

Lesson #10

Witnessing

For you will be a witness to Him unto all men of the things which you have seen and heard.

Acts 22:15

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Witnessing

How long will the light of a candle last? Of course, the light will go out when the candle burns out. But if we light another candle with this one, the light will double in intensity. Will the light of the first candle diminish because it has lit the second? No. If we use the second to light a third, will the light of the second diminish? No. The light of each candle will last until the candle burns out. But when the first light goes out, the second will still be burning. When the second light goes out, the third will still go on shining. If we keep on lighting more candles—ten, a hundred, or a thousand candles—the light will never go out. This explains the testimony of the church. When the Son of God was on earth, He lit the first candle. After that, more candles were lit one after another. For the past nineteen centuries, the church has been like candles; when one candle burns out, it is continued by another one. This goes on and on even today. The church has never ceased shining on this earth, just as salvation has never stopped. Some have lit ten candles; some have lit a hundred. Candle after candle has been lit, and the light continues on.

Brothers and sisters, do you want your light to continue, or do you want to see it end when your candle is extinguished? You have been lit by someone. He does not expect the light to end with you. Every Christian must try his best to bring salvation to others. He must do his best to testify to others and lead others to the Lord so that the testimony may continue on this earth from generation to generation. It is unfortunate that with some people their light ends and their testimony ceases. This is most pitiful! The church has been propagating itself for generations. Some people find their testimony continuing, while others have unfortunately gone without posterity. The

light of a candle can only shine while it is still burning. Likewise, a man's testimony continues only while he is still alive. In order for the light of a candle to go on, other candles must be lit before the first one burns out. In this way the second, the third, the hundredth, the thousandth, and even the ten thousandth candle will carry on the light. This light will continue forever and spread to all parts of the world. Such spreading will not diminish the light of each candle. We suffer no loss when we witness. But by witnessing, the testimony goes on.

WHAT IS WITNESSING?

In Acts 22:15 the Lord sent Ananias to speak to Paul: "For you will be a witness to Him unto all men of the things which you have seen and heard." From this we see that the basis of witnessing is what we have seen and heard. You cannot be a witness to what you have not seen with your own eyes or heard with your own ears. Paul saw something with his own eyes and heard something with his own ears. God charged him to be a witness of what he had seen with his own eyes and heard with his own ears. First John 4:14 tells us what witnessing is: "We have beheld and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world." A person is a witness to what he has seen. Thank God, you have believed in the Lord. You have met Him, believed in Him, received Him, and gained Him. You are saved. You have been delivered from sins, received forgiveness, and obtained peace. Now that you have believed in the Lord, what joy you possess. This joy is something which you did not have before. Formerly, how heavy was the load of sin upon you! But now, thank God, this load of sin is gone. You have seen and heard something. What should you do today? You should testify of your experience. This

Verses

Acts 9:19-21

19 And once he had taken food, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples in Damascus for some days.

20 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, that this One is the Son of God.

21 And all who heard [him] were amazed and said, Is this not the one who ravaged those who call upon this name in Jerusalem and came here for this, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests?

Acts 22:15

For you will be a witness to Him unto all men of the things which you have seen and heard.

1 John 4:14

And we have beheld and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world.

John 1:40-43

40 One of the two who heard [this] from John and followed Him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ).

42 He led him to Jesus. Looking at him, Jesus said, You are Simon, the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is interpreted, Peter).

43 The next day He wanted to go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, Follow Me.

does not mean that you have to leave your job to be a preacher. It means that you should witness to your friends, relatives, and acquaintances of what you have seen and heard, and bring them to the Lord.

The gospel will stop with you if your testimony does not continue. It is true that you are saved; you have the life of the Lord and you are lit. But if you do not light others, you will be finished when your candle burns out. You should not meet the Lord empty-handed. You should bring many with you when you meet the Lord. New believers must learn from the very beginning to witness to people and bring them to the Lord. Never be lazy in this matter. If a believer does not open his mouth from the very beginning, after a few days he will form a habit of keeping his mouth closed, and then it will take much effort to turn the matter around. You have believed in the Lord. For the first time you have tasted so great a love, received so great a Savior, obtained so great a salvation, and experienced so great an emancipation. Yet you do not testify for the Lord or light others with your light! You really owe the Lord something!

