

WITNESSES

If you've been a Christian for any length of time, you've been encouraged to witness.

When I was a young Christian, I was told that the Christian's number one responsibility is to witness and share the gospel with people. They even used to use a few guilt trips, saying you aren't much of a Christian if you don't witness.

Let's look at a few scriptures and see what this witnessing is all about.

In Matthew chapter 4.17, Jesus went about the countryside preaching repent, because the Kingdom of God is here.

Verse 23

Jesus was going about in all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

And the news about Him spread throughout Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and severe pain, demon-possessed, people with epilepsy, and people who were paralyzed; and He healed them. He went all over the country proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom and demonstrating it among the people.

Then Jesus told his disciples that we must share this gospel with the other cities. So, He sent them out. Here is Matthew's account of His instructions to them.

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every sickness.

As you go, preach, saying, 'the Kingdom of Heaven has come near.' Heal *the* sick, raise *the* dead, cleanse those with leprosy, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. Matthew 10.1+7

When Jesus sent out His 12 disciples and the 72 others that followed, He did not send them out to do their very best to try and persuade people that the Kingdom of God had come. He sent them out to continue doing exactly what He was doing, manifesting and proclaiming that kingdom.

When John the Baptist was put in prison, he sent two disciples to Jesus to ask if He actually was the Messiah or should they look for another.

Jesus did not respond with a discourse about the hundreds of prophecies about Him that He had fulfilled. He said, Go and tell John what things you have seen and heard; the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. Luke 7.22

Before Jesus was taken up into heaven, He gave His disciples His final instructions.

He gave them the authority to continue preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and demonstrating it in their world. Matthew 28.18

Here is Mark's account of their response.

They went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.

Jesus also told His disciples after the resurrection, to stay in Jerusalem and wait for what the Father had promised.

He told them, you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall BE My witnesses both in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the Earth.

He did not tell them that He would set up a campaign for them to go and DO witnessing for Him. He said, you shall BE My witnesses to the whole world.

It was the Holy Spirit's presence and power within them that enabled these "ignorant and unlearned men" to manifest and spread the Gospel of the Kingdom to the entire known world, without buildings, without a Bible, and without the internet.

For hundreds of years this early church was a persecuted, illegal cult, that was full of the presence and power of God such that outsiders began to call them Christians - little Christs.

Natural men can proclaim a teaching, but Jesus made it quite clear that the witness that He wanted for this world required the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul was one who followed His instructions. He testified that, my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Acts 4.33 declares, with great power the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus....

Peter spoke to Cornelius and his household in Acts 10. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of all the things that He did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

The scriptures are clear that God wanted all of mankind to be redeemed into His family and be citizens of His Kingdom with all of it's rights and privileges.

It's also quite clear that God wanted His children to be the Ambassadors of His Kingdom and He has done everything necessary to make that happen for us.

He gave us His commission.

Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their wrongdoings against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin *to* be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5.18

God did what only He can do to enable us to accomplish that mission.

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers *and* sisters; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. Romans 8.29

The gospel is not the mere transmission of a Bible teaching. It's the supernatural act of God to transform His children into what He originally created them to be.

Let me wrap up This video with a few examples of what this transformation looks like in God's children.

The Apostle Paul declared in 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 the effect that this supernatural work had on the people that he ministered to.

It reads, you are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all people, revealing yourselves, that you are a letter of Christ, delivered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. They became visible expressions of Christ eternal life.

In Isaiah chapter 61, Jesus declared, The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD anointed me to bring good news to the humble; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to captives and freedom to prisoners...

He also shares God's purpose and the results of His efforts.

So, they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

The manifestation of God's Holy Spirit made them into visible, undeniable, testimonies of God's greatness.

This chapter continues, I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Then their offspring will be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them because they are the offspring *whom* the LORD has blessed.

The Father's purpose in transforming His children is to re-create them to BE His witnesses and His testimony to the entire Earth.

This scripture continues, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. Let's allow God's Holy Spirit to fill us and transform us to be the Ambassadors of His Kingdom, and walking billboards of His greatness.

God bless you.

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