

Our Spiritual Résumé
Reinbeck UMC
January 13, 2007

A recent survey claims that 50% of job applicants lie on their résumé. Everything from fake degrees to inflated salaries.

I wonder if there is such a thing as being too honest though. . .

"Accomplishments: Completed 11 years of high school." "It's best for employers that I not work with people." "Married, eight children. Prefer frequent travel." "You will always find me to be an extremely trying person" "Special Skills: Speak English."

Today is Baptism of our Lord Sunday. This happens just before Jesus starts his public ministry. You might think of this as Jesus coming out party his introduction to the world. You might think of this as his ordination. Or you might think of it as his resume. What a resume! The heaven's open up a dove descends and God says "This is my beloved son. Listen to him." Now that is a reference. You could have as many people as you want saying "He's a nice guy" or "She's a hard worker" but it would never add up to these 8 words from God himself would it?

Then in Acts we read Peter's resume. Sure it is a little weird to put it in sermon form, but what do you expect from a guy who thought "if Jesus can do it I can do it" as he stepped out of the boat. Or the guy who said "I'll never betray you "in one breath and "Jesus who?" in the next.

The Peter we see in this resume is not that same stumbling disciple who seemed to have foot in mouth disease.

First he tells his background:

37-38" You know the story of what happened in Judea. It began in Galilee after John preached a total life-change. Then Jesus arrived from Nazareth, anointed by God with the Holy Spirit, ready for action. He went through the country helping people and healing everyone who was beaten down by the Devil. He was able to do all this because God was with him.

Then he tells his accomplishments:

39-43"And we saw it, saw it all, everything he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem where they killed him, hung him from a cross. But in three days God had him up, alive, and out where he could be seen. Not everyone saw him—he wasn't put on public display. Witnesses had been carefully handpicked by God beforehand—us! We were the ones, there to eat and drink with him after he came back from the dead. He commissioned us to announce this in public, to bear solemn witness that he is in fact the One whom God destined as Judge of the living and dead. But we're not alone in this.

Finally he shares his references:

Our witness that he is the means to forgiveness of sins is backed up by the witness of all the prophets. 44-46No sooner were these words out of Peter's mouth than the Holy Spirit came on the listeners. The believing Jews who had come with Peter couldn't believe it, couldn't believe that the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on "outsider" non-Jews, but there it was—they heard them speaking in tongues, heard them praising God.

He's got a pretty good set of references too. The prophets and the Holy Spirit. Now it's not quite God's voice booming from heaven, but it is the next best thing.

I want you to think today: what does your spiritual resume look like? What qualifies you as a Christian? Why? Because the next two weeks we are going to be talking about sharing our faith and we have to start by figuring out what we have to share.

My question today is – “if I were considering you for a sales position in the Kingdom of God incorporated, what would you put on your resume?”

Let me say before we get started. I know that some of you have decided already that you don't have anything to put on your resume. I don't believe that for a minute. You all have impressive resumes. There is not one unqualified, or under qualified person in this congregation. . There is not one unqualified, or under qualified person in this sanctuary. . There is not one unqualified, or under qualified person watching this on TV. Each and every one of you would be an excellent position for the position God is filling. The biggest Job today is convincing you of that.

Just like Peter, let's start with our background. What did Peter include in his background?

He tells where he met Jesus and what he believes. How long did it take him to do that? It took 4 whole sentences.

Peter. . . one of the greatest apostles, who spent 3 years walking, talking and eating with Jesus, who was with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, who celebrated the original last supper with him, who saw the empty grave and ate fish with the risen and glorified Lord; used 4 sentences to describe his spiritual background. I'm no Peter, neither are you, so we probably only need one sentence. You can use two if absolutely necessary.

In this first part, Peter described the very essence of what he knows- the very essence of his faith. Our resume starts with what we believe and since we are people of the book, let's start with a scripture.

In the first space, write your key Bible Sentence. The one you think best sums up the whole Bible and what you believe. It might be "*love the lord you God and your neighbor as yourself.*" It might be "*For God so loved the world the he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.*" It might be the one I would choose Romans 8:38 *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Now that is a long sentence, but it is only one sentence and the message doesn't get any clearer to me. What one Bible sentence would you use? . . .

The second thing Peter did was to testify to his personal experience. This is very different from the first 4 sentences. He says *we saw it, . . . Witnesses had been carefully handpicked by God beforehand—us! . . . We were the ones,. . . He commissioned us.* .

This is a much more personal statement than he starts with. Ours will be too.

We are going to break this into two sentences. First Sentence: Where did you meet Jesus? "I met Jesus personally at a youth work camp on July 19, 1978 in a worship service" Yours will be different, of course. If you grew up in the faith and grew into love with Jesus, then put that down. If you spent 30 years running from God and finally got cornered, put that down. Just one sentence about how you met Jesus. . .

Next a sentence about what Jesus has done for you. It's OK to put general things like he forgave my sins and made me right with God, but be as personal and specific as you can. The more personal and specific; the better. I put, *by his loving forgiveness Jesus makes me acceptable to God; teaching me that nothing, nothing, nothing can keep God from loving me; and he makes me want to be the best person I can be for the one who created me, accepts me, and loves me.*

Now yours won't sound like that. Mine doesn't say "The heavens opened and God called me his beloved son" like Jesus'. It doesn't say "we saw it all, God hand picked us" like Peter's. And yours won't sound like mine. Make it yours. Authentically yours. Notice I printed the same form on back of the resume so you have a second copy to work on and revise this week. . . .

Finally we finish our Spiritual Resume's with the references. Jesus had God himself speaking from the heavens. If that has happened to you, put it down. Peter had the prophets and immediately the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the listeners. If that has happened to you, put it down. If not, write down the proof you have that you are indeed Christian.

This could go two ways. It could be internal proof or external proof.

Internal might be I really feel the nudging of God to help the poor, and when I am doing that God really works through me to give me a generous heart and encouraging words. You might write something like, "I feel God's presence most clearly in my life when I am working for habitat for humanity, or teaching Sunday school, or singing" or whatever.

The Other direction, external references, would tell where other people see God in you. Other people say they know when I am praying for them. Other people say the way I explain the Bible helps them, or other people say I am very encouraging when they are grieving the death of a loved one.

I put- *"In spite of trying to run from God for 12 years, I am back where I always thought God wanted me, and it feels really right. I know and others affirm that God is working in me and through me more than ever."*

Go ahead and fill in where do you most clearly see God working on you, or where do others most clearly see God working through you.

That's it- your spiritual resume. You aren't Jesus- you aren't Peter- you aren't me- you are uniquely you and your resume is uniquely you.

Now look at it. I know you will want to improve it this week. That's your homework. But look at it. Hopefully you have enough scribbled down to see that you have more of a spiritual resume than you thought.

If you have had trouble with this, keep working on it. Even call me and we'll work on it together, because this is such an important first step to claiming your own scriptural authority and mandate to share God's love.

Let's pray.

MY SPIRITUAL RESUME

Spiritual background

Romans 8:38 *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Experience

By His loving forgiveness Jesus makes me acceptable to God; teaching me that nothing, nothing, nothing can keep God from loving me; and he makes me want to be the best person I can be for the one who created me, accepts me, and loves me.

References

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References