

## Stories That Matter — Week 5: "The Story Abides"

Ezekiel 34:1-7, Psalm 115:1-11, 18b, 1 Peter 3:13-22, John 14:15-21

**Opening Prayer:** Gracious God, We gather today grateful that your story is still being written in and through us. Open our hearts to your presence. Quiet our minds from distraction. Help us not just to hear your Word, but to experience it living within us. Remind us that we are never alone, and that your Spirit is always at work. Speak to us now, Lord. Amen.

**Theme: The Story Abides:** God's story doesn't end with Scripture—it continues in us through the presence of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. We are not just hearers of the story; we are participants in it.

**Secular Quote:** "Stories don't end when the book closes. They live on in the people who carry them." — Unknown

**Starter Question:** Have you ever felt alone or forgotten—even when you knew, deep down, you weren't supposed to be? What did that feel like?

### Digging Deeper Questions

#### 1. Ezekiel 34 – When Leadership Fails

- What stands out to you about how the shepherds failed the people?
- Where do we see examples today of leadership that serves self instead of others?
- How does it encourage you to know that God steps in when people fall short?

#### 2. Psalm 115 – Trusting the Right Source

- What are some "modern idols" people tend to trust instead of God?
- Why do you think it's hard for us to give God full glory instead of taking it ourselves?
- What does it practically look like to "trust in the Lord" in everyday life?

#### 3. 1 Peter 3 – Living with Hope

- What does it mean to give a reason for your hope with gentleness and respect?
- Why is gentleness so important when sharing faith?
- Where in your life is God calling you to respond with hope instead of fear?

#### 4. John 14 – The Promise of Presence

- What does Jesus mean when He says, "I will not leave you orphaned"?
- How have you personally experienced God's presence in a difficult moment?

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- What does it mean to you that Christ is “in you”?

#### 5. The Spirit and the Story

- What helps you stay aware of God’s presence in your daily life?
- In what ways is your life telling the story of Jesus to others?

#### Actionable (Live It Out This Week): “Follow the Way Challenge”

##### 1. Practice Awareness

Take 2–3 minutes each day to pause and simply say:

**“Jesus, remind me that you are with me.”**

Notice where you sense His presence.

##### 2. Listen for the Spirit

When facing a decision or moment of stress, pause and ask:

**“Holy Spirit, what are you teaching me right now?”**

Write down what comes to mind.

**Closing Prayer:** Lord Jesus, thank you for the promise that you have not left us alone. Thank you for your Spirit that lives within us—guiding, teaching, and reminding us who we are. Help us to live as people who carry your story well. Give us courage to show hope, gentleness in how we speak, and awareness of your presence in every moment. May our lives reflect your love so that others may see your story alive in us. We trust you. We follow you. And we thank you that your story abides. Amen.

#### Daily Scripture Guide:

**Monday – Choosing the Right Path:** Proverbs 3:5–6

**Focus:** Trusting God over our own understanding.

**Tuesday – Walking in the Light:** Psalm 119 105–112

**Focus:** God’s Word as guidance for daily living.

**Wednesday – Following Jesus Daily:** Luke 9:23–25

**Focus:** What it means to truly follow Jesus.

**Thursday – Living as God’s People:** 1 Peter 2:9–12

**Focus:** Identity and purpose in Christ.

**Friday – Staying Connected to the Way:** John 15:1–8

**Focus:** Remaining connected to Jesus.

**Saturday – Walking by Faith:** 2 Corinthians 5:6–10

**Focus:** Trusting God even when we don’t see the whole picture.

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