Held in the Light

An invitation to share your story

Share one experience of God's grace for our devotional booklet, *Held in the Light*. This devotional will offer our neighbors a little companionship, Scripture, and prayer. Your story may help someone recognize Christ's care in their own life.

What is testimony?

A testimony is telling how you have experienced God's grace in your own life. It may be the story of coming to faith in Jesus, or one small moment when you received help, learned to forgive, or found strength to keep going. You can share something you are still learning. You do not need a finished story or a dramatic ending.

Your story is worth sharing:

You may think, "Nothing remarkable has happened to me," or "Someone else has already told a story like mine." But no one else has lived your life. Someone may recognize their own struggle in the details only you can tell. A quiet act of kindness or a small step of faith can help another person see God's love.

Begin with three questions:

1. What happened? Tell one moment, as you would tell a friend.
2. How did you experience God's help or grace? It may have come through Scripture, prayer, another person, or strength for the next step.
3. What are you learning? How is Jesus helping you trust, love, forgive, receive care, or serve?

Let us help with the rest…

Aim for about one handwritten page or 200–300 words, but do not let the word count stop you. If a Bible passage comes to mind, include its reference. If you need help choosing Scripture or shaping your story into a devotion, ask Pastor Paul. You can also tell your story in a conversation and ask for help writing it down.

The next page gives you a place to begin. Three examples follow at the end. You do not have to sound like any of them.

A place to begin:

Write here or use your own paper. These questions are helps, not a test.

Your name as you would like it printed _____

You may request that your name be withheld.

What happened

I remember a time when…

_____

_____

How I experienced God's help

Looking back, I can see…

_____

_____

What I am learning

Jesus is helping me…

_____

_____

Optional Scripture reference _____

Before you share

Tell your own experience in your own words. Share only details that are yours to tell; ask permission before identifying another person or describing their private experience.

We will help with Scripture, a reflection question, prayer, and editing. We use the NIV for Bible quotations. Substantial changes will come back to you for approval. Approving the final devotion gives Marion First Friends Church permission to print and distribute it in this noncommercial ministry.

Return to Pastor Paul or the church office as a Word document or a clearly written paper copy.

Deadline _____ Questions are welcome.

Examples to help you begin

These three examples are made up to show the process. Please share your own experience. The Scripture, reflection question, and prayer show what we can help add to your story.

Example one Receiving care

A Meal at the Door

Scripture reading Galatians 6:2

What happened

After several tiring days caring for a family member, I heard a knock at the door. A friend stood there holding a pot of soup. She did not ask me to explain everything or tell me how to feel. She simply said, “I thought you might need supper.” I had been telling everyone I was fine. When she left, I sat down at the kitchen table and cried.

How I experienced God’s help

I had been praying for strength, but I expected strength to mean doing everything myself. Through that meal, I began to recognize Christ’s care in another person’s kindness. Galatians 6:2 calls us to carry one another’s burdens. That evening, I was the person whose burden needed carrying. God’s grace gave me room to admit that.

What I am learning

Jesus is teaching me to receive care with gratitude. I am also learning to notice when someone else may need a meal, a visit, or a listening ear. I do not have to solve every problem to offer love.

Reflect

Where might God be inviting me to receive help?

Pray

Jesus, thank you for meeting me through another person’s kindness. Help me receive your care and share it with someone else. Amen.

Example two Beginning again

The Apology I Put Off

Scripture reading Colossians 3:12–15

What happened

I spoke sharply to someone I love. I was tired, and afterward I kept explaining to myself why I had reacted that way. But the look on their face stayed with me. The next morning, I almost began another explanation. Instead, I said, “I hurt you. I am sorry.” They listened. We still had something difficult to discuss, but we could begin again.

How I experienced God’s help

In Colossians 3, Paul calls people loved by God to compassion, humility, patience, and forgiveness. I began to see that I could trust Christ’s mercy enough to tell the truth about my own behavior. Being tired explained something about my reaction, but it did not remove my responsibility. God’s grace helped me take the next step toward repairing the hurt.

