



16 FEBRUARY 2018
THIS IS MY STORY

Galatians 1:11 “For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; **12** for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. **13** You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. **14** I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. **15** But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased **16** to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, **17** nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus. **18** Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; **19** but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord’s brother. **20** In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie! **21** Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, **22** and I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; **23** they only heard it said, “The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy.” **24** And they glorified God because of me.”

Paul writes to the Jesus-followers in Galatia, who were in danger of adding to the central content of the gospel by requiring Gentile Christians to maintain a Jewish lifestyle. He begins with a rebuke: “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel”¹ Then, instead of plunging into theological debate, he offers a personal testimony.

This then is the core of our faith – we have a story to tell. While this does not excuse us from theological reflection on our story – if all that we have is clever theology, then we have nothing. Ours is a faith that speaks of a personal spiritual encounter with the God of Jesus; and this is the testimony we share.

For Thought

I was bruised, but Jesus healed me,
 Faint was I from many a fall,
 Sight was gone, and fears possessed me,
 But He freed me from them all.

Refrain:

*Yes, I’ll sing the wondrous story
 Of the Christ Who died for me,*

Francis H. Rowley, 1886

The First Sunday in Lent

The Scripture passage for the day is drawn from Reuben Job and Norman Shawchuck, A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and other Servants, (Nashville, The Upper Room 1983), 106.

This reflection is from my own devotional exercises for the day.

¹ Galatians 1:6