

Parables, images or visualized stories illustrate something important. In addition, I observe that the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul told **real stories** to people, events that really happened, not just examples and images.

Apostle Paul was very happy and passionately shared his deep experience of meeting living Jesus, whose followers he had persecuted to death. He urgently recounted this event also to his opponents and the kings (Acts 22:1-21; 26:12-18). In their speeches, the apostle Peter and Paul often showed that Jesus was alive! (Acts 2:24,32; 3:15; 4:10; 7:55; 10:40; 13:31-32; 17:3; 18:31; 23:6; 24:15,21; 25:19; 26:8) Yes, their key message pointed to Jesus' sacrifice, but at the same time they assured everyone that Jesus was resurrected and active. They showed people their personal contact with living Jesus, who speaks and effectively enters people's lives.

If we are to use similar elements in contact with our friends, **we must have some experience with Jesus ourselves**. It can also be experience with the Word of God: „I read a piece and it felt like Jesus was standing next to me talking to me.“ It can be a unique memory that led me to invite Jesus into life and also how I perceived it subsequently. Some believers will be happy to tell a surprisingly answered prayer. (I just hope that the word „prayer“ would be avoided as unwanted „Christianeese“.) Others may mention an element of healing - one's own or someone close in the family. I myself have experience with Jesus' intervention in the field of financial provision.

„But I don't have such a strong ,testimony,“ a believing friend sometimes tells me. „I haven't even had such visible experience with Jesus.“ Um, ask the Lord to remind you of these stories from your own life, some may be already there, and to open your eyes to his new inputs into your life, which are yet to come. **Focus your attention on them!** I estimate that once you begin to perceive various small things, you will become a much bigger enthusiast for Jesus.

I am very happy to tell this story to my unbelieving George: *“Sometimes my friends and I did informal creative Bible readings that you already know. At one occasion I said my favorite sentence: ,I talk to Jesus while driving a car.’ Joe sat there with us and said nothing. When he came again in about two weeks, he said, ,I tried it!’ ,What did you try?’ I couldn't remember our conversation. ,Well, that thing with Jesus!’ ,And what about Jesus?’ ,As you*



*said you talk to Him while driving...‘ Ah, and what happened?’ ,I had to turn back to see if someone is not sitting behind me in the car,’ Joe said, deeply concerned. When he addressed Jesus and asked Him to let him experience his closeness, he felt a strange and strong inner touch, like never before... Later he invited Jesus into his life and asked Him to forgive him for all the bad things and to lead him. It is clear to me, George, that Jesus has slightly different paths for everyone, but it is certain that he is alive and he listens to us carefully...!*

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Do you occasionally follow stories from the lives of believing friends you know personally? I do, very gladly! Then I occasionally use these stories with my unbelievers. I would say, for example: *„One of my friends - his name is Robert - grew up in similar conditions as you. He told me how he experienced wonderful inner relief when he invited Jesus into his life, and received His forgiveness. It completely changed his life. I would gladly introduce him to you!”*

*I praise You, Lord Jesus, that life with You is simply wonderful. Though not always easy...*