

# Devotional—Tour Week 3

## "The Stories"

Matthew 13:9-17, 34-35 & 53-57 (The Message)

9 **"Are you listening to this? Really listening?"**

**Why Tell Stories?**

10 The disciples came up and asked, "Why do you tell stories?"

11-15 He replied, "You've been given insight into God's kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn't been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. **That's why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight.** In their present state they can stare till doomsday and not see it, listen till they're blue in the face and not get it. I don't want Isaiah's forecast repeated all over again:

Your ears are open but you don't hear a thing.

Your eyes are awake but you don't see a thing.

The people are blockheads!

They stick their fingers in their ears

so they won't have to listen;

They screw their eyes shut

so they won't have to look,

so they won't have to deal with me face-to-face

and let me heal them.

16-17 But you have God-blessed eyes—eyes that see! And God-blessed ears—ears that hear! **A lot of people, prophets and humble believers among them, would have given anything to see what you are seeing, to hear what you are hearing, but never had the chance.**

34-35 All Jesus did that day was tell stories—a long storytelling afternoon. His storytelling fulfilled the prophecy:

**I will open my mouth and tell stories;**

I will bring out into the open

things hidden since the world's first day.

53-57 When Jesus finished telling these stories, he left there, returned to his hometown, and gave a lecture in the meetinghouse. He made a real hit, impressing everyone. "We had no idea he was this good!" they said. "How did he get so wise, get such ability?"

## *Time for personal reflection (Tour Week 3):*

What is my favorite Bible story? Why do I like it so much? What do I learn from it?  
How does it make me feel?

What occasions usually prompt people to begin telling stories? What are some of the best stories about people in my family? When do these types of stories get told?

Stories are powerful tools. They make points, encourage thought, and carry on the tradition. The Jews have a great history of story-telling, as it was a means of passing along the word of God from generation to generation. This can be witnessed in Jesus' life by the many times he repeats ideas and quotes Old Testament scripture. He knew what His audience wanted and He gave it to them. *Godspell* presents many of Jesus' stories to a modern audience. Do I really know who our audience is? Am I prepared to give them what they want?

What can I do to make sure the stories we tell in *Godspell* create readiness and nudge the people toward receptive insight? How important am I in this story-telling process?