

## Witness / Disciple

April 27, 2025

How long has it been since you thought about your faith journey? It is good to remember the time and place God called us. That was when you chose to believe Jesus is Lord and God had raised Him from the dead! It was when the Holy Spirit made the unknown known to you.

You were saved! The promise of Colossians 1:27 was fulfilled in you, “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” The hope of glory is in us and we might be bearers of that hope to others.

I have been pondering how am I supposed to do my part in what we call “the great commission” “Go, make disciples of all nations”, and how am I to be Jesus’ “witness to the ends of the earth”? This is about us. What is our role; How do we reflect Jesus Christ in us?

Before his crucifixion Jesus said “go, make disciples.” (Matthew 28:19-20) On the Mount Of Olives after He had risen from the grave and before he ascended into heaven he said we “would receive power, the Holy Spirit, and be His witnesses”. (Acts 1:8)

Is there an order about witnessing and discipling in our lives? In our ongoing, continuing, faith journeys?

Our witness of Jesus impacts our effectiveness to reach others (what they see and hear). First I need to be a witness of the Good News, the Gospel, and then, maybe, I can be effective teaching or discipling others? My witness definitely affects my discipling.

As we grasp the eternal significance of our witness we are encouraged by the reality God knows all about us. It is He who calls us to be Jesus's witness. The good, bad, and the ugly in our faith journey have all prepared us for whatever God calls us to do or say. When contemplating our own witness do we ask how can I do this? Do we ask God because the Lord has searched us and knows us.

God knows when we sit and when we rise up. He understands our thoughts afar off. God sees our path and our lying down, and He is acquainted with all our ways. There is not a word on our tongues, but the Lord knows it altogether. God is behind and before us and has laid his hand upon us. King David wrote that such knowledge is too wonderful. (Psalm 139:1-6)

We can find guidance in the Old Testament "He (the Lord) has shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God! (Micah 6:6)

In the New Testament John tells us they asked Jesus "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." (John 6:28-29)

As we begin to realize how important our witness is there are wonderful words of encouragement for us.

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God hath raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart a person believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. The scripture says, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. This is what we are called to witness by our words and actions.

Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Do you believe this? How will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without someone to proclaim Him (witness)? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that share the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:8-17)

The Sermon On the Mount is about believers and the awesome goodness of God. Do others see the reality of these words in our witness: the reality of these blessings?

Do our lives, what we do, what we say, reflect the ‘Sermon on the Mount’? Are we poor in spirit? Do we mourn? Are we meek, hungry and thirsting after righteousness? Are we merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for righteousness sake? (Matthew 5:3-10)

Do we witness inner peace or are we angry or frightened? Jesus gives peace: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid? (John 14:27)

How do we witness Jesus' love? Love suffers long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If this is us we can be confident in our witness. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

When thinking about your witness, remember God is not the author of confusion but of peace. If our witness brings confusion or disunity we need to stop and listen for the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

Luke wrote “In Jesus we live, and move, and have our being.” (Acts 17:28) What a great encouragement! If we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us others should see the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Paul tells us our witness should be one of faith, hope, and love and of these three, faith, hope and love, the greatest should be love. Are these apparent in our witness? (1 Corinthians 13:13)

God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. Folks don’t need our input or observation about sin: they know. They need to see mercy and grace. If God makes them aware they are aware. (John 3:17)

And we live in confusing times and confusing messages. As witnesses we must guard our hearts.

There will be times our witness will be challenged. Peter writes to us “If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderers, or as a thieves, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters.” (1 Peter 4:15-17)

In worship this morning we just asked God to open the eyes of our heart. Did you sing this as a prayer? Your boldness as a believer comes from the power of the Holy Spirit in you.

Do you question how great our God is if makes us his witnesses?

They brought a man, who was deaf and mute to Jesus. Jesus touched him, saying “Be opened”. And straightaway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosened, and he spoke plain words having never heard them before. (Mark 7:31-37)

Unbeknownst to us, our witness may be touching those who have never heard that there is Good News.

God will use us. If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:11)

Jesus didn't march or demonstrate. He was not loud. His power was that he knew where he stood and those in power knew where he stood. Would our witness be perceived this way?

We don't stand up to wrong by being quiet. How did Jesus react to power? He spoke truth to power. Early believers witnessed the power of truth and the Word. Still today our witness is the Way, the Truth, and Life.

God commendeth his love toward us. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. That is our witness. (Romans 5:8)

Do you feel insecure in the events of today; in what is happening? We may doubt ourselves as we are constantly changing but Jesus never changes. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. We can know God better than we know ourselves. He never changes. (Hebrews 13:6)

We are all at some point in our faith journey. Are we afraid of failure or our own weakness? Is our desire to be effective witnesses? If we seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; all these things shall be added unto us. (Matthew 6:33)

When afraid, remember The Good Shepherd prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies and anoints our head with oil; our cup runneth over. (Psalm 23:5)

When God seems far away, remember to call out. “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)

Trust God’s word for it is ”a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. (Psalm 119:105)

Your future is anchored in your past, good, bad and ugly but the promise to us is God works all things for good. He will use us. (Romans 8:28)

God calls people because his desire is that everyone will hear the Good News and be saved. (2 Peter 3:9) Our faith journeys began when we realized who Jesus is and accepted God's grace and mercy in Christ’s death and resurrection. At that juncture in our lives the Holy Spirit came. For us the unknown became known.

We must first and foremost be witnesses, otherwise we are just clanging cymbals teaching Christianity to the unsaved who, without the Holy Spirit, cannot grasp or understand how much God cares about them.

#### PRAYER:

- O Lord, touch us and move us to be your witnesses.
- For some of us this morning we have for the first time heard you call our name. Open our ears to hear.
- For others you are renewing your call to be witnesses of your mercy and grace.
- Open the eyes of our heart Lord and show us your will as witnesses so we may be instruments of your love.
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- We ask these things in the name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