

1/28/24 SALT CO
What's Your Story?
"Telling Stories of Return to Joy"

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¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

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²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this

son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

SLIDE WELCOME TO THE SALT CO!

- To first timers
- To those online

When we say “Seasoned Adults” we mean this in two ways:

SLIDE **SEASONED AS IN...**

Chronologically-- we’ve lived a lot of seasons of life
BUT more importantly-

Spiritually--- by the grace of God, when we receive Christ into our lives we become like THIS [gesture: one hand—two hands—joined together]

...we become a new creation...transformed and *transforming* for the rest of our lives.

JESUS CALLS US THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

So we call this the SALT CO...

A word about what we hope happens here, meeting new people, making some friends, hospitality (xenophilia!). Means we consciously mix tables.

Quick review of theme

- Last time, “Signals of Transcendence”

Next time, which happens to be Superbowl Sunday, we're going to have a special session of SALT CO to hear the story of Coach Bill Redell.

-Today, WE are going to be the storytellers! We're going to learn how to tell stories that shape us and those we share them with.

But first! Let's sing!!

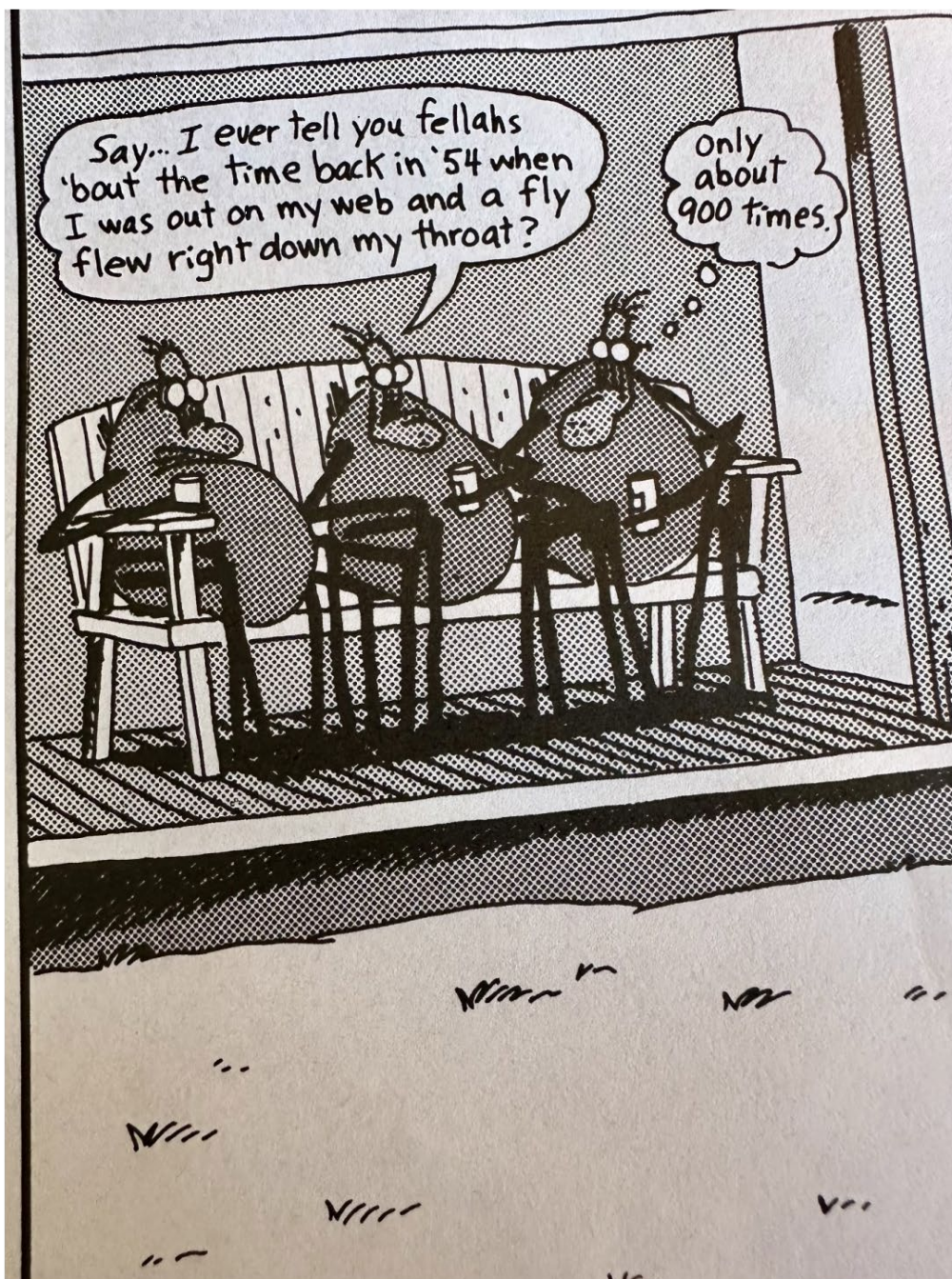
SONG. Rejoice in the Lord Always again I say RE-JOICE

