Luke begins the third gospel in a most unique and personal way. His first sentence tells us “many have undertaken to set down an orderly account” of the life of Jesus. Examining his gospel closely tells us that one of those writers was Mark, our second gospel. How do we know that? Because so much of Mark is included in Luke word for word. Luke also uses other sources which he openly admits were “servants of the word.” He then writes, “I too decided, after investigating carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.” Luke writes the story of Jesus, grateful for those who came before him, but wanting to tell this incredible good news his own way. We have no other opening of a Gospel quite like the first four verses of the Gospel of Luke.

So let me ask: How will you tell the story of Jesus through your personality, using your words, in your way? At the end of Luke’s
gospel, following the resurrection, the risen Lord will charge his followers to be his witnesses to every person on earth. Had those first followers of Jesus not told the story *their way*, followed by those who heard it telling the story *their way* from century to century, no one would have told you and me the greatest story told by human lips. I ask again: How will you tell the story of Jesus?

To answer that question, we first confess that our story of Jesus came to us from several faith sources. One of those sources is the Bible. Both in our public liturgy and with an open Bible, we hear or read our Lord’s story one narrative at a time. The Bible is God’s Word, handed down to us by faithful men and women, age after age, the written witness to the work of God in human history. From time to time, someone asks, “Why do I need to read the Bible? Many of the stories are hard to understand, I don’t know where to begin, and I’m not sure it makes any difference whether or not I take the time to read it.” Maybe you have felt the same way. Where you begin reading is not as critical as that you start reading. Make time to read God’s Word. Start in the
middle of the Bible and read one of the Psalms every day. Monastic communities read through the Psalms every three months. Our worship each week includes a Psalm. In that one book, right in the middle of the Bible, every human emotion marches through our lives, one Psalm after the other. The Psalms are a good place to begin. A second place to dip into the Bible would be one of the four Gospels. Many people find the Gospel of John, the Fourth Gospel, as the most accessible and easy to understand. Think how much more meaningful would be your faith and your understanding of our Lord’s life, death, and resurrection if you started reading one of the Gospels and read one story from our Lord’s life every day. I say again: read the Bible and there you will find a treasure of resources to help you put together your own story of faith.

A second source to help us tell our story is the community of the Church. Look around you and see with me each individual life at liturgy with you today. All of us have our personal story that began in family. If you are baptized, your life story and the story of Jesus Christ are intimately tied together. Every one of us has a story to tell of how our
Lord, his teaching, his life, his death, his resurrection has brought us grace and hope, joy and peace. More than a few of us have stories to tell about the gift this community of faith has been to us in times of difficulty. When a loved one died or when you faced a surgery, hospitalization, loss of job, or birth of a baby, it was this community – the folks sitting all around you – who stood with you, prayed for you, and loved you through life’s ever-changing circumstances. Your story of living with brothers and sisters in the Church will be unlike anyone else’s. *Your* story has *your* fingerprints on it, your voice speaking it, *your* personality shaping it, and *your* history formed by it. Tell that story. Tell the story of Jesus, grateful for the people who share the gift of faith with you in God’s Church.

A third source that shapes our story of Jesus is the history each of us brings to the human experience. Just like no two of our “voice prints” or fingerprints, DNA or personalities are the same, each of our stories from birth to this very hour is ours alone. You may have grown up in a small family where grandparents lived in another state. Others grew up
in a very large family with aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins in and out of your life on a daily basis. Some have known the pain of a home broken by divorce. Others have sacrificed much of family life because a father or mother serves our country in the armed forces. Yes, all of us bring our personal story to our faith story. Times are, we think there is nothing special about us. We look at others and see amazing athletic prowess or unusually gifted musical ability. A friend may be a whiz at science or a sibling uncommonly blessed with a love for great literature and art. And then we look at ourselves and ask, “What gifts do I have?” The answer can come almost immediately if you will remember how your life has touched others in simple, faithful ways whether you have lived 10, 20, 80 or more years.

The Bible, God’s Church, our own personal life story longs for one more important source to help us tell our own story of God’s love at work in our lives. That one additional source is the presence of God’s Holy Spirit. Just as our Lord stood before his home community of faith in Nazareth, having read from the Bible, (a book – or in that day a scroll
– of Isaiah), mindful of his own uniqueness as a person, we too stand in this place and can say with him: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” When he uttered those words, a stillness came over that Nazareth congregation. For there, standing before them, was their own child, a part of their community, Jesus, the son of Mary, a simple hometown boy.

Filled with the Spirit, Jesus announced Good News, telling his friends and family that God’s Kingdom was breaking into their lives through the story he would live and tell. He told his story of God’s love and grace his way, he lived the story his way. He suffered and died on the cross for many reasons, not the least of which was he could not help but tell the story of God’s presence in the world as only he could tell it.

How will you tell your story? What if you followed our Lord’s example, arming yourself with strength from God’s Word, aware people who have invested good gifts in you, and that your own life story is worth telling? Tell the story your way. And when you do, you will be
in the same company with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and all who have told the Jesus story across the ages. That’s very good company to keep!