

I Am Jesus' Witness

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] I'd ask you to take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 5. We'll be reading the first 16 verses.

! Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

[1 : 18] Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth.

But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world.

A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

It was 40 days after Jesus was raised from the dead that he met with his 11 disciples just outside of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives, just before ascending into heaven in their sight.

And he gave them his last words as recorded in Acts chapter 1 and verse 8. He had told them to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit.

[2 : 32] And then he said, But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the world, the ends of the earth.

And it's in these words that we find our next identity statement as to who we are in Jesus Christ. I am Jesus' witness.

You are my witnesses, Jesus says. So if you are in Christ by faith, say with me, I am Jesus' witness. I am Jesus' witness.

Now it is true that Jesus was speaking to his 11 apostles here, and that they were in a special sense called to be his witnesses.

It was because they had been with him from his baptism all the way to his ascension. For those three years of public ministry, they had lived with him.

[3 : 37] They had sat at his feet. They had heard his teaching. They had seen his miracles. All that he did and said. And they had been eyewitnesses of these things.

And then they had seen him as risen from the dead. Now all that was necessary, as the rest of Acts chapter 1 points out, when they come to select a replacement apostle for Judas, who went to his place.

And these were the qualifications to have been with Jesus from his baptism to his ascension. So that we might, quote, be eyewitnesses of his resurrection.

So that was important to the qualification for an apostle, eyewitnesses. And this New Testament emphasis on eyewitnesses stresses the historical factualness of the very foundation blocks of the Christian faith.

We don't believe in stories and mere myths. We believe in facts. We believe in facts. Historical facts that have been written down for us.

[4 : 48] That were seen by eyewitnesses. Heard by earwitnesses. And by the time the four gospels were written, there were still eyewitnesses on the earth to verify what was said.

Whether that was really what Jesus did. Did he really say that? And so we have every confidence to know that what we read in the four gospels is exactly what Jesus said and heard.

As the spirit also was guiding and directing their mind and hand as they wrote. Well, that being said, it's not just the apostles who were called as Jesus witnesses.

And you see that throughout the book of Acts. They keep saying, well, we are witnesses of these things. And we can't help but speak about what we've seen and heard. But it's not only the apostles who are called as Jesus witnesses.

When a great persecution broke out in Jerusalem because of the stoning of Stephen and Saul of Tarsus seeking to destroy the church. We read that in that day, all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

[6 : 05] And wherever they went, they proclaimed the word. Wherever they went, they gospelized the word. They evangelized with the word about Jesus.

Who he is and what he has done for the salvation of sinners. These were not apostles. These were not ordained ministers, but rank and file Christians witnessing wherever they went.

Gossiping the gospel, telling what they knew about Jesus. It's the same when we come to Matthew's account of this great commission that he gave to the apostles as they gathered with him. This commission to make disciples of all the nations and baptize them and teach them to obey and so on. Jesus promises to be with them in that work to the very end of the age.

Well, now, 2000 years have passed and the disciples are long gone from the scene of evangelizing and making disciples. And yet Jesus promised that in this task of making disciples, he would be with his church to the end of the age, which just shows that the apostles stood here before Jesus as representatives of the church.

[7 : 21] And yes, just as they were witnesses in their generation and the early church was were part of that group of witnesses in their generation.

So now here in the 21st century, you and I who are in Christ are now witnesses to our generation. And so it will be to the end of the age.

The very word for witness in Acts 1, 8 and elsewhere in the New Testament is a word that had its origin in the courtroom. It's a scene that we're all very familiar with where a witness is called and he takes his place in the witness stand after being sworn in.

And he's peppered with questions. He's not there to speculate about what he thinks might have happened. Who's guilty and who's not? That's that's not his business in the witness stand, is it? He's there for one reason. We want to know what you know about this case. What did you see? What did you hear? Where were you?

[8 : 26] We want the facts. I witness facts. And so a witness bears witness. It's you have the noun form and then the verb form.

A witness, the subject, the person bears witness. A verb, that's what he does. And and that witness is his testimony, isn't it?

And that's entered into the court record, his testimony. And even so, for us to be Jesus witness simply means that we tell what we know about Jesus and his gospel to bear witness of his claims and of his saving power.

And that can be as long as Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two, where Peter proclaimed Christ and he bore witness to what was said about him in the Old Testament. And then he bore witness about Jesus from the events that had just happened there in Galilee over the past years, how Jesus had had done miracles and many signs and wonders as God was validating that this is his son and savior and Messiah.