SONG

SALT TALK What's Your Story?

SLIDE of Old Spiders Cartoon

From: Dick Thompson dickandsuzanne@gmail.com
Subject: Old spiders
Date: January 23, 2024 at 4:23 PM
To: Dick Thompson dick.thompson@calvarywestlake.org



-Suzanne and I are on our way out the door to meet friends for dinner. We've cut this a bit short. Just as I'm about to close the front door, Suzanne stops, "Wait! Where's my phone? I just had it. It's not here!" I can feel a tightening in my stomach. But I hold on. I take a breath. Maybe I take another breath. I think. I say, "Where did you last have it?" I tell myself to let go of the time. I tell myself, "Dick, go help look for it." To be methodical in the search. I am very confident we will find it. Sure enough. EUREKA! It was in the inside zippered pocket of her purse! We head out, I'm feeling relieved, not only for finding the phone, but for keeping it together during the search. I will try to remember this the next time...

--Suzanne and I were in a toe to toe- what about I don't recall. I do remember **feeling annoyed and** slipping into "Enemy Mode" Thing was, in the middle of this we had to go to the pharmacy. We had just switched insurances and I brought the information and handed it to the pharmacist who carefully punched in all the numbers. **I felt nervous about** the new insurance, will they take it? What if there's a problem? I began to picture all the hoops I'd have to jump through to get this insurance thing sorted out. I stood and waited, and waited. I heard the *click* and a whirring sound of the pharmacists' computer printer. A very good sign I thought. Sure enough, the pharmacist shows me the charge, 00.00! **I feel relief and the energy of that relief.** With that feeling still moving in my brain I went to find Suzanne to tell her that I was sorry for not acting like myself...That was an *even better* feeling than having my new insurance working!

I was able to find something to be glad about, like the insurance going through, and leverage it to restore **"glad to be together with Suzanne"** and get on with our day!!

-Suzanne and I were looking forward to our big trip overseas. After battling legendary traffic to LAX we stood in a long line at the international terminal. The big board indicated that the flight we were to board was delayed. Bad weather. We worry. Will we make our connection in Istanbul? Our anxiety grows with each slow step toward the counter. Finally, I put our information and passports in front of the attendant. He looks them over, then he looks at us with a pained look, turns to consult with a person behind him, who looks at us, shaking his head. This is not good. They whisper to each other in Turkish. The first man nods, and turns to tell us, *"I'm very sorry, the flight delay means you will miss your connection..."* Our worst fears confirmed. Now what? There's more conversation. Someone picks up a phone. We are standing there it felt like an eternity. Finally, the man comes back to us. *"We are very sorry for this.. We have put you on the next flight out. You will land in Istanbul, but you will not be able to get your connecting flight until the following day. So, for your trouble, we are going to put you up in a very nice hotel, all expenses paid.."* We felt confusion, our heads spinning to wrap our heads around what just happened. THIS IS NOT WHAT WE HAD PLANNED! But then, we began to re-group. We made some phone calls. We told ourselves, *"Ok, it is what it is."* (Don't you love that phrase?) Three hours later when we boarded the plane we were welcomed by a man wearing a chef's hat! The flight was as smooth as glass. The food was magnificent. And the hotel next to the airport in Istanbul was awesome. We get our next flight out the following morning after a restful night's sleep and arrive refreshed.