What I am learning

Jesus is forming holiness in me through the way I speak at home. I am learning to pause before answering and to apologize without adding an excuse. I still get it wrong, but I am learning to return to Christ and begin again.

Reflect

What would help me take responsibility for the way my words affect others?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank you for your mercy. Form your patience in me, and give me courage to repair the hurt I cause. Amen.

Example three Faith while waiting

Enough for Today

Scripture reading Matthew 6:25–34

What happened

While waiting for important news, I kept checking my phone. Every quiet hour became another opportunity to imagine what might go wrong. One afternoon, I put the phone down and walked outside. I noticed the birds at the feeder. For a few minutes, I stood still and prayed, “Jesus, I do not know what comes next. Help me live this day with you.”

How I experienced God’s help

Jesus’ words about the birds and the Father’s care in Matthew 6 came to mind. My situation had not changed, and I still had questions. But I began to remember that I was loved by God in the middle of the uncertainty. Christ was present while I waited. I could bring him my fear and ask for help with what was actually before me.

What I am learning

I am still waiting. Some days I check the phone too often. Yet I am learning to return to prayer and attend to today’s responsibilities. I can make supper, answer a friend kindly, and take the next faithful step without knowing the whole future.

Reflect

What is one faithful step I can take while I wait?

Pray

Jesus, meet me in my uncertainty. Help me trust your care and give my attention to the life before me today. Amen.

Thirty story starters

Read until something brings a memory to mind. Choose just one, or use a story of your own. The Bible references are optional starting places; Pastor Paul can help you choose a passage.

These questions invite stories of Christ's grace and the holiness he forms in everyday life. Return to the three questions: What happened? How did I experience God's help? What am I learning?

Noticing God's welcome

1 A Name Someone Remembered

Who remembered your name when you felt overlooked? Tell about that encounter and what it helped you understand about being known and loved by Jesus. Scripture to explore: John 10:14–15.

2 The Seat Beside Me

When did someone make room for you in church, at a gathering, or in a conversation? What did that welcome mean, and how has it shaped your own welcome? Scripture to explore: Romans 15:7.

3 Faith at the Kitchen Sink

Did an ordinary chore become a moment of prayer or awareness of God? Describe what you were doing and how you began to notice his presence. Scripture to explore: Psalm 139:1–6.

4 A Question I Finally Asked

What question about faith did you hesitate to ask? Tell how a conversation, Scripture, or prayer helped you bring your uncertainty honestly to Jesus. Scripture to explore: Mark 9:14–29.

5 A Song on a Hard Day

Has a hymn or song helped you remember God's care? Describe the day and what it stirred in you. Name the song without copying its lyrics. Scripture to explore: Psalm 42:5–8.

6 Starting with a Small Yes

What first step drew you toward Jesus: attending worship, opening a Bible, or agreeing to pray? Tell what that step was like and what followed. Scripture to explore: John 1:35–39.

Receiving and practicing mercy

7 When Someone Was Patient with Me

Who gave you time to learn or begin again? Describe one moment of patience and how it helped you recognize Christ's mercy toward you. Scripture to explore: 1 Timothy 1:12–16.

8 Letting Go of the Scorecard

When did you realize you were keeping track of someone's faults? What helped you bring that resentment to Christ, and what are you learning about forgiveness? Scripture to explore: Ephesians 4:31–32.

9 Glad for Someone Else

Have you struggled when someone else received something you wanted? Tell how God helped you face that feeling and begin to rejoice in another person's good. Scripture to explore: Matthew 20:1–16.

10 Telling the Truth Gently

Recall a difficult conversation when you needed both honesty and kindness. What helped you speak or listen, and how is Jesus forming your way of relating? Scripture to explore: Ephesians 4:15.