[9 : 36] And then what had happened in his trials, his death, his resurrection and his ascension into heaven. There it is, Peter bearing witness.

Or it may be as simple as that man who was born blind in John chapter nine and he's drug before the Pharisees and they're questioning him.

Oh, that man is a sinner, they say. And he says, well, one thing I do know, I was blind. But now I see. And it was the man they call Jesus who did it.

He bore testimony to what he knew, what he had experienced, what he'd seen, what he'd heard about Jesus. So every Christian has a testimony to tell as Jesus witness of who he is and what he's

done.

Every Christian has people in our influence who need to hear that witness from us. You don't need to be a Bible scholar to tell what you know about Jesus. In fact, if you know enough about Jesus to be saved, you know enough about Jesus to tell someone else how to be saved, don't you?

[10:50] It's one of our identities. Who am I? Why am I? What is my life to be about? I am Jesus witness.

Jesus witness. Jesus witness. Now, to be witnesses of Jesus, to be witnesses of the Lord has ever been the calling of God's people, as Peter says in 1 Peter 2.9.

Addressing the church, he says, you are a chosen generation. You are a royal priesthood. You are a holy nation. You are a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

That's who you are. You're to be a declarer. You're to be a witness who just tells forth what Jesus has done for you in taking you out of your darkness and into light.

We sang it, didn't we? We were in that dungeon of darkness. And thine eye gave forth a quickening ray, and I woke, and the dungeon blazed with fire.

[11:59] I was in the dark as to who God is. I was in the dark as to how guilty I was before him. I didn't know the way to be right with God. I was in the dark.

And then light came. Light came, and I rose, went forth, and followed Jesus, you see. That's what the witness does. He tells what God has done in bringing him out of darkness into his marvelous light.

We are his witnesses. That's our identity. And that was the identity of the Old Testament people of God as well. His word to the people of Israel in Isaiah 43, 12 and 13.

You are my witnesses, declares the Lord, that I am God. Yes, and from ancient days, I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand.

When I act, who can reverse it? Again, in chapter 44, in verse 8, you are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other rock.

[13:00] I know not one. That's God telling his people their identity as witnesses. To him. Of who he is.

Not only to their children. But to the other nations around them. Who have their own gods. And they are to go and be witnesses of Jehovah.

And say, no. Your gods are not gods. There is only one true and living God. And Yahweh is his name. And he reigns over all. And he does as he pleases.

With none to stop him. So as Christ witnesses to this world. We need to think this morning of two things that are so critical. If we are to bear witness in our generation.

We need to give attention both to our life. And our lips. Both to our deeds. And to our words. And those are the two points I have for you this morning.

[14:00] The scriptures. Talking about witnessing to the world. Emphasize both. It's not an either or option. As if I want to choose just to be a witness with my life.

And not say anything. Just let people see the way I live. Or I'm just concerned about telling people about Jesus.

I'm not so concerned about the way that I live. It's not one or the other. To choose one without the other is half a witness. As the scriptures hold it before us.

And can actually do harm as we'll see. So the Bible emphasizes both. We must as well. Let's look first of all. At the importance of our lives. In our witness. Our deeds.

We read from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. And when you come down to verse 14 of Matthew 5, 14. He's going to tell his followers their identity as witnesses.

[15:03] He's going to say you are the light of the world. That's your identity. And that's what you're to be. The light of the world. The witness. But before he ever gets to verse 14.

Jesus first describes the character of his people. Their lives are identified by eight beatitudes. You notice them. Eight attitudes and behaviors.

That mark their lives as different from the world. First of all. They're not arrogant and cocky. And self-conscious or confident. They're not confident in themselves.

But they're poor in spirit. They're bankrupt in spirit. They have this poverty of spirit. That says I don't have this thing under control. I am poor.

And I need your riches. I need you every hour. There's a poverty of spirit. That marks their heart and life. They're not clowns.

[16:05] Secondly laughing their way through life. There are. There's plenty of joy. To the Christian life. But there's also things that make them mourn. When they see the brokenness of the world around them.

When they see how sin's bondage is ruining people and families and businesses. And our culture. And our environment.

We weep. We see sin in ourselves. And it causes us to mourn. Thirdly. They're not pushy. They're not demanding that they get their way through life.

They're meek. They're meek and gentle. Fourth. They're not hungry for worldliness and more of sins pleasures. But they hunger and thirst for the righteous life that God requires.

