

Bible Study

“Empowered by Grace to Witness”

Prayer: Dear Jesus, place within us the confidence and boldness to proclaim the Good News to those around us in all places and at all times. By your grace, help us to be your witnesses both in what we say and do. Bless us as we examine what it means to be witnesses for you. In your precious name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4), and he gives us the privilege and responsibility to share that truth, the Gospel, with all people. Empowered by his grace, he uses us as his hands, feet, and mouth. We are his instruments through which others hear and learn about Jesus and his love, grace, and mercy.



Prior to Jesus’ ascension, he told his disciples, “...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Filled with the Holy Spirit and his power, the disciples began the task that every generation of Christians since then has continued. Our witnessing takes place in our homes, neighborhoods, at our places of work, and beyond. Being a witness for Jesus is more than attending church or being busy in church work. We share his Gospel so others will come to know him as the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). We have the opportunity to tell others of the greatest miracle that has ever occurred. The Son of God came to live as one of us, to be humiliated for the sake of those he loves, and then to rise victoriously, the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20). This miracle is one to be shouted from the housetops, for it is meant not just for you and me, but for all humankind. That’s what the “Therefore” in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) means. Christ has died for our sins and risen again so that we might live forever with him. He has authority to issue this command. “GO THEREFORE!” Don’t keep this miracle a secret. Take time to tell it to your neighbors and friends. Use your talents to build up your church so that its mission and ministry might be enhanced. Spend your resources so that others (if not you yourself) are enabled to be his witnesses to “all nations.”

God’s plan for his people has always been that we take responsibility for sharing the Good News. Peter wrote, “Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). God blesses us with minds to learn and mouths to speak. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God will give us the words and the courage to use them.



Along with most people, we are eager to talk about the weather, sports, economy, or politics, but, as Christians, we have been given “this treasure in jars of clay” (2 Corinthians 4:7), the treasure of the Gospel message ... something vastly more important to talk about. Our attitude should be like that of Peter and John, who, when commanded to stop speaking of Christ, said, “...for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

Questions for Discussion

1. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. How does building relationships help you witness?
2. Can you rely solely on your lifestyle to witness? Why/why not?
3. You are not to be speechless when called upon to defend your faith (1 Peter 3:15). How can you “*be prepared*”?
4. How would you describe the attitude of the women as they left Jesus’ empty tomb (See Matthew 28:8; Luke 24:8-12)? What is your attitude regarding the empty tomb and the resurrection?

Paul’s Witness

After his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul lived his life witnessing for Jesus. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he had much to say in his letters about proclaiming the Gospel. In 1 Corinthians 9:16-17, Paul discussed his role as a steward of the Gospel: “*For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship.*” Paul was controlled by the love of Christ to give his life over to preaching the Word of God (2 Corinthians 5:14).

In 1 Corinthians 4:1 Paul introduced himself and his fellow workers “*as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.*” Paul was called to be a servant and steward for the Lord in order to win others for Christ. Knowing that as a steward for Christ his strength was not his own, he stated, “*For this I toil, struggling with all [God’s] energy that he powerfully works within me*” (Colossians 1:29). Paul saw his life, energy, and motivation as gifts of grace. “*Of this Gospel, I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power*” (Ephesians 3:7). The greatest treasure we can share with others is the Good News of the Gospel. That same grace that motivated and empowered Paul to go about witnessing for Jesus can equip and energize us.

5. Read 2 Corinthians 3:2. What does it mean to be a letter for Christ?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 4:5-6. What are you directed to do?
7. Read Matthew 5:14-16. What are you to be? Are you?
8. Read 1 Corinthians 4:2. What is the trust that you’ve been given? How can you be faithful?
9. Read 2 Corinthians 5:19-20. You are called an _____. As such, what is your role?
10. Read John 15:5; 2 Corinthians 12:9. What made the Apostle Paul such a great witness?
11. Why are stewardship and mission (witnessing) inseparable?
12. Read Philemon 6? How can you, by witnessing, come to a deeper understanding of “*every good thing that is in [you] for the sake of Christ*”?

Prayer: *Lord, we thank you for the privilege and opportunity to be your witnesses. Grant us faith, boldness, and generosity to be effective in sharing the Gospel with others. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.*