EXAMPLES OF WITNESSING

Going into the City to Tell Others

In John 4 the Lord told the Samaritan woman about the living water. By this she realized that no one on earth can find satisfaction without the living water. Everyone who drinks of the water from the well will thirst again. No matter how many times man drinks of that water, he will thirst again; he is never satisfied. Only by drinking the Lord's water will we not thirst again, because there is a spring that will flow out of us and satisfy us continuously. Only this inner satisfaction can give us true satisfaction. The Samaritan woman had been married five times. She married one man after another; she had changed her husband five times, yet she was still not satisfied. She was a person who drank again and again but was never satisfied. Even the man who was with her at that time was not her husband. She, undoubtedly, was not a satisfied person. But the Lord had the living water that could satisfy her. When the Lord

showed her who He was, and when she had Him, she left her waterpot and went away into the city, saying, "Come, see a man who told me all that I have done. Is this not the Christ?" (v. 29). Her first reaction was to testify to others. What did she testify? She testified Christ. Perhaps the people in the city knew something about her, but there were probably many things which they did not know. Yet the Lord told her everything. She testified to others, saying, "Is this not the Christ?" The moment she saw the Lord, she opened her mouth to invite others to find out whether He was the Christ. As a result of the woman's word, many believed in the Lord.

All those who have seen that they are sinners surely have a testimony to give. Those who have seen the Savior also have a testimony to give. This woman gave her testimony within a few hours after she had met the Lord. It was something that happened on the same day, not something that happened a few years later when she returned from a revival meeting. She witnessed to others immediately after she returned to the city. Once a person is saved, he should tell others what he has seen and understood immediately. Do not speak what you do not know, and do not give a long discourse. Just tell them what you know. This is all you need to testify; you only have to tell others how you feel. Some can say, "I was so depressed before I believed in the Lord. But now that I have believed in the Lord, I have become so happy. In the past I pursued many things but was never satisfied. Now there is an unspeakable sweetness within. Before I believed in the Lord I could not sleep at night. But now I can sleep well. I used to be full of anxiety and bitterness. But now I feel peace and joy wherever I go." You can tell others what you have experienced. You do not need to tell them what you cannot say. You do not need to tell them what you do not know. Do not speak anything beyond what you know or beyond your present situation. That may stir up arguments. Present yourself to others as a living witness. They will have nothing to say.

John 1:44-45

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.

John 4:29

Come, see a man who told me all that I have done. Is this not the Christ?

Mark 5:19

And He did not allow him, but said to him, Go to your house, to your own [people,] and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and [how] He has had mercy on you.

One on One

A person needs not only to go to the city, to his home, and to the synagogues to witness to others about his faith in the Lord, but also to bear a special testimony—to lead others to the Lord one on one. Such is the testimony in John 1:40-45. The moment Andrew believed in the Lord, he led his brother Peter to the Lord. Although Peter later became more gifted than Andrew, Andrew was the one who led Peter to the Lord. Philip and Nathanael were friends; Philip first believed in the Lord and later led his friend to receive the Lord. Andrew led his brother to the Lord, and Philip sought out his friend. Both are examples of leading men to the Lord one on one.

In a certain country there was a believer named Todd, who was very good at leading people to salvation. He was sixteen when he was saved. It was a holiday and he was in a village. An older couple from a church took him in for hospitality. They were experienced workers, and they led him to the Lord. The young man had lived a wanton life, but on that day he knelt down to pray and was saved. In the course of their conversation, the young man found out that the gospel could not prevail in that place because a certain Mr. Dickens would not repent. When Todd heard this, he asked, "Who is this Mr. Dickens?" They told him that he was a retired soldier over sixty years old. He kept a gun at home and vowed to shoot whoever came to preach the gospel to him. He regarded every Christian in the world as a hypocrite, and he called them all by such a name. Whenever he came across a Christian, he would behave in a violent way. No Christian dared to preach the gospel to him or even walk past the street where he lived. If he knew that a Christian was walking past his street, he would curse vehemently and fiercely. When Todd heard this, he prayed, "O Lord! I have received Your grace today. You have saved me. I must go and testify to Mr. Dickens." Even before he finished his tea, he said, "I am going." He had been saved less than two hours earlier, yet he wanted to witness to Mr. Dickens. The older couple advised him, saying, "Do not go. Many of us have failed. He has chased some away with a rod. Others fled when he threatened them at gunpoint. Even though he has beaten up so many people, we do not want to take him to court because we want to maintain a proper gospel testimony. This has given him the excuse to become more fierce." Todd said, "I feel that I should go."