Righteous life. They're not insisting fifthly on their rights. They're they're not demanding justice. Eye for eye. Tooth for tooth. They're not returning evil for good.

[17:11] But when people mistreat them. They're merciful. When they see poor and needy. They. Give. They're merciful. Sixth.

Their purity is not just concerned with a few outward. Scandalous sins. As long as I don't do this or that. I'm. I'm happy with my purity. No. Their purity is purity in the heart.

Purity of thoughts. Purity of desires. Purity of motives. They're the pure in heart. They're. The seventh. They're not contentious and argumentative.

They don't go around with a chip on their shoulder. Just daring people to knock it off. And you'll have a good argument on your hands. They're peacemakers. They love peace. And they pursue it. And then they're not conforming to this world.

But becoming more like Jesus. And living the righteous life that he desires. Which marks them out as. Strangely out of step with the world. And because of it. The world persecutes them.

[18:12] Anything from a sneer. A laugh. An insult. A slander. To taking their lives. Persecuted because of righteousness. So these are the kind of people.

That belong to Jesus kingdom. This. This is a picture into their. Their attitudes. And their behaviors. The way they live. Due to the grace and power of Jesus Christ.

Who is filling them. They weren't born this way. They were born again this way. When the spirit of God came in. And is producing these. Marks.

These attitudes. In their lives. And these attitudes and behaviors. That he describes here. Are the very saltiness. That he now comes to.

That's what gives saltiness. To your life Christian. That makes you. The salt of the earth. A preservative. In the midst of a decaying. Culture. If you lose your saltiness.

[19:12] That. That kind of. Beatitude life. What good are you on the earth? You're good for nothing. But to be trampled on. By feet. That's. That's what you do with salt.

That's not salty. It's not performing. It's function. And. And this kind of life. Marked by these beatitudes. Is what gives. Brilliance to your life.

That makes you the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill. That cannot be hid. There it is. It's. It's right out there. Where. Nobody can deny it. There's a city on that hill.

There's light. Coming forth. From that person. The grace of God. God. God. You see. Has made. The people of God. Holy. And refreshingly. Different from the world. He's. Made them a light. That points others. To this great salvation.

[20:07] In Jesus Christ. Now our Lord says. That no one. Lights a lamp. To then. Immediately. Put it under a bowl. Kids. Did you get the imagery?

What do you say? Nobody. Lights a lamp. And then immediately. Puts it under a bowl. To cover up. The light. If it was darkness. That we wanted. Then we would never.

Have lit the light. We already had darkness. Right? Before we lit it. We had darkness. So. This is folly. No one would light. A lamp. Only to. Plunge oneself. Right back into the darkness.

That we had before. No. If we. If we go to the trouble. Of lighting. A lamp. And let's remember. It was more than flipping a switch. There was the wick. To trim.

There was the. The oil. To fill the. The pot. And. And then the lighting. Of the lamp. Without a cigarette lighter. One of those things. That you. Just push. There was some trouble.

[21:01] To lighting a lamp. And nobody went to the trouble. Of lighting a lamp. If it was not. To set it up. And to give light. To the room. And even so.

Christian. God did not light you up. With gospel. Life. And power. In order to have you. Hide your light. Under a bushel. Under a bull. Think of the trouble.

God went to. To bring his life. And light. To you. He didn't leave you. In the darkness. Of unbelief. And sin. But in his matchless grace.

And love. He sent his one and only son. Into the world. Into this dark world. To pay for your sins. On Mount Calvary. To suffer hell. In your place.

To work out a righteousness. By living a holy life. In an unholy world. And then he sent his holy spirit. Into your dark heart. To bring you life. To bring you back.

[21 : 56] To make you alive. To wake you up. To spiritual truth. And reality. To make you willing. To repent. And receive Christ. As your savior.

And lord. And now to live in you. The holy spirit. To live in you. To produce this kind of life. This fruit of the spirit. Beatitude type. Life. I say.

God didn't go to all this trouble. To light you up. With his salvation. Only to have you now. Hide your light. Under a bowl of indifference. Towards your identity.

As witness. To hide your light. Under a bowl of worldliness. So that there is nothing different. About your life. No. He. He. Lit you up.

With grace. And truth. And life. And love. In order that you might. Let your light shine. Before. Men. That. That they may see. Your good deeds.

[22 : 50] And. Come to give praise. To your heavenly father. That's why he lit you. So if you're a light. A witness. Then witness. Bear.

