**TESTIMONY MARCH 2024**

I have run out of volunteers to give a testimony this month, so I took this as a sign from the Lord that I should give it, and that it should focus on giving your testimony.

I think there are three main reasons why we shy away from giving our testimony. I’ll call them **Fear, Focus and Fame**. One, we feel frightened. When I sat down to plan this testimony, the first thing I did was to ask the Holy Spirit for guidance, and what came into my head was Jesus saying “Do not be afraid, I am with you.” So that’s my first point: ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and trust the Spirit of Jesus to protect you from fear.

The second challenge I face and we all face is Focus: what should I talk about: there is so much I could say. (By the way, please allow me a small commercial break here: my full testimony is so long I actually turned it into a book called “Pray as you can’t” available on Amazon. End of commercial.)

So again, I asked the Holy Spirit what incident I should choose for this testimony and he reminded me of the very first Life in the Spirit seminar I organised in our parish over 30 years ago. I had never even been through the seminars myself, though I had read loads of books and listened to teachings and testimonies on tape and made my own personal commitment to Jesus as my Lord and Saviour about 7 years previously. But I had this powerful prompting that we should run the seminars. I had a lot of support and help from my brother who had run the seminars and recommended a programme and speakers.

Anyway to cut a long story short, praise God everything went smoothly: we thought maybe 40 people might turn up but it was more like 90 for the first session, though it then settled down to about 75 I think. So we didn’t have enough group leaders, but some experienced people just appeared to help and all was well. Many lives were changed by that course, as people yielded to the Lordship of Jesus and the charisms of the Spirit. And we also recorded the talks and used the recordings to run it again in our prayer group and more lives were transformed. So that’s an example of focus and it also includes the important elements of before and after - what was the challenging situation and how did God change things.

The final challenge to giving a testimony I call fame, by which I mean that we can be discouraged from giving a testimony out of a false sense of modesty. We feel its wrong to boast and we may be shy and don’t want to draw attention to ourselves. The solution to this is in God’s word. As Paul says in 2 Timothy 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” And Jesus said: “Go to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you. “Over the years I have had to remind myself of these words, because I am actually quite shy by nature and I have to pray also that **I** will not be the focus but all the glory will go to God. So I’m not boasting about myself but about the Lord.

So I hope I have demonstrated some of the key things about testimonies, including the fact that they should keep to time!