



WOW: Word Of the Week

History, Story

March 16, 2022

Story—an interesting word. A tale, yarn, fabrication. Don't story, don't fib, don't lie.

Story—a chronicle, narrative, account, tale, or history.

Our word this week is story – a shortened form of the word “history.” Latin: historia. Greek: historeo, Gal. 1:18-19, to visit to get information, to interview. A brief history of the word “story” shows that in the 1200s the word referred to “a connected account or narration of a happening,” especially of important events or people. The shortened word, story, came to be applied to a short history. By the 1500s, the meaning could include a narrative of fictitious events. To find the word referring to a newspaper article we have to wait until 1892. The idea of a story-line is attested in 1941, a reference to the “story of my life” occurs in 1938, referring to an autobiography.

This intriguing history of story gives us a series of WOWs! Some have seen in the word history the combination “his story,” referring to God or Jesus.

Let's talk about history. Let's talk about your story; your history. Think about the history of the world. In the Bible we read a story, stories, we read history. Not untruths but truths.

Application! What story guides your life? Do you know THE story? What is your story? How and where do the stories around you intersect, overlap, and combine in your own life?

It is possible for Christians to study THE story without learning how to live out that story in daily life. It is possible to read history without learning from history. “Those who will not learn from history are destined to repeat it.”

What are we thinking when we think about the word “story”? History. But history considered in smaller pieces, anecdotes, events, occurrences, experiences. What story, what stories define your life?

In the U.S., we are defined by the story of our nation, the story of Western capitalism, the story of individualism, the story of personal rights. These and a host of other stories unconsciously form us. Our view of religion is informed at least in part by the history of civic religion that characterized the founding of the nation.

Our lesson. Christians have an alternative story—history has completely altered our lives. We have a story we constantly live into—a story we constantly seek to live out, the story that gives us our identity as part of a faith community. The source of identity, belonging, purpose and direction, and hope.

An important part of living within the story is continually hearing and being reminded of the unique history that has brought us where we are. I continually urge Christians toward the habit of reading Scripture, all of Scripture, focusing on the uniqueness of the story we find there. Preaching, the message of the church, the message shared with others, must constantly open up the story, connect us to the story, reminding us that Christ stands at the center of the story, and thus at the center of our identity, purpose, and hope.

If you would like a helpful tool for spending time in the word, may I suggest my book, *Dwelling in the Word*, an opportunity to spend time in each chapter of the New Testament.

Also, this week I begin a new Sunday series—the “Jesus Story” as seen through the eyes of the early church. Easter from the perspective of Acts! Available on my YouTube channel, with links on my website and also here on my Facebook page.