That light. That witness. To the world. The Lord Jesus. Is here. Emphasizing. The importance. Of. A life. Of love. A life. Of good deeds. A life. Of holiness. And what is holiness.

If it is not loving God. With all our hearts. And loving our neighbors. As ourselves. You can summarize it all. And that's what holiness is. That sums up.

What God requires. Of us. And. And so Jesus is emphasizing. How important it is. If we're to be effective witnesses. In the world. That. That we have a life. Such as.

These eight. The attitudes. Such as Christ lived. Because. That kind of life. Will adorn. Will beautify. And will commend. The gospel of God.

[23 : 46] Our savior. A holy. And humble life. Is absolutely essential. For our mission. Here in the world. We're trying to commend.

Christ to sinners. We're trying to tell them. How. How wonderful. A savior he is. So a man shows up. At your front door. Selling diet pills. And you immediately recognize. He's a hundred pounds. Overweight. Are you interested? Or. A bald man. Is selling. Miracle grill. Hair formula. Are you buying? Or a professing Christian.

Talking all about Jesus. But his life. Is an unholy mess. Unable to be differentiated. From the world. Who's interested.

In hearing about Jesus. From such a life. You see. We're witnesses. Of a holy Jesus. And our testimony. And our message. To this sin. Besotted world.

[24 : 45] Is that this holy Jesus. Saves unholy sinners. And he forgives. All of our sins. And then he sends. His holy spirit. Into our hearts. To clean up our act.

To clean it up. From the inside out. To purify the heart. And to purify our lives. That's what Jesus does. In saving us.

He saves us. From our sins. His blood. He breaks. The power. Of reigning sin. He sets the prisoner. Free. We tell them. His blood. Can make the foulest. Clean.

Because his blood. Aailed for me. Do they see in us. Such fruits. Of salvation. Of a life. That is being cleansed.

And purified. From the heart. Right out to the hands. And the mouth. We testify. That there's grace. And forgiveness. In Jesus Christ. Are they receiving grace. And forgiveness. From us.

[25 : 40] Has the gospel. Of God's grace. Made us gracious. Has God's gracious mercy. Made us merciful. Has gospel love. Made us loving. And if not.

What kind of witness. Can we bear to this world. About a gracious. Merciful. Loving. Savior. For sinners. Who saves us.

From what we are. Makes us like himself. We who bear this message. To the world. Are to. Be ourselves. A living demonstration. Of its sin. Cleansing power.

We're to be like. Maybe you've been to the beach. And seen people walking around. With billboards on them. They're walking billboards. Advertising where you can find. A good pizza. We're to be. We're to be walking billboards.

In our lives. Or to be advertising. What a wonderful. Savior we have. Who cleanses us. From sin. Who not only forgives. Our sins. But. But he cleans us up.

[26 : 33] And he has power. To break. The bondage of sin. In our lives. Such lives. Make the doctrines of God. Our savior. Attractive.

Titus 2. 10. And men cannot argue. With the power. Of a holy life. Spurgeon said. The beauty of a holy life. Is the most powerful. Influence. In the world.

Next to the power. Of the spirit. Of God. So Bob. And Kathy. Self. Have transplanted. Themselves. Right into.

A poor. And needy. Neighborhood. In West Atlanta. And they're there to. Share the love. And truth. Of Jesus Christ. Aren't they? So what are they doing?

Well. They're loving on people. They're giving out. Panera bread. They're. Stopping. And talking to people. They're befriending.

[27 : 28] People. They're showing. Genuine interest. You need a ride. To the marketplace. Come on. I'll give you a ride. Spending time. Taking them. Waiting on them. Bringing them back. Having them into their home.

For a meal. Getting to know them. And love. Is opening doors. For the gospel. Would you like me. To come back. And. And. And. Hold a bible study. And we can find out. From God's word. Who this Jesus is. And what. He's done. For sinners. And you see. It was love.

That threw the door open. So that. The truth. Of the gospel. Could. Could walk through. Francis and Edith Schaefer. Opened their home. In Switzerland.

To all kinds of people. Seeking answers. Everything from the hippie. One. Roaming types. To. Highly educated. University students. And philosophers. And professors.

[28 : 23] And the Schaefer's. Took time. To listen. To their questions. To understand them. Let me. Do I understand you right? Is this what you're saying?

Is this your problem with Christianity? Is that right? They. They showed interest. They wanted to know the person. And then.

