**What will your story be?**

**Introduction**

1. We are fascinated by the stories of others – famous people, presidents, war heroes, athletes, celebrities, etc. Many times, these stories inspire books and films for our entertainment.
2. Whether fiction, or history, the stories of others make us reflect on ourselves.
3. As we live our lives we are “writing our story” so to speak.
   1. **1 Corinthians 10:6, 11; Romans 15:4** – matters of the past were recorded by God for our benefit.
      1. Did the characters of the OT know they were writing their story as they lived their lives?
      2. Did these characters know God was recording these things for all to see?
      3. David against Goliath – was he thinking about his story being written?
      4. David with Bathsheba – was he thinking about his story being written?
      5. Mary anointing Jesus – **Mark 14:9** – did she know she was leaving a legacy?
   2. While our stories aren’t being recorded in a volume of books like those of the Bible, they are being recorded in the mind of God, and will be revealed – **Revelation 20:12** – He will judge according to our works. (They will be placed beside the standard – our story will be placed besides God’s word.)
   3. Do we think about what story we’re writing?
4. What kind of story should we value, and aim to write for ourselves?
5. The Story That Doesn’t Matter
6. Your Popularity
   1. Most stories are told and valued based upon the popularity, or fame of a person.
      1. Stories aren’t often told about those who are unknown.
      2. This is why people strive for fame.
   2. Popularity is fleeting – **Ecclesiastes 4:13-16** – a short story about two kings.
      1. **(v. 13)** – what is better? Then why…
      2. **(v. 14)** – because he is wise, contrary to the old king who won’t receive instruction, he comes out of poverty to become king.
      3. **(v. 15)** – While all the people once looked up to the old king, now the young king took his place.
      4. **(v. 16)** – However, the same fate belongs to the old king’s successor – even he will come upon a day when his glory diminishes.
      5. Popularity is vain – no matter how many admirers you get, that will fade, and another will come behind you.
   3. In a world of social media we would do well to consider the vanity of popularity.
7. Your Education
   1. Education is good and has its place. But this is not what we should make our lives about.
   2. Solomon’s view on wisdom – **Ecclesiastes 1:16-18**
      1. **(v. 17)** – it is vain.
      2. **(v. 18)** – it causes grief and sorrow – the more you know the more bad you see, and realize your inability to change it.
      3. **Ecclesiastes 12:12** – there is no end – always ignorant about something, and striving to learn everything is wearisome.
8. Your Success
   1. Most stories of men are built on their successes. Whether business, or some other matter.
   2. Success from hard work is vain – **Ecclesiastes 2:18-23**
      1. **(vv. 18-19)** – all your success is left to someone else. He may further it, but he may lose it all due to foolishness!
      2. **(vv. 20-21)** – you worked hard for all your success, but it is left to someone, and that one didn’t even work for it.
      3. **(vv. 22-23)** – Ultimately, all that hard work leaves you with nothing!
9. Your Net Worth
   1. So many are overly concerned with how much they’re worth. When you’re gone it won’t matter!
   2. Riches won’t ultimately satisfy – **Ecclesiastes 5:10**
   3. Solomon sought fulfillment in this – **Ecclesiastes 2:1-11**
      1. **(vv. 1-3)** – His goal.
      2. **(vv. 4-10)** – A greater net worth than anyone ever.
      3. **(v. 11)** – Vanity.
   4. Professional athletes complain about pay, and speak about “generational wealth” which they already have. They seek fulfillment in their financial worth.
10. Your Family Ties
    1. What about those you’re connected with? Is that most important?
    2. Many stories are told concerning who knew who, and how. Some stories are about famous families.
    3. Some are satisfied with their story simply being about having a good relationship with their family – also vain – **Matthew 22:30** – those relationships won’t continue.
       1. The Lord did not say these relationships were top priority – **Matthew 10:34-37**
    4. While familial relationships are important, they are not the “all” of life, and should not merely be what our stories are about.
11. Your Societal Imprint
    1. So many talk about leaving an imprint on society. Few actually are remembered.
    2. For the common men, their stories will mostly be forgotten – **Ecclesiastes 9:5-6**
    3. The king from before – **Ecclesiastes 4:16** – eventually he is replaced, and the attention is focused on another.