Sometimes it's time to let go of our timing for there to be time for even better timing.

These three stories share a common thread. These are,

SLIDE

“Practiced tales of times we faced upsetting emotions without getting overwhelmed, or times we got overwhelmed at first but were able to recover.”

The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People, p. 21

They are return to glad-to-be-together joy stories. And the more I remember stories like these, the more likely it will be that I will be able to act like my self and stay relational even when I’m experiencing an upsetting emotion.

We’ve talked before about the most mature person in a room being the one who can carry the most emotional weight and stay relational.

Storytelling is another aspect of what it means to elder well. To remember and tell our return to joy stories, builds our own spiritual maturity but also **equips those who hear these stories to do the same.**

These insights come from our friend Chris Coursey, author of the Joy Switch and his co-author pastoral counselor Marcus Warner who together last year put out this little book, The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People.

SLIDE of book

One of the 4 habits is storytelling, because, as they write,

SLIDE

“How we tell our stories determines how we see ourselves and how we see the world.” Page 95

I want to pause here to consider how biblically founded this insight is. Paul says in his letter to the Philippians,

SLIDE

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, and if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8

This is after he has told them to **“Rejoice!”** = return to joy! He is exhorting his friends to engage in an *intentional process* to recover from discord. Prayer, supplication, WITH THANKSGIVING (gratitude!), that opens the way for peace. He concludes this exhortation with a form of story-telling ourselves and others that begins with **“whatever is true, whatever is honorable... think on (remember) *these things!*”**

Because, *“the more stories we collect of our returning to joy without becoming overwhelmed, or times when we were overwhelmed but then could recover, the more we anchor our brains in the understanding that no matter what emotion I may be feeling right now, it is not the end. There is a path back to joy from here.”* (P. 21)

Coursey and Warner say a joy story explains how we faced a negative emotion in one of three ways. As I go through these be thinking of when you have experienced some of these.

SLIDE Three Ways a Joy Story Explains How We Faced a Negative Emotion. (three points building)

1. We dealt with a hard emotion, but still acted like ourselves
-“Learning to tell our joy stories in which we felt hard emotions but still act like the best version of ourselves helps to reinforce our true identity.” (104) (Suzanne and me at the LAX Turkish Air counter, I don’t remember us losing it in front of them...)

2. We dealt with a hard emotion, but were able to recover and return to joy.

-“When we get triggered, our relational self disappears and we act like someone else [me in stupid enemy mode]. Returning to joy is the process of getting our true self back online. This happens when we can find joy with another person even though our emotions are still upset. (105) Me after my stupid enemy mode moment with Suzanne in the supermarket.

3. We dealt with a hard emotion, but learned a helpful lesson even if we learned it the hard way.

-these are “I’d really like to have that one back again!” Do over stories.

-“To effectively tell these do-over stories we paint a picture of the situation by including a description of what happened, where we messed up, and what we could have done differently.” (p. 108) We reinforce how to stay ourselves and recover when feeling emotions and navigating circumstances that are demanding, painful, triggering, and simply too intense.

- Looking back at times when we were at loggerheads I should have said, “I need to take a walk. Can we get back to this in an hour?”

With these three ways joy stories can help us with returning from negative emotions in mind, Coursey and Warner offer a simple, four “step” way to tell a return to joy story:

SLIDE How to Tell a Return to Joy Story (four points building)

1. Don't start with the worst thing that ever happened to you or the biggest example of an upset emotion you can remember.
2. Describe how your body felt when you were upset, and how your body felt when you recovered.
3. Use your face and body. Make sure your face expresses the emotions you are feeling and make eye contact. (So as you say "Yuck" you bend over and hold your stomach. Or droop your shoulders when you talk about feeling sad.
4. Keep it brief- two to three minutes.

