

Passion for the Story

Dear Sara,

My four-year old son was lost! He and I were home alone that day when suddenly I noticed that he was no longer underfoot. I had been distracted for just a brief moment and Aaron was gone. I walked into every room of our home, but he was not there. I stepped outside into a 110-degree Arizona summer, cupped my hands to my mouth and shouted his name. *Aaron! Aaron! Aaron!* Over and over again I shouted, but no response.

I ran frantically down the street, first in one direction and then the other. I kept running, covering every block in the immediate neighborhood and yelling his name repeatedly, I was desperate and afraid. All sorts of scenarios flashed through my mind. Had he wandered out into the dangerous desert near our home? Had someone snatched him for some perverted purpose? My son was lost and I could think of nothing else but finding him. My son was lost, my heart was broken.

Eventually I did find him . . . playing with some toys in a closet in the house. And that experience has aroused within me a passion that remains to this day.

Sara, the voice of God cries out for the lives of lost people with the same kind of feeling, the same kind of passion and the same kind of desperate love which could have been heard in my voice on that day my son was lost. The

biblical record is shot-through-and-through with accounts of God searching, seeking and longing for the return of his lost children. Immediately, on the very first pages of the Bible, after Adam and Eve have introduced sin and rebellion into the world, the voice of God is heard calling, *Adam! Eve! Where are you?* And the voice of the Savior has continued calling out through the corridor of time, from Adam to people today, people who are likewise lost and troubled, confused and alone. Striving to bring lost and broken human beings back into fellowship with Himself has always been and will always be God's highest priority!

My prayer for you, friend, is that you will always maintain your passion for proclaiming God's good news story. Tell it straight, tell it often and tell it with an urgency in your voice that your hearers cannot miss! Proclaim to all who will listen that *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.*

Not, God was in Moses reconciling the world to Himself.

Not, God was in Elijah the prophet reconciling the world to Himself.

Not, God was in St. Peter or St. Paul reconciling the world to Himself.

Not Budha or Mohammed.

Not Calvin or Luther.

Not Dr. Laura or Oprah.

Not even Billy Graham or the Pope.

No! *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.*

This is our story, Sara! We are a people with a story to tell—a one of a kind, absolutely unique story to tell—the precious, life-transforming story of Jesus Christ:

Jesus, who was *with God and who was God*;

Jesus, who became human and dwelt among us *full of grace and truth*;

Jesus, who *did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped*;

Jesus, who *humbled Himself and became obedient unto death—even death on a cross*;

Jesus, who *was buried and raised the third day*; and whom God *exalted to the highest place and gave . . . the name that is above every name*.

This is our story, this is our song. There is a passion here that we need to recover and maintain. It is a passion for the story, and a compassion for those who have not yet heard the story or who have not yet made it their story. None of us has to look long or far to find people who are hurting and lonely and lost, living with other stories that have shaped their lives in false or distorting ways. They are all around us! Nor does it take great powers of observation to see that the North American story is a false and distorted story that needs the transforming influence of the Jesus story if there is to be true liberty and true justice for all.

It is said that a famous violinist once happened upon a magnificent instrument in a music shop. He asked if he could buy the precious violin, but was told that it had already been sold to a collector and soon would be in a showcase for display only. *But this is not a violin merely to look at,* the artist shouted, *it is an instrument with which to bless the world.* For weeks he pleaded with the collector to sell him the instrument, but to no avail. At last, one day, he was allowed to at least play the violin. He said later that he played that violin as one condemned to death would play to obtain ransom. When he finished playing, the collector understood and said, *I have no right to keep it. It belongs to the world. Take it into the world and let it be shared.*

This Jesus story—we have no right to keep it to ourselves! It belongs to the world. And the world is waiting to hear it. No, the world is dying to hear it. Take it into the world and let it be shared. Maintain your passion for the story!

Your fellow herald,

Tony Vis

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How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!

Romans 10:15b