

WITNESSING FOR JESUS

Introduction

“. . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Those are the last words Jesus shared with the disciples who saw him taken into heaven. Last words on most occasions are the most important things to be said. Jesus was emphasizing the necessity of being filled with God’s Spirit and witnessing to the world about spiritual truth and the abundance of true life.

The words of Jesus about witnessing for him were not directed only to the disciples surrounding him before his ascension. Those disciples would leave that place and witness in Jerusalem nearby. They and new believers would tell others about Jesus in the nearby regions of Judea and Samaria. Countless millions throughout the world, ultimately, would hear the Good News and become witnesses themselves – in every neighborhood, city, town, village, state, province, precinct, territory, region, and continent on the globe. What God’s grace and love has done for our lives is amazing and too wonderful not to share. How can we possibly keep silent?

Witness of Early Christians

When persons in the first century encountered Jesus, they shared what they experienced and witnessed for Jesus without being asked.

The shepherds at the birth of Jesus returned to their home area. Scripture says, “When they had seen him, *they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them*” (Luke 2:17-18).

The blind man miraculously healed by Jesus was repeatedly questioned by Pharisees who accused Jesus of being a sinner. The blind man said, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” (John 9:25).

The Samaritan woman at the well who encountered Jesus shared it with her

townspeople. “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ? . . . many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony (John 4:29, 39).

These scenes played out all over the known world at the time. People heard the gospel message because those who had found new life in Jesus Christ told others about it. They spread the word.

They witnessed for Jesus.

What It Means to Be a Witness

You do not have to be an evangelist, preacher, or gifted orator to witness for Jesus. Often that misconception keeps some believers from being the witnesses Jesus called them to be. Effective witnessing for Jesus is storytelling, simple sharing. It is taking the opportunity, when it arises with family, friends, neighbors, or others, to just say a few words about your faith – the new life you found, the joy that is now in your heart, a healing that you received, a miracle you witnessed. Just share it in simple language and conversation. Share it in your own words.

Think of witnessing about Jesus as you would if you were a witness on the stand in a courtroom. Those witnesses tell only what happened and what they observed. They do not have to explain *why* or *how* something happened; they only share *what* happened. They are not the prosecutor, the defense attorney, the judge, or the jury. They are a witness. That should be your approach to being a witness for Jesus in the world. You are not a prosecutor, an attorney, a judge, or a jurist. You are a witness where you are – whether at home, at work, over the backyard fence with your neighbor, on the highway, or in some other setting.

The Holy Spirit is key for witnessing, for those speaking and those listening. That is why Jesus told the disciples to be empowered by the Spirit before becoming witnesses. “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4-5). Jesus went on to say, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses. .” (Acts 1:8). Notice that the Holy Spirit in their lives was prerequisite to witnessing. The Holy Spirit would give them the courage to open their mouths and the words to speak.

On the listening end, the Holy Spirit works in the hearts and minds of those who hear your witness.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said this, “Unless I go away, the Counselor (Holy Spirit) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:7-8). Conviction of sin in the lives of those who need to repent is the work of the Holy Spirit; it is not your responsibility. If you will but speak, the Holy Spirit will convict those who hear and will engineer spiritual change in their hearts.

Ways to Witness for Jesus

How you live your life is your biggest witness for Jesus. Everything you do or say is usually seen or heard by someone. When writing to Christians in Corinth, Greece, and discussing the impact of his ministry on them, the apostle Paul said, “You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody” (2 Corinthians 3:2) (*emphasis added*). Paul was highlighting the way their lives spoke to him and the world. Your life is an **open letter** to all who encounter you! Good words and actions bear good fruit. Harmful words and actions turn people off and away from spiritual things. Let your life be a witness for Jesus.

Casually speak your witness for Jesus when you have the opportunity. Share what has happened in your life with family, friends, and others. Be the witness Jesus has called you to be. But just a word of caution: what you share will be received in different ways. Some will be happy and rejoice with you. Others may refuse to hear what you say, but that’s okay. You will have planted a seed. The Holy Spirit will continue to minister in their hearts. Other witnesses will come their way and the varied circumstances of their lives will continue to move them toward our loving God, all because you cared enough to witness for Jesus. They will have been drawn one step closer to salvation.

Formally share the gospel message if you are called to a special ministry. Some have the spiritual gifts and talents to do so. Though all are called to be ministers (witnesses for Jesus), some are called to set apart, formal ministries, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). They should equip and prepare themselves to proclaim God’s Word in the pulpit, in a convention center, in the field, in Bible study sessions, or wherever God makes the opportunity. If that is you, embrace that form of witness faithfully. It works to bring about conversions to Christ, builds up the Body of Christ, and equips the saints for ministry and witness (Ephesians 4:12-13).

This is an introduction to the subject of **Witnessing for Jesus**. Here are a few other resources you may wish to explore on the subject:

[How can I witness for Christ? \(billygraham.org\)](http://billygraham.org)

[How can I be an effective witness for Christ in a lost world? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

[Step 7: The Christian and Witnessing | Cru](#)

[How can I be an effective witness for Christ? How can I effectively witness to a lost world? \(compellingtruth.org\)](http://compellingtruth.org)

[Why We Witness for Christ and 6 Practical Points on How to Do It \(biblesforamerica.org\)](http://biblesforamerica.org)

[52 Bible verses about Witnesses, To Jesus Christ \(knowing-jesus.com\)](http://knowing-jesus.com)