is stronger. His story is one of faith and hope and courage.

The question for me to ponder was, "What will we do with our story of small?" Will it drive us to discouragement or despair or even defeat? Or will it confirm to us that, yes we are small, so the very thing we need to do is, in God's strength to continue to take courage and take the gospel to those around us?

(Just to give a broader perspective: Since this week in February we have had an encouraging night at Pulse with the youth back onboard, engaged and asking good questions. We have also had our profile raising chat, with a good level of engagement and interest. Also since Christmas we have had more people back onboard at church. It pays to see the story over the long-term.)

Please pray for us as a family, for our mission team and the church family as we reach out with the gospel to make disciples in Jesus name, knowing that He is with us. Matt 28.18-20. Pray that this would give us courage, faith and hope to tell ourselves a different story!

Pray particularly as we seek to raise profile as a church family, starting by confirming the story we have to share about ourselves and the ways we want to share it.

Holmes Prayer Update

March 2018

STORIES AT HOME We are a house who love a good story. Here are a few pictures below with our current favourites.

Ally: Mountain Rain. "a little thing is a little thing, but faithfulness in a little thing is a great thing" is a quote repeated throughout this book that kept James Fraser from giving up and the truths that this book touch upon are still encouragingly true and I have found helpful for me today.

Colin: Fistful of heroes from John Pollock is a collection of Missionary Stories. I especially liked the story of Stonewall Jackson, the confederate general in the American civil war, whose trust in God in the middle of battle meant he and his men stood firm as a stonewall in the heat of battle.

Anna: Paddington bear. Eoin: The World's Worst Children.

Conor: That's How God Made Animals

STORIES AT BOOK CLUB

Ally enjoys going to a monthly book club in our local library. The group has been going for over 6 years now and in all that time no matter who has walked in they have felt accepted. I value this welcoming group of mostly older ladies, where no matter our differences you are encouraged to have a voice, an opinion, a value. I love to hear the ladies reflecting on the book we have read and being part of the conversation. As we indirectly share life and values while we gush over the lovely characters or show infirmation at others. **Please pray for Ally as she continues to give another perspective at times, especially as they meet this month to discuss "The Marrying of Hani Kaufman" a book about orthodox Jews who choose to make hard life choices based on what they felt God desired of them.**

Thanks for your continued prayers and support as share God's great redemption story with others here, praying they may find their place in it as His followers

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