

The Power Of Personal Testimony

John 1:35-51

Introduction

Are you familiar with the poem the Clock of life?

“The Clock of Life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.
To lose one's wealth is sad indeed.
To lose one's health is more.
To lose one's soul is such a loss
That no man can restore.”

Thirty nine people died while I read that short poem. Every hour 5,417 souls on average pass into eternity and go to meet their Maker. What are you doing to help reach them with the gospel?

Many people feel paralyzed in talking to people about their faith in Jesus Christ. Some Christians assume it is the Pastor's duty or the full time Christian workers responsibility to preach the gospel and share the message of Jesus Christ. Before leaving the planet earth Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20).

Jesus said, “Go” not stay. I want to talk to you today about the power of your personal testimony in bringing people to Jesus Christ. In this section of Scripture we learn about the Witness of John the Baptist. We also see John's account of Jesus' call to his first disciples.

What makes a credible witness? How can you share your testimony in way that makes sense and will encourage people to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?

What are some of the more common reasons people give for not sharing their faith?

“How do I guide the discussion on to the subject of Jesus Christ?”

“How can I overcome my fear of not being accepted, or thought weird?”

‘How do I overcome my fear of talking about Jesus Christ?’

“How do I overcome my lack of confidence that God can use me to bring someone else to Christ?”

The Witness of John The Baptist (vv.35-36)

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1. (v.35) **“Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples”**. This is John the Baptist. One of the disciples we know to be Andrew (v.40) “One of the two heard John speak”. Who is the other disciple? I suspect it is the author, John the Beloved. They were disciples of John the Baptist. I suspect they were about 13 or 14 years of age. Why? John the Beloved was the youngest Apostle. He probably would not have been allowed to leave home and enter into a regimen of rigorous discipleship until after his 12th birthday. I suspect John and Andrew were close in age because teenagers have a tendency to hang out with people their own age.
2. (v. 36) **“And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”**. There are three things about this verse that I want to draw to your attention. The first is the messenger—John. He is preaching. In this passage of scripture people come to Jesus Christ in three different ways. The first is preaching. The second is personal evangelism. The third is Jesus himself draws the person to himself. How many of you came to Christ because you heard a preacher preach the gospel? How many of you came to Christ because a family member or a friend loved you enough to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and you received Jesus as your Savior? How many of you were the hard headed and hard hearted type of person—who Jesus showed up in your life and issued you an ultimatum? Get right or get left!

John is a messenger. He is a witness. There are three things you need in order to have a credible or believable witness: (1) You must have a knowledge of the facts. (2) You must morally be above reproach. (3) You must have a reputation for telling the truth.

John has all three qualifications. This brings us to the second point about this verse that I want to draw to your attention. John’s knowledge of the facts is his message. **“Behold the Lamb of God”**.

Wow—isn’t that the shortest sermon you ever heard? “Behold the Lamb of God”. John calls Jesus the Lamb of God. Earlier John preached the longer version of his sermon in verse 29, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

What is John’s message? Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! In a way, that is the sum of the message of the whole Bible! The question in the Old Testament is “Where is the lamb?”(Gen.22:7). In the four gospels, the emphasis is “Behold the Lamb of God!” Here he is! After you have trusted Him, you sing with the heavenly choir, “Worthy is the Lamb!” (Rev.5:12)”(see Warren Wiersbe p.287).

Luke 1:15 (NKJV)

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15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹

Think about it. John knew the facts, wanted to share them and had a clear conscious. Does your behavior match your testimony? I read a sign in a Christian bookstore. It said, "People may not believe everything you say, but they will believe everything you do!"

Luke 1:17 (NKJV)

17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, *"to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,"* and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."²

Jesus.

John knew the facts about Jesus. John was morally above reproach. John is mentioned some 89 times in the Bible. John had the special privilege of introducing Jesus to the nation Israel

Matthew 11:11 (NKJV)

11 "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ³

John was willing to tell the truth, even if it cost him comfort and freedom. John the Baptist exposed the wicked and illegal marriage of Herod Antipas.

The true witness must have the proper motive: "He must increase. I must decrease"(John 3:30).

Jesus Calls His Disciples (vv.38-51)

This passage of Scripture gives us several principles we can use to help us in sharing our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Many things could be included but we look at eight things:

- 1. The Assurance of God's Work in Your Life.**
- 2. The Realization of Personal Sin.**
- 3. Surrender To God**
- 4. Spend Time With Jesus**
- 5. Be Grounded In The Great Truths of Scripture**
- 6. Be Planted In Order To Bear Fruit**

¹*The New King James Version.* 1996, c1982. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

²*The New King James Version.* 1996, c1982. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

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- 7. A Willingness To Work Hard**
- 8. All Things Must Be Done In Love**

The Assurance of God's Work in Your Life

John points people to Jesus. We must do the same. In order to point people to Jesus you must have the assurance of God's work of love in your own life! Are you saved? How do you know you are saved? Do you have a testimony?

(v.38) Jesus' first question to John "What do you seek?" What are you looking for? Define your purposes and goals. Are you looking for a political activist? Are you looking for someone who will overthrow the government, throw off the yoke of Roman oppression?

The Realization of Personal Sin

You will not want to do the will of God on your own. We do not have the ability to effectively witness and share the Lord Jesus Christ apart from the resources of God. In our flesh, we sometimes do not want to tell people about Jesus. You can have the confidence to confront people in their lost condition. All people apart from Christ—are lost—whether they want to admit or not!