12. The Story That Matters
13. A Story to Consider – **Luke 16:19-26** – Rich Man and Lazarus
    1. **(vv. 19-21)** – on the opposite ends of the spectrum.
       1. One is rich and healthy.
       2. One is poor and miserably afflicted.
    2. **(v.22)** – Both died anyway!
    3. **(vv. 23-26)** – Lazarus was comforted, but the rich man tormented.
       1. **(v. 25)** – his story concerned his “good things,” and Lazarus’ story was about his “evil things,” but this mattered no more.
       2. **(v. 26)** – His TEMPORARY story had ended, and his ETERNAL story had begun.
       3. **Our physical lives are a preface to eternity**.
14. Your Standing with God
    1. It is not our popularity that matters, i.e. our standing with men, but our standing with God.
    2. Paul was only concerned with God’s estimation of him – **1 Corinthians 4:3-5** – he wasn’t concerned with how the Corinthians, or he judged himself, but how God viewed him.
    3. Solomon sought fulfillment in everything, and saw that all was vain. But how one stands before God was seen to be of utmost importance – **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**
    4. None may stand with you, but if you stand with God, then the Lord does – **2 Timothy 4:16-17**
15. Your Knowledge of God
    1. Secular education is fleeting, and vain, but the knowledge of God is invaluable.
       1. Much secular education is an end in itself, and is not utilized in the future.
    2. New covenant based in knowing God – **Jeremiah 31:33-34**
    3. Knowledge of God affects your standing with God – **1 John 1:1-7** – we must come to know the Word of life to know God, and be right with Him in the light.
    4. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. We must become a fool to become wise according to the knowledge of God – **1 Corinthians 3:18-20; 8:1-3 – to seek the knowledge of God to be known by Him – fellowship. (not mere intellectualism)**
16. Your Growth in Christ
    1. Even the knowledge of God is not all there is.
       1. Some lose sight of the purpose of these things – **1 Timothy 1:5-7**
       2. Some deny the power of the gospel – **2 Timothy 3:5**
    2. We must live the knowledge we gain – **2 Peter 1:2-4** – this is a participant knowledge.
       1. Partaker – sharer in – we are involved in that which we know.
       2. It is not a mere intellectual process, but a matter of faith.
       3. **2 Peter 3:18** – we must grow in knowledge, but also in practice.
    3. **Galatians 2:20** – what Paul learned of Christ he lived.
       1. Faith comes from hearing God’s word – **Romans 10:17**
       2. But true and pleasing faith obeys.
17. Your Heavenly Treasure
    1. We must be able to differentiate between the value of the seen, and that of the unseen – **Matthew 6:19-21** – earthly treasure perishes.
    2. We must strive for that which is most valuable – **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** – they strive for perishable, we for imperishable.
    3. Lay up treasure in heaven – **1 Timothy 6:17-19** – be rich toward God!
    4. Folly of the rich man – **Luke 12:19-21** – had riches, but his soul was required of him.
18. Your Spiritual Ties
    1. Family is important, but ultimately the most important family we can be a part of is the family of God – **Hebrews 3:4-6** – we can be of the house of God.
    2. Jesus understood the importance of such – **Matthew 12:46-50** – those who do God’s will are the family of Christ.
    3. We want our names to be written in the book of Life – **Philippians 4:2-3**
    4. **Hebrews 12:22-24** – we should want to be a part of Mount Zion, the city of the living God.
19. Your Legacy of Faith
    1. Our story affects others – **Romans 15:4** – like those of the OT.
    2. The story we aim to leave should not be one which leads to the pleasure, wealth, physical success, etc. of another.
       1. We may leave these things behind.
       2. However, that should not be our focus.
    3. We need to aim at leaving a spiritual legacy.
    4. Mother and grandmother of Timothy – **2 Timothy 1:3-7** – encouragement to continue in the faith which was instilled in him by them.
       1. **2 Timothy 3:14-15** – encouragement to continue in what he learned from his mother and grandmother.
    5. We should seek to live by a faith that speaks after we’re dead – **Hebrews 11:4** – always seek to please God, and abide by His word.

**Conclusion**

1. What is your story?
2. When your life is reflected upon by others what will they see?
3. What story are you writing with your life right now?
4. What things are most important?
5. We should seek to live our lives with the aim to serve God to the best of our ability.