Francis. Would share the gospel. And demonstrate the reasonableness. Of the Christian worldview. He wrote books on defending the faith.

With compelling facts. And reasons. Why. This is. The truth. That would oppose. Those who questioned. Or. Opposed it.

But Dr. Schaefer said. The greatest. Apologetic. Of all. Is love. The greatest defense. For the power. Truthfulness. Of the gospel.

[29 : 19] Is love. You can't argue with love. It opens doors. You see. And commends. The gospel. As being more than words. But as being. That which transforms.

The life. And turns self-centered. Selfish individuals. Into people who love. Genuinely love. Their neighbors. When our friends.

First went to the far east. A country long under. Atheistic communism. They were struck. With the hardness. Of the people's hearts. The absence of love.

In society. Just in. Neighbor to neighbor. And. In one sense. We say. Well. Should we be surprised. If God is love.

And there is no God. Then would you expect love. To be flowing. In that culture. And they saw that vacuum. And they stepped into the vacuum.

[30 : 16] With the love of Jesus. That had filled their hearts. And they began to take children. In and off of the streets. And feed them. And clothe them. And give them an education. House them.

And these children and others. Have been warned. By that love. To listen. To the gospel. That saves sinners. And some of them. Are coming to faith. They've been warned.

To. By love. To listen. To the gospel message. About a God. Who so loved this world. That he sent his one and only son. Into the world.

So that whoever believes on him. Might not perish. But have everlasting. It's love. That opened the door. For the gospel of God's love. In Jesus Christ. To enter.

The ears. An interested. Hearing. Of the word. The love. Love is the greatest apologetic. Of all. Opening doors. For our message. And I'm sure.

[31 : 23] There are people. In your lives. Who need to hear. The gospel. And need to see. The love. That it produces. In the hearts. Of those who. Believe it. I've shared this before.

But I think. It fits this context. When that immoral. Young. Man. Augustine. First moved. To Milan. To receive. A teaching post. There. The bishop.

Was. Ambrose. And he was. A holy man. A minister. Who is known. All over. The world. For his. Preaching. Of the truth.

Of the gospel. And in his confession. Augustine. Is. Is speaking. To God. And recalling. This time. In his life. When he first. Went to Milan. And this is what he says.

To God. And so I came. To Milan. To Ambrose. The bishop. I was led to him. By you. Unaware. That through him. I might be led. To you. That man of God.

[32 : 20] Received me. Like a father. And expressed. Pleasure. At my coming. With a kindness. Most fitting. In a bishop.

And I began. To like him. At first. Not as a teacher. Of the truth. For I had no. Absolutely. No confidence. In your church. But as a human being.

Who was kind. To me. Was kind. To me. And gradually. Though I did not realize it. I was drawing closer. Closer.

To you. It wasn't Ambrose's preaching. It was. Ambrose's kindness. That opened the door. For the truth.

About the kindness. And love of God. Our father. Who sent his son. To save. Unrighteous. Sinners. We bear our witness.

[33 : 19] Of Christ. Before a watching world. They're not only listening. To our words. They're watching. Our lives. And rightly so.

Rightly so. They want to see. If it's real. Or is it just more. Of the cheap talk. That there's so much. Of in our day. This. This. This week.

I heard the testimony. Of a man. Who was. The first in his family. To be saved. He was a married man.

His mother and father. Were unconverted. As were his. Siblings. 20 years later. After his conversion. His daughter died. And the day after.

His mom and dad. Were converted. And this grieving man. Went to his father. And he said. Dad. What's up? For 20 years. I've been witnessing to you. And you have not come to Christ.

[34 : 20] And now my daughter dies. And. And the day after you guys get. Come to Jesus. For life. And he said.

I've been watching you son. For 20 years. And I watched you yesterday. In the loss of your daughter.

And you can't fake hope. You can't fake hope. In the face of such loss. And if that's what Christ gives.

I want to know it too. Now that man's hope. Did not save his father. The only hope for sinners is Jesus. But what that. Gospel produced hope.

Did was throw open a door. So that. This man would have a question. What gives that kind of hope. In the face of death. That I'm petrified of.

[35 : 19] And the answer. Was found in Jesus Christ. Hope. Opened the door. For the truth. And isn't that what Peter's talking about. When he tells us about.

What we need to be doing. As witnesses. In 1 Peter 3. 15. He. He says. In your heart. Set apart Christ. As Lord. Lord over the whole of life.