He arrived at Mr. Dickens's door. As soon as he knocked, the man came to the door. He had a stick in his hands, and he asked, "Young man, what do you want?" Todd said, "Is it all right for me to speak a few words to you?" The man nodded, and both of them went into the house. The moment they were in the

house, Todd said, "I would like you to receive the Lord Jesus as your Savior." Mr. Dickens lifted up his rod and said, "I suppose you are new here. I will let you go and not beat you up. But have you not heard that no one is allowed to speak the name of Jesus here? Get out! Get out right away!" Todd said again, "I would like you to believe in Jesus." Mr. Dickens became furious. He ran upstairs and returned with a gun in his hand. He shouted at him, saying, "Get out or I will shoot!" Todd responded, "I am asking you to believe in Jesus. If you want to shoot, you can shoot. But just let me pray before you shoot." He immediately knelt down in front of Mr. Dickens and prayed, "O God! This man does not know you. Please save him." Then he prayed again, "O God! This man does not know you. Please have mercy on him. Have mercy on Mr. Dickens." Todd knelt there and would not rise up. He continued praying, "O God! Please have mercy on Mr. Dickens! Please have mercy on Mr. Dickens!" After praying five or six times, he heard a groaning near him. A little while later, he heard Mr. Dickens lay down his gun. Soon Mr. Dickens was on his knees next to Todd, praying, "O God! Please have mercy on me." Within a few minutes, that man had accepted the Lord. He took the young man by the hand and said, "In the past I have only heard the gospel. Today I have seen the gospel." Later, the young man told others, "The first time I saw his face, it was truly a face of sin. Every wrinkle spoke of sin and evil. Later, light shone through the wrinkles, and every wrinkle seemed to be saying, 'God is merciful to me.'" The next Lord's Day, Mr. Dickens went to church, and later he led dozens of people to salvation.

In the first two hours after his salvation, Todd led a notoriously difficult person to the Lord. The sooner a new believer opens his mouth, the better it is. We should not waste any time in leading others to Christ.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WITNESSING

Being a Great Joy

The two happiest days in every believer's life are the day he believes in the Lord and the day when, for the first time, he leads another person to Christ. The first one, of course, is a particularly happy day. However, the joy of leading another person to the Lord for the first time may be greater than the joy experienced on the day of his own salvation. Many Christians do not have much joy because they have never spoken anything for the Lord; they have never led a person to the Lord.

Begetting Life

No tree will sprout without further growth. Likewise, no one can have God's life without begetting more life. Those who never witness to sinners are probably in need of others witnessing to them. Those who have no desire or interest in leading others to repentance unto the Lord are probably in need of repentance themselves. Those who are silent for the Lord in front of others probably need to listen again to the voice of God's gospel. No one can be so advanced that he no longer needs to save others. No one can advance to the degree that he no longer needs to witness to others. New believers need to learn to witness to others from the very beginning. This is something we have to do for the rest of our lives.

Experiencing the Misery of Eternal Separation

D. L. Moody was very good at leading men to salvation. He once made up his mind to preach the gospel to at least one person a day, whether or not he was giving a message on that day. One day he went to bed, and then he remembered that he had not preached the gospel to anyone yet. What should he do? He changed his clothes and went out again to look for someone he could speak to. It was already midnight when he looked at his watch; the streets were empty. Where could he find anyone at such an hour? The only person he could speak to was a policeman who was on duty: "You must believe in the Lord." The policeman was in a bad mood over something at that moment, and he scolded Moody angrily, saying, "Do you not have something better to do than persuade me to believe in Jesus in the middle of the night?" Moody went home after sharing a brief word with him. But the policeman was touched by Moody's word. A few days later he visited Moody and was saved.

As soon as a person believes in the Lord, he should make a resolution before the Lord to lead men to the Lord. Everyone should have a record of how many souls he will save in a year. He may resolve to save ten or twenty a year. He should then begin to pray for them. General prayers are useless prayers. If you go to the Lord and say, "O Lord! Please save sinners," it is too general a prayer. You must have a specific goal in mind. If you want ten, aim for ten. If you want twenty, aim for twenty. You can prepare a book in which you write down the names of the ones you have gained for the Lord. As you gain one, write his name down. At the end of the year, you can count the number of those who were saved and the number who remain unsaved. Continue to pray for those who are not yet saved. Every brother and sister should practice this. It is not too much to gain thirty or fifty souls a year; ten or twenty is common. We must ask the Lord for a specific number in our prayer. The Lord wants to hear our specific prayers. We should pray to the Lord every day and should testify whenever there is opportunity. If all of us preach the gospel and lead people to the Lord this way, our spiritual life will advance quickly in a few years.

We must uphold the torchlight of the gospel and must light everyone around us. Let every Christian go forth to light others. The testimony of the gospel needs to go out from us until the Lord's return. We should not be lit ourselves without lighting others. We should light more and more candles. So many souls before our eyes are in need of salvation. We must try our best to testify to them and lead them to Christ.