Let's look for a moment at verses 45-51.

Carl Jung said, "The great neurosis of our time, the great plague that inhabits and indwells all people is the pervading sense of emptiness".

See Genesis 28:10-22.

Surrender To God

Look closely at verse 47; "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit".

The word 'deceit' can also be translated 'guile'.

See Genesis 32:22-24

Genesis 32:22-24 (NKJV)

22 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok.

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23 He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.

24 Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. ⁴

Some of you may be familiar with Jacob's story. He stole his brother's birthright and went to live with his Uncle Laban. There Jacob received a dose of his own medicine. Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah—when he really wanted to marry Rachel.

Jacob took his family, his flocks and his herds and headed home. On the way home he ran into his brother. His past caught up with him.

When Jacob thought his brother would exact revenge, he sent over his oxen, donkeys and flocks. He sent over his men servants and maid servants. He sent over his wife (first Leah and the Rachel). He sent over his children. It's easy to surrender things and people. But finally Jacob had to surrender himself.

Spend Time with Jesus

Look at verse 39. "He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour)." About 10:00 AM (or about 4:00 PM) if you reckoning Jewish Time or Roman Time. The disciples stayed with Jesus that day. How much time do you need to spend with Jesus before you are comfortable bringing someone else? For Andrew it was one day!

See verses 40-42. How do we reach the lost? Andrew begins with his family. Andrew is willing to play second fiddle. Andrew is willing to take the back seat. Andrew may never have done great things for God (as the world reckons greatness). Andrew's brother Peter will go on and become one of the leaders of the early church. Peter's preaching will result in thousands of people receiving Christ

Do you know the name of the person who led Billy Graham to Christ? Do you know who was responsible for Dwight Moody's conversion or Charles and John Wesley's entry into the ministry? Behind the conversion of great evangelists, pastors and leaders are faithful men and women who are being obedient to the call of Christ in their own life.

Be Grounded in the Great Truths of Scripture

What are the great truths of Scripture? The famous theologian Karl Barth was once asked to recite the most profound truth he ever learned. "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so". The person we need to know is Jesus. The great truths of Scripture would include his virgin birth, his sinless life, his substitutionary atonement on the cross of Calvary, his bodily resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven. Christ's

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bodily return to the earth. Jesus Christ's judgment of all people and nations and his eternal rule forever.

Be Planted In Order to Bear Fruit

Associate and identify with other believers. Note: They kept company one with another.

A willingness to Work Hard

Andrew went out and did the work. Note: You will never accomplish the work by just thinking about it. Verse 41: "He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah". Start with your family. Continue with your friends. End with "others"—and you will have the whole world as your mission field. Family is difficult because they know us. Friends are difficult because we don't want to risk friendship. Others are difficult—because sometimes we are motivated by fear rather than love. We are more concerned about what others think, and our own reputation, standing and safety.

All Things Must Be Done In Love

1 Corinthians 13

"Ours is an evangelical culture. So many people convinced that they've been saved by Jesus, abused by Satanists, cured by homeopathy or the laying on of hands, abducted by aliens, or protected by angels seek public acknowledgment that their convictions are true. Imbued with messianic fervor, or simply seeking "validation," they are not content to hoard the truth; they are compelled to share it and convert the unenlightened, relying on the force of their own intense emotions. Generally, the only proof offered for a fantastic belief is the passion it inspires in believers" (*Sleeping with Extra-Terrestrials; The Rise of Irrationalism and Perils of Piety*, Wendy Kaminer p.4; Pantheon Books New York 1999).

What proof do I offer? I offer the proof of a changed life. But there is more. Jesus Christ is the Son of God not because I say so. (see verse 45) "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph". Predictive prophecy proves Jesus' identity. The resurrection proves Jesus' identity.

Conclusion

Why aren't more people saved? Huxley's testimony.

2 Corinthians 4:3 (NKJV)

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3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁵

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NKJV)

4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁶

There can be any number of reasons that people give. Bad experiences with other Christians. Commitment to an immoral lifestyle. People like their sin. Intellectual dishonesty. Fear of God. Fear of Man.

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

JOHN BOILED IN OIL supernaturally delivered banished to Patmos by the wicked Emperor Domitian. Dies an old man in exile

NATHANIEL sliced to pieces with a knife.

MATTHEW SLAIN BY A SWORD IN THE DISTANT LAND OF ETHIOPIA IN AFRICA.

MARK; Dragged through the streets of Alexandria until his body is torn to pieces.

LUKE Hung from an olive tree in Greece

PETER Crucified head down in ROME.

JAMES; BEHEADED IN JERUSALEM

JAMES THE LESS thrown from the top of the pinnacle of the temple. Survives. beaten to death with a fuller's club.

ANDREW BOUND TO AN 'X' shaped cross in the Greek city of Patreas in Achaea. Shares his faith as they torture and murder him.

THOMAS RUN through with a lance somewhere in western India.

JUDE Shot to death with arrows

MATTIAS Stoned to death and then beheaded

BARNABAS; STONED TO DEATH IN SALONIKA

PAUL tortured then beheaded in Rome

THEY SACRIFICED THEIR BODIES AND THEIR LIVES TO BRING PEOPLE TO CHRIST. WOULD TO GOD WE WOULD DO THE SAME.

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