No part of your life. But that Jesus. Is set apart. Set over. It all. As Lord. That's where we start. And then. Always be prepared.

To give an answer. For the reason. Or to give an answer. To everyone. Who asked you. To give the reason. For the hope. You have. Do this.

With. Gentleness. And respect. Act. You see. The assumption. Of Peter. Is that. With Christ. As Lord. You will be men. And women. Of hope. Knowing Jesus.

[36 : 16] As Lord. Overall. You will be people. Of hope. In a world. Without hope. Hope. Hope. In the face. Of death. Hope. In the face. Of shattered dreams. And plans.

In your life. A peace. And joy. In Jesus. That nothing. Can take away. And that's. The quality. Of life. That gets. The attention. Of a world. That is broken. And fearful.

Of death. And fearful. Of these trials. And have no. No energy. No resources. To. To. Have a reason. To go on. And suicides. Going off the charts.

No hope. And it prompts. The question. Whether verbally. Or in their minds. What is it. That gives you. Such hope. In such. Hopeless situations.

I'm all ears. Hope. Hope through the door open. For the gospel. I give you these many examples. This morning. To encourage us all.

[37 : 14] To not forget. The persuasive. The persuasiveness. Of a holy life. Produced by the power. Of the gospel. Of Christ. Who saved us. Are we living close enough.

To Jesus. Are we abiding. In Christ. That fruitful vine. Enough. To be drawing. From him. A supernatural love.

A supernatural joy. A supernatural peace. And hope. And kindness. That adorns. The gospel. And it says.

This message is true. Listen up to this. It's real. It's genuine. It's genuine. That's the challenge. As Jesus witnesses. We must not underestimate. The persuasive power. Of such a life. To commend the gospel. Of Jesus. But though there. Though such a gospel.

[38 : 11] Produced life. Is attractive. And though it commends. The gospel. And prompts interest. And questions. And open doors. For our message. Still. There is more to do. We must in the second place. Speak.

The gospel. And that's what Peter's. Just told us. That when your hope. In difficult trials. Begs an explanation. You need to be ready. Always. To do what?

To give an answer. And that's something. That takes words. Isn't it? To give an answer. And that leads us. To the second emphasis. And we'll be briefer with it.

What does scripture say. Is important. For a witness. Of Jesus. Well your life. Is critical. To commend the gospel. But secondly. The importance of our words. In our witness.

It's not just our deeds. It's our words. There's a rather famous quote. That's going around a lot. Has gone around for a long time. Some attribute it to St. Francis of Assisi.

[39 : 06] That that's been denied. Not sure who said it. But it goes like this. Preach the gospel at all times. And if necessary. Use words.

Have you heard that? Preach the gospel. At all times. And if necessary. Use words. The implication. Is that you don't need words. To preach the gospel. Now perhaps the statement. Is simply trying to emphasize. What I've been trying to emphasize. For the last 30 minutes. How important it is. That our lives. Commend the gospel. Show forth. The fruit of the gospel. But this statement. Overstates it. And in the end. Undermines. An important truth.

About witnessing. Which is this. And never forget it. It is always necessary. To use words. In proclaiming the gospel. Always necessary.

[40 : 01] There's no such thing. As preaching the gospel. Without words. Because the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. Is a message. That cannot be. Communicated. Without words. It's a message.

About a certain. About certain. Historical facts. Paul outlines them. In 1st Corinthians 15. But. But those historical facts. Are the.

That the eternal son of God. Became man. In Jesus of Nazareth. Born of a virgin. Who lived a perfectly sinful life. And then died.

A substitute. To atone. As a substitutionary death. For man's. Sin. To take away man's sin. That he was buried. He rose again. On the third day.

Victorious. Over sin. Over death. Over Satan. And then he ascended. Into heaven. And he's coming back. To judge. All mankind.

[40 : 56] And all of us. Are sinners. And therefore. In big trouble. With God. To escape. His eternal wrath. You must repent. And trust. In this Christ. Alone. And he will save you.

He will save you now. Now being loving. And kind. To your neighbor. Does not communicate. That. To them.

No. That will take. Words. You see. You cannot be. The gospel. To the lost. You cannot really. Live the gospel. Because the gospel. Is not our life.

But a message about. The life of Jesus of Nazareth. Who he is. What he's done. To save repenting. Believing sinners. They must know that. And only words.

Can communicate that. Proclamation. Is the central task. Of the witness. Why is he in the box? Not to show you anything.

