**“My Story” – Week 3 (Their Story)**

**February 5-6, 2022**

Hey everyone! We are currently in a series called “My Story” and today we are doing our third week: “Their Story.” Now, when I say “their story,” you might be wondering who I’m talking about? Well, it could be a lot of people – people in your family, friends at school, other kids on your team or in band/choir with you, your neighbors, or maybe even a complete stranger.

They might be a Christian; they may not be. As we’re going to talk about today, it is just as important to listen to others’ stories as it is to share our own. In fact, we’re going to practice listening to someone’s story right now because I’d love to share mine with you!

**(Leaders Note: Briefly share, in 3-5 minutes, your testimony about how you committed your life to Christ and what He is currently doing in your life)**

Listening to someone else’s story is very important. It lets them know that you care, and you’re interested in what’s going on in their life. I mean, how many times have you said to somebody in the hallway at school or someone you know out in public, “What’s up?” or “How’s it going?” or “How are you doing today?” and you actually get more than a one-word answer. We ask those questions, but we aren’t really prepared (or sometimes even interested) in hearing how people are ACTUALLY doing! It almost feels weird if they genuinely answer the question!

Our **THP (Take Home Point)** is in the form of a question today because I want it to cause us to really think about how we would answer it. Here it is…

**Whose story can I listen to?**

Jesus had many incredible qualities, but I think one of his best was how good of a listener he was. He wasn’t someone who wanted all the attention – even though many of the things he did drew attention. He spoke to large crowds, but he also always had time for that one person.

In John 3 in the New Testament, we see Jesus listening and having a conversation with a man named Nicodemus, a religious leader who wanted to talk to him. Nicodemus was afraid his reputation would be ruined if the other religious leaders found out he was hanging out with Jesus, so he met him at night. Jesus could have been like, “Oh, it’s too late…maybe another time, Nicodemus.” He could have even said, “Nicodemus, who cares what those other guys think? Just come visit me during the day like everyone else!”

**But he didn’t…he met him, listened to him, and answered his questions respectfully. Jesus was willing to listen to his story.**

There was another time in the New Testament in Luke 24:13-29 where right after Jesus had risen from the dead. Think about that…RISEN FROM THE DEAD. He appears to two of his disciples walking along the road. Now, they have no idea that it’s actually him and Luke doesn’t really specify why they didn’t recognize him. He just comes up and says, “So, what are you guys talking about?” and they’re like “What are we talking about?! Are you like the only person on planet Earth who doesn’t know what just happened? Our teacher, Jesus, was executed on a cross. We thought he was going to be the Messiah. We thought he was going to save us and now he’s dead!” Jesus told them, “Well, didn’t the Messiah have to go through all that stuff?” And right there, he started to explain all of the prophecies in the Old Testament (by the way a prophecy in the Bible is a prediction about something or someone that ends up being true later) about what the Messiah was going to be like…and Jesus fit every description.

Pretty cool, right? They had no idea it was actually Jesus! Check out what happens next in Luke 24:28-35: *“As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.”*

Even though Jesus obviously knew what happened, he still took time to listen to them. Then, he went and shared a meal with them, which was the very same thing he did with his disciples before he died. He could have gone off and done all these crazy awesome things just to show off how he had risen from the dead. Instead, he just spent time with his friends. If the God of the universe, Jesus, can listen to someone’s story and just have a meaningful conversation, don’t you think we should be doing the same?

I have a question for you: who is that person in your life? As our THP says: **Whose story can I listen to?** Is there anyone in your life who you know is struggling and all they need is someone to just care about them, talk to them, and listen to what they have to say?

Last week, we read a verse from the Old Testament that talks about sharing your story. It’s from Psalm 107:1-2, which says this, *“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story…”*

As we have challenged you to think about your own story and then sharing it with others, I want to challenge you again to listen to someone else’s story. Ask them what they think about God. Ask them how they’re REALLY doing. Invite them to come to church with you. Just be willing to listen to and encourage them because we ALL need friends like that! Pray and ask God who that person might be. Pray that He will help you be ready when the opportunity presents itself. Let’s close with prayer before we start our group discussions! **(Teacher’s Note: Pray and then close the message)**