

## **My Story** // Start and Stop

As a pastor, one of the privileges I have and look forward to is sharing a eulogy or memorial at someone's funeral. I get to celebrate their life as a creation of God and their life as a new creation in Christ. In a very real sense, even though the person has "gone on", I get to tell their story before family and friends. It is a joy! But, it also makes me ask, "What will people say about me when I'm gone?"

Maybe you feel the same? If you fast forward 5, 10, 15 years, or even the end of your life, would you look back and love the life you lived? Most of us would say YES... and NO. And, whether we want to admit it, the NO eats at us! Deep down, we all have a story to tell. The question is: Are you living the story you want to tell? If not, grab a pen, begin to think, and start to write: **My Story**.

Hebrews 12:1-2a (ESV) says, "Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith." With all the examples of right faith and good works in Hebrews 11, note the words, "let us", which show up twice here!

First, Let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely. If you're like me, there's a long list of burdens that weigh you down. There's a long list of sins that easily entangle and cling to you. If you like new year's resolutions, these are your STOP doing list! This week, make that list. Write down, I decided to STOP \_\_\_\_\_. And, with the help of the Holy Spirit, cast them off and lay them aside!

Second, Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.' In our story, we all want stronger faith, better marriages, successful parenting, quality friendships, healthier shape, improved leadership, no debt, etc. Write down, I decided to START \_\_\_\_\_. This year, with the help of the Holy Spirit, may you live the story you want to tell!

Let's pray. Lord, in Ephesians 2:10a (ESV), Paul says, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works." As baptized believers, help us live as new creations in Christ. Help us throw off every weight and sin that clings closely. Help us run with endurance the race set before us, by looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Help us live the story we want to tell!

Amen.

## **Scripture Reading**

“1Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.” - Hebrews 12:1-3 (ESV)

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

## **Message Series**

My Story

## **Message Topic**

Stop and Start

## **Message Points**

- I decided to stop \_\_\_\_\_.
- I decided to start \_\_\_\_\_.

NOTES:

## **Memory Verse**

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” - 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

## **Small Group Questions**

- What is on your 2018 New Year's resolution list? Why do you include those things? What will help you to accomplish these resolutions?
- In 5, 10, 15 years, or even at the end of life, what do you want your “story” to be? What do you want to be remembered by others for?
- Read Hebrews 12:1-3. Based on this, what things do you want to STOP in your life? What things do you want to START in your life?
- What does this mean? “The decisions we make today determine the story we will tell tomorrow.” How will you live the story you want to tell?

## **YouVersion**

None