[41 : 53] He's there to talk. Isn't he? To tell what he knows. About the case. That's the central meaning. Of the word witness. And that's the central task. Of Jesus witness.

To tell what we know. About Jesus. Concerning his. His great salvation. Peter says. For you have been born again. Not of perishable seed. But of imperishable.

Through the living. And enduring. Word of God. When you came to birth. It was through the hearing. Of the word of God. And this is the word. That was preached. To you. It was explained. It was proclaimed. To you. James says. In James 1. 18. He chose to give us. Birth. Through the word. Of truth.

So if the gospel. Is to be known. It will have to be. Through words. Even a wordless movie. Of Jesus. Dying on a cross.

[42 : 46] Does not proclaim. The gospel. Because even Calvary. Needs words. To explain. What was happening. There on the middle cross. And it's not.

What it looks like. It looks like. Three. Criminals. Are getting. What they've got. Coming. But oh. It's. It's quite different.

With that middle man. Isn't it? Where. What. Really. Was happening. There on that middle cross. Well.

Words are needed. To explain. What the eye. Could not see. That Jesus. Was. Was purchasing. People. For God. By paying. The price. To redeem them.

That. That there. On the cross. Jesus. Was being wounded. Not for his own. Transgressions. But for our. Transgressions. He was being. Crushed. For our. Iniquity. And the punishment.

[43 : 43] That we deserved. Was being put on him. So that we could have. Peace with God. And by his wounds. We could. Be healed. That the curse. Was falling on him.

That blessing. Might fall on us. Forever. And ever. Now you can look at a crucifix. All your life. And never figure that out. It will take words.

It will take God's words. And that's why we not only have. The four gospels. Explaining what happened. But we have the epistles. That follow. God's word. Explaining. What happened on that. Middle tree. The Christ was dying for sins. The righteous for the unrighteous. To bring us to God. You see. It takes words. Doesn't it? That God made him. Who had no sin. To be sin for us. That in him. We might become the righteousness. Of God. That takes words.

[44 : 38] To explain. What eyes cannot see. That's what Paul says. Is necessary. Everybody who calls on the name of the Lord. Will be saved. But. How can they call on him.

In whom they've not. Believed. And how can they believe on him. Of whom they've not heard. And how can they hear without a. Preacher. And how can they preach without. Being sent.

Do you follow his. Unbreakable chain. You need somebody to proclaim. The words. The truth of the gospel. In order for someone.

To be able to believe. On Jesus. And therefore. To call out to him. To cry out. Save me. I need. You Lord Jesus.

The message must be spoken. If they're to hear. And believe. And call. On the Lord. And be saved. So yes. Jesus witnesses. Will want to live a life. Consistent with the gospel message. They will want to live in a way.

[45 : 39] That demonstrates. It's saving power. And grace. And love. And kindness. But we will always need words. God's words. About. The cross.

About the empty tomb. To give them the gospel. And that was the case. In every one of the examples. I used. In the far east. In Switzerland. In West Atlanta. In Milan. A loving life.

Was not the gospel. A kindness. Never saved anyone. Of men. A kindness. Of witness. Never saved anyone. No. The life is important.

To gain a hearing. For the gospel. But the gospel. Still must be proclaimed. In words. Think about this. Without words.

Our godly lives alone. Do not point people. To Jesus. But to us. Isn't that what we saw last week? That one of the. The things about men. That. They've got a way. That seems right to them.

[46 : 32] And what is that way? That's that. We're saved. We earn salvation. It's not a gift. We earn it. And that's the way. That seems right.

And now. If you're just going to be a. Seek to be a witness. With your life. And they see you. Doing a lot of good deeds. What will they conclude? Oh yes. Of course. Of course. John's going to be saved.

Look how holy he is. He gets up. And goes to church. Every Sunday. Oh sure. He's going to be saved. He earned it. No. If they are to know. That that's a delusion. You're going to have to speak. Aren't you? You say not by works of righteousness. That I've done. If I'm saved. It will be all. God's fault. It will be what he has done. In Jesus Christ. To save me. So. A good life. Without words. Can actually. Add to people's delusion. And. Support. Their thinking.

[47 : 27] That we're saved by works. So people of God. Here's your identity. According to Jesus. You're my witnesses. You're the light of the world. Now be what you are. Let your light shine.

With love. With kindness. With hope. With joy. And then tell them. Who gives you that. Love. And joy. And hope. And Jesus doesn't just say. To his eleven. Now go get them. No. He says. You'll receive power. When the Holy Spirit. Comes on you. And that was the outpouring. Of the Holy Spirit. On the church. And now. The Holy Spirit.

