

Witness

Mandatory – No More Excuses

Matthew 28:18-20

The Bold Witnesses in Acts 2

- ❖ Jesus has been crucified
- ❖ Jesus appeared only to His disciples
- ❖ Brings us to an intersection that our witness must navigate: Public perception vs. Private conviction
 - The general public left with the scene of the crucifixion and burial
 - The disciples had seen Him since and were encouraged by Him
 - The problem is how do we persuade those who have not had your experience and therefore don't share your convictions

Some examples of navigating public perception vs. private conviction

- ❖ The woman at the well – John 4
 - What she had:
 - She had her biases based on her exposure – John 4:9, 20
 - She had a drama – John 4:17-18
 - She has an unrealized thirst – John 4:13-15
 - She has religious knowledge but is void of revelation – John 4:19-26
 - She had a waterpot but left it when she gained a conviction – John 4:28
 - She discovered she had a witness – John 4:29

- ❖ Peter on the Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:22-36

- ❖ The Ethiopian Eunuch – Acts 8

- ❖ Peter witness to the house of Cornelius – Acts 10:34-43
 - There was an audience – vs. 24
 - Peter kept it real and refused to be worshipped – vs. 26
 - Peter understood everyone had value and potential in God – vs. 28
 - Peter was a sent man – vs. 17-23, 29-32
 - The Word is for everyone – vs. 34-43
 - God's Power is available to all who believe – vs. 44-48

Our Development and Witness through Stages

- ❖ Dark Ages
 - Represents the time in your life when Jesus wasn't even on your mind – 1 Pet. 2:9
 - In your dark ages, you didn't walk – you slithered like a snake
 - “Snakes like to live in damp, dark, cool places where food is abundant.” UK Extension Service
 - Snakes eyes are always open...
 - Snakes can live off 2 meals a year. Contrast this to Heb. 10:23-29
 - THE WITNESS: less on Christ and motivated by other things – John 4:20, Mat. 21:12-17; Mat. 7:21-23

- ❖ Babe in Christ – 1 Peter 2:2
 - You can be born again but not yet still immature
 - Can't always discern good from evil (Heb. 5:12-14)
 - Think you're doing good but still not doing what God say
 - Gullible – Heb. 5:14; Eph. 4:14
 - Dull of hearing – Heb. 5:11
 - The text gives no credence to physical age for spiritual maturity – James 1:2-5
 - Arrested development: body kept growing but mind stopped
 - One of the key distinctions between a baby and a mature adult is their ability to eat and digest foods – Heb. 5:14
 - Can't handle anything more than the basics: repentance, faith, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment – Heb. 6:1-2
 - THE WITNESS: Passionate, excited, bold with limited knowledge
 - Impactful while still flawed – John 4:29-42
 - Favored while still flawed – John 8:11
 - Shown mercy and grace while still flawed – Luke 18:10-14
 - Sincere, protected and shielded while still immature – Luke 18:16-17

- ❖ Enlightenment – When the Word becomes more than surface and begins to penetrate your heart – Eph. 1:18; Psa. 119:105
 - Not always aware of what God is doing but you know God is working in and through you – Acts 9:1-5, Acts 26:12-19
 - THE WITNESS: Can relate to where you were and help others grow to where you are or are going

- ❖ Maturing
 - Not where you were but not where you are going to be – Phil. 3:14
 - There's more – 1 Cor. 12:31; Acts 18:24-28
 - Aware of your issues and depend upon the Lord –
 - THE WITNESS: You can focus on loving, reaching and leading others to Christ while staying connected to Him yourself – Rom. 10:1-4

- ❖ Empowered – Acts 1:8
 - Led by the Holy Ghost
 - Bold witness – Eph. 6:19; Acts 2:4; 1 Cor. 1:5
 - With power and authority – Acts 2:14, 21, 32, 36-38

A Word-Aligned vs World-Aligned Witness

- ❖ Our witness must be able to reach and touch those in this world
- ❖ Our witness involves what we include as well as what we exclude

World-Aligned Witness

- ❖ The world is at enmity with God – James 4:4;
 - We are taught not to love the world OR the things in the world – 1 John 2:13-17
 - Let's look at Genesis 11 and Tower of Babel and Nimrod
 - Themes: rebellion, innovation, self-dependence, better without God mindset
 - Had one language but not aligned with God
 - Majority doesn't always mean alignment with God
 - God confused their languages and caused them to disperse
 - The world is still rebelling against God – Mat. 24:10-12; Rom. 12:1-2
 - 3 things in the world that are not from God – 1 John 2:16 KJV & MSG
 - Desires of the flesh (physical desires)
 - Desires of the eyes (personal desires)
 - Pride of life (self-interests)
- ❖ A world-aligned witness seeks to include God while holding to the things of the world
 - Am I including God but really living for the world? Rom. 12:1-2
 - Am I comfortable trying to have it both ways – the world and God? Rev. 3:16
 - Is God's Word final or are my feelings and not offending the world more important?
 - A world-aligned witness promotes unity in sin rather than purity in God – Gen. 11

Word-Aligned Witness

- ❖ Recognizes your physical and spiritual location and motivations are not the same – John 17:15-16
- ❖ What keeps us is the Power of the Holy Ghost and The Word of God – John 17:14, 17; John 16:13
- ❖ The Word has sustaining power – Isa. 40:8; John 1:1-13
- ❖ We must remain consistent and focused on the Word – 2 Pet. 3:14-18; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Tim. 4:1-16
- ❖ A Word-aligned witness:
 - Reveals God's Love in spite of our failings
 - Tells the truth in love – Eph. 4:15
 - Makes Him known instead of drawing attention to oneself – Phil. 2:7-10; 3:10
- ❖ Points to the Word –
 - That it's the Word at work and not mere man – Isa. 55:11
 - Sometimes our response is simply because of the Word – 2 Cor. 6:14
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Follow the Evidence

- ❖ We are called to be witnesses and have been made evidence of Christ's work
- ❖ Evidence: the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid. (Oxford Languages Dictionary)
- ❖ The enemy is distraught at the thought that you would realize who and what you are – 1 Cor. 2:6-8
 - That's why he tries to guard the fact of your demise in spite of knowing the truth of your elevation – Mat. 27:62-66
- ❖ We must learn the importance of the evidence – Acts 1:2-5; Luke 24:36-43
- ❖ We must learn the importance of the witness – 1 John 5:7-8

The enemy seeks to destroy your witness of what God has said and done – Acts 4:1-22

- ❖ Signs the enemy is trying to silence your voice and sharing of the Gospel
 - They become grieved as you teach and share truth – Acts 4:1-2
 - Your witness is effective at the same time you are presented with bondage – Acts 4:3-4
 - Your witness is misunderstood because those trying to understand are ignorant of your Source – vs. 7
 - Exo. 2:14; Mat. 21:23; Acts 7:27
 - You are set in the midst – overwhelming opposition – Psa. 22:16
- ❖ What you need to remember:
 - You have the Holy Ghost available to you – vs. 8; Acts 1:8; Luke 12:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:3; Mat. 10:16-20
 - You have the Word – vs. 10-12; 1 John 5:13; Isa. 53:1-10; John 14:6
 - You have the witness standing with you – vs. 9, 14, 20-22
 - You also are the witness – vs. 13
 - They may not like you but can't deny your witness – Acts 4:16
 - You have to be determined to share your faith in spite of the opposition – Acts 4:20; 22:15

Exercise:

What was it about the following that caused the enemy to want them silenced?

- ❖ The blind man – John 9
- ❖ Lazarus – John 12:9-11
- ❖ The impotent man – Acts 4
- ❖ You?