

WITNESSING TO THE UNSAVED

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Most Christians have come to Christ or received Him as their Saviour because somebody witnessed to them personally about the Lord Jesus. The first task of every Christian is to introduce others to Christ. Every saved person, without a single exception, will be held responsible for personal witnessing. Concerning this wonderful privilege and tremendous responsibility of witnessing to the unsaved, I shall try to point out three things.

I. The Reasons For Witnessing.

1. The example of Christ.

The soul-saving passion dominated the life of Christ. It was the primary concern of His life. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The Saviour has invited every Christian to follow Him. Repeatedly He said, "Follow me." To be a real Christian is to be a follower of Christ. To be a follower of Christ is to have the same purpose in life which Christ had. How can any person be a follower of Christ and not give his life to that to which He gave His life? Christ won most of His followers by personal contact, as was evidenced in the cases of Matthew, Nicodemus, the woman at the well and Zaccheus.

2. The command of Christ.

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Since He is our Saviour and Lord, we do not have any right to ignore His command. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). It is by our obedience to His command that we can prove our love for Christ. He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Nothing is any more certain than the fact that, if we love Christ, we shall strive to please Him. If we love Christ, we will witness to our relatives, our acquaintances and others whom we shall meet.

3. The condition of people.

Those who have never been introduced to Christ are lost in sin and need salvation. Think of the poor man at the pool of Bethesda, who had been handicapped with an infirmity for thirty-eight years. He was in that condition because nobody cared enough about him to put him into the pool at the time when healing was available. People around you are unsaved and are waiting for somebody who is interested enough in them to give them a little assistance. The eternal destiny

of souls depends on your witnessing to them. They can say with the Psalmist, "No man cared for my soul" (142:4).

4. The welfare of the church.
Any person who really loves his church and wants to see it grow will personally witness to lost souls, seeking to win them to Christ and church membership. Some churches are decreasing in membership because their members are not winning others to Christ.
5. The desire for personal blessings.
Those who witness for Christ to the lost always receive wonderful blessings. Among these blessings is real joy within their own souls. There is no joy like that of bringing an unsaved person to the Saviour. Christ said, "There is joy among the angels over one sinner that repenteth." If they rejoice when a soul is saved, when all that they can do is to watch a human being introduce him to the Saviour, how much greater will be the joy of the person who introduces the sinner to Christ! In personal witnessing the child of God enjoys fellowship with Christ, as well as receives the fulness of the Holy Spirit's presence and power.

II. The Requirements For Witnessing.

1. A Christian experience.
It would be useless for anybody to try to witness for Christ without a personal saving knowledge of Him. An unsaved person will not try to witness for Christ. Andrew could not have persuaded Simon Peter to receive Christ as his Saviour before he was able to say, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41). Christ said, "Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" (Luke 6:39).

Even any good life insurance company will require an agent to hold a policy in the company before he is allowed to try to sell a policy to others. That procedure is wise. Would you buy hair restorer from a bald man?

2. A conviction of the sinner's need.
Do you believe that people are lost? "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). You will never witness effectively for Christ unless you believe that people without Christ are condemned already.
3. A concern for souls.
Along with a sense of danger to which the souls of the lost are exposed must go a tender solicitude for their welfare and a zealous exertion for their salvation. One prominent churchman remarked that the average church member does not have the slightest concern for the salvation of other people.

We frequently sing, "Throw Out the Lifeline," but do not throw it. We sing, "I love to Tell the Story," but never tell it. We sing, "Rescue the Perishing," but our rescue efforts do not prove that we have much concern. Have you ever said to a lost person what Whitefield said: "I am willing to go to prison and to death for you, but I am not willing to go to heaven without you"?

4. A consistent life.
Nobody will accept your offer of the gospel of Christ unless your life gives evidence of what you claim it will do.

A Christian lady came to the United States for Bible instruction. Later she was asked if she would not be delighted to have her brothers come over here to study, as they also were in Christian work in the homeland. She held up her hands, and with horror in her face said: "No, no, I would not want them to come and see the way American Christians live!"

5. A working knowledge of the Scriptures.
One who witnesses for Christ must know enough Scriptures to show a sinner that he needs a Saviour, that Christ is the Saviour Whom he needs, and how to make that Saviour his own.
6. A willingness to work at the job.
One can never witness for Christ to the lost until he is willing to try. He learns by doing. One cannot learn to swim by keeping away from the water. One cannot learn to witness for Christ by refusing to try. One cannot prove to others that Christ means much to him or that he loves the Saviour unless he is willing to tell others what He has done for him.
7. A dependence on the Holy Spirit.
There will not be any power in your testimony unless the Holy Spirit blesses and uses it.
8. A persistent effort.
No work requires more patience or perseverance than witnessing to the lost. Refuse to give up because you fail at the first attempt.

III. The Rewards For Witnessing.

1. The bliss of doing the Lord's will.
2. The joy of helping others.
The greatest joy in the Christian life is to introduce a soul to Christ. I am sorry for any church member who has never had that joyful experience.
3. The undying gratitude of those you win to Christ.
4. The satisfaction of knowing that others will be in heaven because you did your Christian duty.
5. The appreciation and commendation of Christ.
We never know how far-reaching may be the results of introducing a soul to Christ. Think of Andrew. He was an humble, quiet, unassuming and consistent Christian. Perhaps the greatest act of his life was that of bringing Simon Peter to Christ. Andrew was the acorn, Peter was the oak, and three thousand converts at Pentecost were the great forest. Andrew will share in the rewards for Peter's work because he introduced him to Christ.

Think of Stephen and Ananias in helping to bring Paul to Christ. Think of the unknown man who introduced Spurgeon to Christ. Dr. J. B. Hawthorne

was an orator whose services were sought by scores of churches, and whose sermons were heard by thousands. On one occasion he went to assist a pastor and church in a two-weeks' evangelistic campaign. At the end of it only one little unpromising boy had made a profession of faith in Christ, and Dr. Hawthorne and the church were a bit chagrined over the result. But that boy was A. T. Robertson, who became the greatest Greek and New Testament scholar of the twentieth century.

A similar thing took place in Scotland. A church went through a whole year with only one profession of faith, and, when that was reported at the annual convocation, they said: "None except Wee Bobbie, and he's so sma' he's no worth the countin'." But Wee Bobbie became Robert Moffatt, the flaming torch that illuminated the night of Africa and blazed the trail for the great and marvelous David Livingstone, his son-in-law.

Never despise the day when a child is won to Christ. Only the Lord knows what that contribution may mean to the cause of Christ.

When and where did you ever talk to anybody about the salvation of his soul? Have you ever tried to witness to an unsaved person? If not, you are not much like the Saviour. When you stand in His presence, the question will not be, "How many did you win to Christ?" but "How many did you try to win?" We are not responsible for the results, but we are responsible to bear our testimony.