Is given to every believer. At the moment of conversion. We become temples. Don't you know. That your body. Is a temple. Of the Holy Spirit. Who is in you.

[48 : 23] And so. We're given the Holy Spirit. Right from. Conversion. And one of the things. He does. One of the things. And reasons. He's come to live here. Is to loose my tongue.

To. To help me to talk. About Jesus. And another thing. He's come to live in here. Is to. To work in me. A life that.

That looks like. Those beatitudes. A life. That looks like. The fruit of the Spirit. Which is love. And which is kindness. And joy. And peace. And hope. And so on.

He gives us the power. Everything we need. To be witnesses. For the Lord Jesus Christ. And you have that. Given to you. The moment.

That you become a Christian. That's why even baby Christians. Are called to be witnesses. Some. Some of the best witnessing. Comes from baby Christians. Who just come out of the darkness. And they can't believe it.

[49 : 18] All my sins are forgiven. That whole past is gone. Forever forgotten. Jesus is my Savior. I'm destined for heaven. And they're excited. And they can't get over it.

And they can't help. Telling others. About their Savior. Even baby. Baby Christians. Can become. Some of the best. Of Christians. So.

Believers. You're on the witness stand. You live on the witness stand. In your home. Your neighborhood. Your school. Your job. Your life's always on the witness stand. What are. What are people hearing?

I close with one further example. Recently shared at a pastor's conference. It has to do with a Christian lady named Vivian.

And she visited Saudi Arabia on one occasion. And she knew a Muslim woman there. Who had invited her to her home. And so she came at the appointed time.

[50 : 17] And they sat in her sitting room. And drank tea together. And then the Muslim lady said. Please. Come downstairs. I'd like to see a room.

That my husband and I have. Have built. And Vivian had no real. Interest in doing so. But she went down. And as they. Came to the bottom. Of that room.

Of the. The steps to the bottom. She. She flipped a switch. And there were 80 people. Sitting. In silence. And when Vivian could get her breath.

She said. Who are all these people? And where do they come from? Why are they here? Well. Her host said. Well they've all come to hear about Jesus.

In the gospel. This is Saudi Arabia. And Vivian said. But that's punishable by death. Who's going to tell them? She said.

[51 : 17] You are. Where they've all come from. And the lady said. For the last three years. I've had a Filipino nurse. Or a Filipino maid.

That's worked in my home. And every day. She came. She was joyful. And singing. It was something in her own language. I didn't even know what it was. So one day. I asked her. Why are you so joyful? What are you singing about all the time? And she says. Oh I'm just singing songs of thanksgiving. To Jesus. Who is taught about in the gospels.

Jesus. And this woman said. If. If he has given you that kind of joy. Now this lady is working in. Slave like. Job.

And. If. If. This Jesus. Gives you that kind of joy. I'd like to hear about it. And it gave her an opportunity. To share the gospel. With this. Muslim lady.

[52 : 16] And eventually. She was saved. She told her husband. About Jesus. In the gospels. And eventually. He was saved. And they told their children.

And then they told their. Extended family. And they told their neighbors. And she said to the lady. They're not all saved yet. But that's who's here. These 80 people. They've come to hear you. Tell them about Jesus. In the gospel. And. Humanly speaking. We. We. We. We come back to this. Simple.

Made. Finding. In the Lord Jesus. A reason. To sing. About him. Throughout her day. With. With joy.

In her heart. That couldn't be faked. And her employer. Saw it. And wanted to know more.

[53 : 13] Her joy. Didn't save. The Muslim lady. Only Jesus. Saves. Sinners. But it threw the door open. It stirred interest. It made the gospel.

Desirable. To know. What is it? And it opened the door. That she might then. Open her mouth. And with words. Explain the gospel. And now. Vivian stood before. 80 more.

Who had been infected. Through. That witness. To hear more words. About Jesus. In the gospels. Witnesses. Of Jesus. As we have heard.

The joyful sound. That Jesus saves. Now. Spread the tidings. All around. That Jesus saves. It's number. 370. 370.

370. Stand with me. As we. Sing to one another. About our identity. As witnesses. Who have heard. The joyful sound. And now.

[54 : 09] Make known. The glad tidings. 370. Grace and peace.

From God the Father. And from our Lord Jesus Christ. Be with you. Amen.