11 Coming Back After a Long Absence

Did you return to prayer, worship, or a relationship after time away? Tell about the welcome you received and what helped you take that step. Scripture to explore: Luke 15:11–24.

12 A Gift with No Strings

When did someone give you something you could not earn or repay? Describe the gift and what it helped you understand about God's grace in Jesus. Scripture to explore: Titus 3:3–7.

Learning to live with Jesus

13 Putting Down a Heavy Expectation

What expectation left you exhausted: being perfect, pleasing everyone, or never needing help? Tell how Jesus began teaching you a more faithful way to live. Scripture to explore: Matthew 11:28–30.

14 A Pause Before I Answered

Remember a moment when you paused instead of reacting. What was happening, and how did prayer or listening help you respond with greater patience? Scripture to explore: James 1:19–20.

15 Honest Work When No One Watched

When did you choose honesty in a small task, transaction, or responsibility? Tell what made the choice difficult and how following Jesus guided you. Scripture to explore: Luke 16:10.

16 Learning to Rest

Has illness, weariness, or a quiet day taught you to rest? Describe what happened and how you are learning to receive Christ's care without earning it. Scripture to explore: Mark 6:30–32.

17 When My Plans Changed

Recall a disrupted plan. What did you have to release, and how did God help you choose a faithful next step while the outcome was still uncertain? Scripture to explore: Proverbs 3:5–6.

18 A Habit That Is Changing Me

What simple practice is helping you stay close to Jesus: prayer, Scripture, silence, or gratitude? Describe one day when you noticed it shaping your choices. Scripture to explore: John 15:1–5.

Finding grace in relationships

19 The Person Who Listened

Who listened without rushing to give advice? Tell about that conversation and how being heard helped you recognize God's care or become a better listener. Scripture to explore: James 1:19.

20 Faith I Saw in Someone Older

What did a parent, grandparent, neighbor, or church elder show you about trusting God? Choose one remembered action rather than trying to tell their whole life. Scripture to explore: 2 Timothy 1:5.

21 What a Child Helped Me Notice

Has a child's question, trust, or kindness helped you see something freshly? Tell the moment and what it opened in your own relationship with Jesus. Scripture to explore: Mark 10:13–16.

22 Making Room for a Different Person

When did you learn from someone whose background or gifts differed from yours? What changed as you listened, and how did belonging to Christ draw you together? Scripture to explore: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27.

23 Love in an Ordinary Task

When did a practical task become an act of love: washing dishes, making a repair, or helping with an errand? What did serving teach you about Jesus? Scripture to explore: John 13:12–17.

24 Remembering Someone with Gratitude

Who do you miss, and what small memory still gives you comfort? Tell how Christ's presence and resurrection hope meet you in grief, even when it remains painful. Scripture to explore: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

Sharing what God has entrusted

25 Something I Could Share

When did you share time, money, a skill, or something you owned? Tell what helped you see it as a gift entrusted by God and available for another's good. Scripture to explore: 2 Corinthians 9:6–8.

26 The Visit I Nearly Postponed

Recall a visit or phone call you almost put off. What happened when you followed through, and how did Jesus teach you to attend to another person? Scripture to explore: Matthew 25:35–40.

27 Hospitality with What I Had

When did you welcome someone without everything being ready or impressive? Describe the welcome and what it taught you about using God's gifts with love. Scripture to explore: 1 Peter 4:9–10.

28 A Concern That Became a Prayer

What person or need kept returning to your attention? Tell how you brought that concern to God and whether prayer led you toward a practical response. Scripture to explore: Philippians 4:6–7.

29 Serving Without Being Noticed

What quiet act of service mattered even though few people knew about it? Tell how God is teaching you to love without depending on recognition. Scripture to explore: Matthew 6:1–4.

30 Good News I Could Tell at Home

What experience of Christ's mercy could you share with someone you know? Describe a conversation or a small change in daily life that made his grace visible. Scripture to explore: Mark 5:18–20.