

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

March 2016

Dear Friends,

You take the time to read these letters (thank you) and I take the time to write them because we share common loves and passions.

The wild and unpredictable stories of our lives intersect because we love Jesus deeply, and we long to know him as he really is. We yearn to see his beauty and redemption come into the world. We look for like-minded (like-hearted) people who long for more of the real Jesus, more of the richness and *availability* of his kingdom, and the way it heals lives. Because these treasures matter more to all of us than even our own lives, I think we also share a common frustration.

I'm guessing we share a frustration with how Jesus and Christianity are typically portrayed in the postmodern world, and how that sabotages any real opportunity to gain a hearing for the Gospel. How do you approach such a cynical age?

When Paul stepped into his mission nearly two thousand years ago, to bring the Gospel to the world at his time, the culture was in many ways primed for exactly what he had to say. For thousands of years men and women honored and assumed the need for sacrifices of various types. They felt the moral fabric of the universe, knew they failed it, and also knew some sort of sacrifice was called for. They were done in every city and byway, every pagan temple. If you read the works of late antiquity, you'll be shocked by how often and assumed sacrifices were done—before a trip, after a trip, during planting and before harvest and afterwards. Sacrifice was a given in those cultures. So Paul could just step into the scene and jump straight to, *Have I got news for you!*

But in our age? Sacrifice would strike the postmodern world as utterly bizarre, barbaric, cruelty to animals, no doubt some form of injustice. I'm not trying to make a case for sacrifice—I'm pointing out that Paul was working in a very different cultural milieu than we are. Which brings us back to, "How do we present the Gospel to such a cynical age as ours? How do we gain a hearing for Jesus?"

That's why you hear us talk so much about "story." Story is an acceptable concept in our day. Story is hip; story is in. People want to know the story—about a company, about where their stuff comes from, about their shoes or beer or music. Read any label and the makers will try and "tell you their story." Whole Foods recently ran an ad campaign on their grocery bags that said, "Every meal has a story." "Tell me your story" is a perfectly acceptable way to get into a meaningful conversation these days.

What we try and do is take people into their heart's deepest needs by first paying attention to their story, which will inevitably lead to their brokenness, which then begs the question, *Who can heal my brokenness? Is there any meaning?*

And that is what allows us an opportunity to talk about how much Jesus cares for their humanity, how he alone has the ability to restore human lives. In a postmodern era, where no one believes in any sort of Larger Story anymore, you pretty quickly find the thirst in the human heart for a story that makes sense of their story. We can't escape it; this is what we are made for.

So this is the tactic and the heart within our first full-length film, *A Story Worth Living*.

Yep—we made a movie! We went out last summer and filmed a gorgeous and epic documentary about a motorcycle trip through the wild lands of Colorado. In the midst of that story, we talk about how each human life is a story. We bring people into the deep questions of pain and disappointment, and why is there so much beauty in the world if everything is just random and meaningless. Gently—I think brilliantly—we build a case for the Gospel of Jesus in the midst of an exciting and sometimes harrowing adventure.

In one sense it is the most “evangelistic” thing we’ve ever done, because the film speaks to believer and skeptic alike. Men *and* women are giving it great reviews, I think because it is done so well, and because it touches on the story of every human life. And the cool thing is...the secular world *loves* this film! We are seeing all sorts of favor in totally non-Christian venues over this project.

The nationwide premiere is May 19—one night only.

We'd love you to come. Even more, we'd love you to grab everyone you know and bring them to your local theaters showing the film. This is an *incredible* opportunity to introduce people to the Gospel you love—not the wacky religious but the deeply beautiful Jesus and the epic Story he is telling. As we've shown the film to the curators of secular film festivals, motorcycle magazines and off-road expos, we are receiving fabulous feedback. This is a film that *invites*, not offends. Which is a wonderful thing for the Gospel in this postmodern hour. It will open up great conversations.

I'm writing to invite you to join us on May 19th, but I'm also writing to invite you to become part of the mission. To seize the opportunity to gain a hearing for the real thing; to help build momentum for a film that could really change people's perspective on God. Can you help us get the word out? We can send you posters (they are very cool), DVDs of the trailer to show groups; we have lots you can use to tell your world about the film.

Come and watch the trailer at astoryfilm.com

To help us and become an “ambassador” visit: astoryfilm.com/ambassador

For our shared love of Jesus and passion for his mission—let's make this film something everyone is talking about!

Thanks friends. You're gonna *love* it.


John