SLIDE The Basic Outline (four points building)

Situation- Invite people into the setting. Where are you? (Jesus does this brilliantly in His parables)

Trigger- explain what triggered the emotion.

- losing track of the phone
- hearing the click and whir of the pharmacist's printer
- learning we had missed our flight

Emotion- What was the tightening in my stomach when Suzanne said she could not find her phone?

Point- Make your point. Explain how you acted like yourself, or how you recovered or the lesson you learned.

-Sometimes it's time to let go of our timing for there to be time for even better timing.

- I was able to find something to be glad about, like the insurance going through, and leverage it!!

We'll try a little of this at our tables.

TABLE TALK (Anthony, for folks online can you make one slide, perhaps split with Three Ways and STEP listed below question #2?)

1. Introduce yourself. How long have you been coming to Calvary?
2. Using the STEP process tell about a time you experienced low to moderate upset, something simple and manageable, where you were able to return to joy.

Setting: Describe the setting for your story (where are you, who are you with, what is the occasion, etc)_

Trigger: What triggered your upset? Be specific about the interactions and what made this unpleasant for you.

Emotion: Talk about how you felt. Use your face and body to describe this.

Point: Talk about how your relationship(s) with others strengthened in some way. How are you encouraged?

3. Which of the Three Ways a Joy Story Explains How We Faced a Negative Emotion (listed here) do you think best describes how your story helps you?
4. Go around and talk about what it was like for the others at the table to listen to your story.

WRAP UP

SLIDE

¹¹ Jesus continued: *"There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.*

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Jesus' story of the Prodigal Son through the STEP process. Notice how Jesus' parables use this approach.

Situation- a self-absorbed younger son insults his father by asking for his inheritance and goes off to squander it all.[ruptures relationship with family/forgets his identity/isolates/enemy mode-

Trigger- in the far away country, alone, eating what pigs eat, the young man "comes to himself". He has an "aha" moment that Jesus' listeners would relate to, nod their heads with a knowing smile.

Emotion-the son's desperation/regret/loneliness/shame. The father's great relief/excitement/ glad-to-be-together- joy, notice the physical ways Jesus uses to describe his joy (robe, ring, sandals, ordering the feast! Proclamation!)

Point- My boy was dead, but now he is alive. He was lost/confused/immature but...turned around/came home to restore relationship Love. Mercy. Joy. *Come home!!*

So what can we take from all this?

SLIDE Four Take Away's

Here are four take away's:

1. When we learn how to manage our emotions then we are able to stay our relational selves under stress.
2. We have a choice in how we tell our stories.

“When it comes to storytelling, we could tell these stories and end with the defeat and the regret. But we choose to tell the stories as lessons we have learned about the importance of returning to joy...”.

“How we tell our stories determines how we see ourselves and the world.” (p. 95)

3. We can build a library of these stories!

“Learning to tell good stories about how we deal with our emotions helps us *build a library* of memories to guide us as we deal with our emotions in the future.” P. 111

4. Story telling plays a key part in the practice of the fine art of eldering.

These stories encourage us to walk the talk!

WALK THE TALK

1. Introduce D.R.I.V.E. Group using The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People, 8 sessions, 9:00-10:30 on first and third Sundays in Room 2010. Sign up using the clip board. Need to order books.

SLIDE Anthony, have fun with this!

D.R.I.V.E. GROUP 1st and 3rd Sundays

4 Habits of Joy Filled People

9:00-10:30 in Room 2010

Starts Sunday, February 18

Concludes Sunday, June 2

2. Journey to the Cross sign up's. Anthony can you pull a slide of this?

SLIDE of Journey to the Cross

March 29

3. Maybe show ROUNDTABLE video
4. Honor our tech team and ask for those who sense a leading to put their names down on the clipboard.

DOXOLOGY

BLESSING