

A Publication of the Port Orchard Church of Christ

January 29, 2023

Tell Your Story

By Sarah Benjamin

I am terrible at jigsaw puzzles. I can watch my kids put together entire sections of a puzzle while I struggle to fit in one piece. But I love to see the finished product, the masterpiece, when it comes together (mostly without my help, of course).

The same has been true in life. I haven't been very good at putting the pieces together there either. I could get straight A's, but couldn't read a bus map. I could understand specifics, but not the big picture. I would take one passage of Scripture, interpret it to the nth degree of the law, then use it as a rope to bind myself with. When I was twelve, I read in the Old Testament that the Jews were not supposed to eat fat, or something like that. So when I ate my French dip sandwiches, I tried to pick out all the tiny bits of fat and then eat the rest of it. Here I was again, extracting a law and not understanding the whole picture.

Now some may see my twelve-year-old self as a wonderful Christian example of great devotion. But I wasn't. In reality, I was missing the joy and freedom of understanding God's true heart behind the law.

Why do I bring all of this up? I think that many Christians (though not at the extremes of my life) don't see the hidden places where we accept an emphasis of law in exchange for the bigger picture of God's heart for us. In other words, we are all used to reading about the burden and yoke of the Pharisees, but we don't recognize it when it pops up in our own lives. And this can be true in one specific area that I wanted to discuss today: The idea of telling our own stories and opening up about ourselves.

I think we need to awaken to the freedom of *sharing*. Let me explain more...

Most Christians are focused on verses of the Bible such as the following: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom...let not the rich man boast in his riches (Jeremiah 9:23). "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (Matthew 6). We interpret these passages as saying we are not allowed to speak about ourselves at all. (After all, talking about ourselves would be bragging, right?) However, I think this misses the big picture of what the Bible is saying.

The Bible says to proclaim what God has done (Mark 5:20). It also says to love each other deeply (I Peter 4:8), which means a deep sharing of what is in in our hearts and lives (which also necessarily includes our accomplishments, which are an integral part of our lives' story).

There is a difference between bragging and sharing. Bragging has the intent to elevate yourself while putting others down, so others feel inferior to you. Bragging closes people out. But sharing, on the other hand, *invites others in*. It allows people to understand and know you better. The Bible says to "give honor" when honor is due (Romans 13:7). However, in order for us to give honor to one another, we have to actually know one another and know what is going on in each other's lives.

Sharing includes naming the struggles, of course, but it also includes naming the victories. Someone cannot really get to know you, unless

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they know the WHOLE you, which includes both the bad and the good—even things that might seem like bragging on the surface, but only because they are amazing areas where God has worked in your life.

In the end, our story is a gift that we can give to others. If we keep it within ourselves, then other people don't get to see God's glory in our story: the gifts that He has given us, the things that He has accomplished, his faithfulness through it all. And people don't really get to KNOW us. It is one of the deepest human needs to be known. But in our society, we often don't cross paths with people other than Sundays at church, if even that. In the old days you could read a community paper or bump into people at the grocery store or have barbecues for everyone in your neighborhood. But these times are gone. In our modern days, we feel stranded on an island in a sea of anonymity. Does anyone really know us? Does anyone really care? If we weren't there, would it make one ripple in the sea of humanity around us?

But God's word tells us we matter. He tells us that we are ONE with others in the connected community of the church, and He says that each person is valuable and deserving of special honor. And it is from that reality that we must operate, not according to the isolation we feel in our contemporary world. We can tell others the story of our lives, because it is a way to honor our individuality, a way to be known, a way to give glory to God.

In conclusion, when we put all the puzzle pieces together, God's heart for our lives is beautiful, not restrictive. So take your biblical permission and freedom—and your courage—and make a decision to share who you really are with your friends and family around you. It's okay. You are not bragging. You are leaving a legacy of God's faithfulness. So go ahead, *tell your story*.

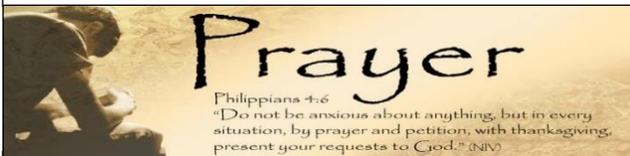
You'll be glad you did.

† Worship Leaders †

Dave Snypp will now be organizing and assigning the worship leaders for our Sunday morning worship services.

If you would like to choose when you lead, contact Dave or the church office.

You'll get an email reminder mid-week.



Teen NEWS

Teen Night

Friday, February 3rd
At the church building
5:30 – 7:00pm



Our Prayer List

- Prayers requested for Roger Taylor who will be having a CT scan on the side of his throat.
- Brooke Armenta is having issues with high blood pressure, having blurred vision, dizziness and headache. Please pray the medical staff will be able to provide her the relief she needs.
- Congratulations to Zach and Brooke Armenta on the birth of their new little boy (yet to be named) who was born January 16th. He weighed 6lbs 5 oz.
- Dale Sanders will be seeing a neurosurgeon to determine treatment for his back issues.
- Peggy Hall's mother is recovering from surgery for her broken hip. Prayer for her recovery.
- Prayers for Daniel (the Fry's grandson) who has a brain tumor. Pray for Darrell and Laura as they are in Arizona to be with them. And also for their trip home.
- Pray for Deja Cormier who had surgery to place a stint in her brain to relieve pressure from the IAH.
- Pray for Derke Peterson who has stage 4 cancer.
- Theresa Scott has stage 4 cancer and was told it is terminal. She will begin radiation soon.
- Praise for all the new baptisms and also for those who have chosen to be clean and /or clean an sober.
- Prayers for the ministry of Cisco and Heather Velez family outreach with the Mercy Mobile.
- Praise that Pam Woodrow is doing well with her new knee replacement.
- Pray for the Herbert's who are traveling to Dallas for a conference this week.
- Pray for Kathy Grace and the concerns she has and anxiousness.
- Pray for our leadership team, all of our ministries.
- Pray for Ukraine.
- Remember to thank and praise God for our many blessings – both physical and spiritual.

We received a letter from Oilda Harris. She sends greetings.

Wayne has a praise for God who is so good.

On January 25th, on Woods Road his granddaughter Sydney and her children were hit head on by a 16-year-old who lost control and swerved into their lane. Her car is totaled, but God is so good. Everyone is ok. Other than Maddie (the baby), all were taken to the hospital and checked out. Wayne was able to take Maddie home to stay with Charlie while he was at the hospital with Sydney and Hayden while Duante (her husband) was at the other hospital with Cassidy.

The other driver Sydney thinks may have a concussion .

Wayne is so thankful that God is so good.

Please say prayers of thanks for all being ok and prayers for the young man who hit them.

God is good ALL THE TIME !

POCOC Web Site (<http://pococ.weebly.com/>)

- Weekly Bulletin – Go to <http://pococ.weebly.com/> then click on Bulletin & Newsletters
- Pre-Covid audio sermons are also still online. Click on Teachings
- Current Event Calendar - Click on News & Events
- Live stream of worship services on YouTube Channel - Previous video recordings, too:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL_SrX11URakOYw7JOR9ZIQ then click on the desired video.
 Please subscribe to be notified when new videos post or when we go live.



Sunday Worship for January 29, 2023 (10:30 am – 12:00 – noon) (Children are dismissed for Children’s Church after communion) Watch live stream or after our worship time: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL_SrX11URakOYw7JOR9ZIQ					
Speaker: James Greer	Singing Josh Bedford	Scripture: James Greer	Prayer: Cisco Velez	Communion: Jim Snead	Offering: Brad Orser
Note: The Tuesday Ladies Prayer group meeting at LaDonna's home is now meeting on Thursdays 10 a.m. Still meeting at LaDonna’s.					
9:30am Adult Class: Auditorium Brad Orser - Review			Children Class: Downstairs Two Classes: children and pre-teen		
Call Laura Fry or the Church Office (360-876-2604) for Zoom Meeting ID					
Men’s Fellowship Downstairs Fellowship Room Tuesdays - 10:00 am			Ladies in the Word Conference Room Tuesdays - 10:00 am		
Bible Class & Prayer Ephesians (in person or on Zoom) Wednesdays: 5:00 - 6:00 pm			Ladies Prayer group LaDonna's home Thursdays 10:00 am		
Port Orchard Church of Christ 4135 Carr Lane SE Port Orchard, WA 98366 360-876-2604 - churchpococ@gmail.com			January 22, 2023 Tithes & Offerings – \$ 2,645.20		
			If you have any questions, please give me a call. God bless you. Gary Chasteen (cell) 360-731-4104		
Call Laura Fry or the Church Office (360-876-2604) for Zoom Meeting ID					

Communion and Tithes & Offerings

The bread and fruit of the vine will be served during our communion time. You also have the option to pick up your communion supplies as you enter the auditorium. It contains both the juice and the bread.

There are also a few options for giving your tithes & offerings:

- 1) The collection box is in the foyer at the entrance to the auditorium.
- 2) Online bill-pay with your bank or credit union. Your bank will mail your check for you.
- 3) Mail your tithe/offering check directly to the Church address below. We have a lock mailbox.

Happy Birthday!

January: Tammy White – 29, Myron David – 30.

February: Christopher Hill – 7, Carla Duffy – 8, Terri (Hall) Wallon – 9, Zari Keagle – 9, DeLoris Lawler – 9, Keith (Fuzzy) Volpitta – 12, Rachel Karn – 18, Jason Hall – 20.