

# Basic Christianity- Witnessing

- Christians must share the Gospel
  - **To witness and share the Gospel is a core requirement of being a Christian.**
    - There are many aspects or functions for the Christian. These include serving, exercising our Spiritual Gifts, reading and studying the Scriptures, fellowship and growing in maturity and many others.
    - They are all important of course but to be a witness and share the Gospel is especially a core function for all Christians.
      - Matthew 28:19
        - “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
    - And contrary to what we might believe, we can be a witness even at the most basic level of Spiritual maturity. One does not have to have a Ph.D. to be a witness.
    - Therefore, we must not neglect or overlook this essential "job" that Christ has given us.
    - **How comfortable are you today with sharing the Gospel and being a witness?**
  - **If Christians do not share the Gospel, then the lost will not be able to come to Christ.**
    - One way we know just how important it is for us to be a witness can be seen in how the lost come to know Christ. When Christians share the Gospel, they help lead the lost to Christ.
      - We know that we are saved by grace through faith, that we must have genuine belief in Jesus Christ.
        - Ephesians 2:8
          - "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift."
        - John 3:16
          - “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
      - **Then how does the lost person obtain this saving faith? They come to it by hearing the Gospel.**
        - Romans 10:17
          - “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.”
    - **If we as Christians choose never to share the Gospel, if we disobey God and keep this truth to ourselves, then how will the lost have faith to believe?**
      - Romans 10:13-14
        - “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher?”
        - Preacher (witness) shares the Gospel -> the lost hears -> the lost believes (through God calling and drawing them) -> the lost are justified -> the lost are now Christians.
      - **This Scripture reinforces the Great Commission. That it wasn’t just a suggestion, but that Christians plays a vital role in spreading the Gospel.**

- Don't think that "preacher" means a select few. We all play a part in God's plan for others to come to know Him.
  - Who is responsible for witnessing?
    - **What do you commonly hear as who bears the responsibility to witness?**
    - Common Christian views on the responsibility of witnessing
      - It's the pastors, deacons or teacher's responsibility.
      - It's for someone who is knowledgeable about the Bible and portrays themselves as a good Christian.
      - It's someone else's job
- **It is our Godly appointed duty to be a witness to others to share the gospel of Christ so that the lost can believe and be saved.**
  - Matthew 28:19
    - "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
  - How can the whole world be reached if only certain Christians are to be a witness?
  - It requires all Christians to spread the Gospel.
- God has chosen to use us to reach others. When we decide not to, we are disobedient.
  - **To share the gospel of Christ is to share the cure for the eternal punishment of sin.**
    - If you had the cure for cancer would you share it?
    - Isn't sharing the gospel that brings eternal life far greater than the cure for a disease that only affects the body which is temporary?
    - The lost will spend an eternity in anguish and separation from God. We must share the truth to all whom God has called us to.
  - **Do you think it is common for Christians to make witnessing a much lower priority?**
  - **Do Christians at times think that it is not their "responsibility" to witness? What do the Scriptures say?**
- **There are many different ways that we can share the Gospel and be a witness for Christ.**
  - **We represent Christ by being His ambassadors.**
    - 2 Corinthians 5:20a
      - "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that **God is appealing** through us..."
    - What does it mean to be an ambassador?
      - In the political world and ambassador is the representative of an entire country.
        - When a politician is chosen and sent to a foreign country, that person is the representative of the United States.
      - It is essential that the ambassador accurately represents the United States and is a voice for all of us in a way that adequately reflects who we are as a country.
      - If the voice of the ambassador is good or bad, it can directly affect how the world perceives us.
      - We would expect appropriate behavior out of our ambassador both in speech and actions.
    - An ambassador for Christ must represent Him to the world.

- In absolutely everything we do, we must remember that we are in a sense doing this under the "flag" of Christianity.
  - Just as we expect our political ambassadors to represent us to the world properly, so does God expect the same from us.
  - **The verse says “certain that God is APPEALING through us”. We should draw people to Christ not turn them away.**
  - God expects us to be His ambassador both in our speech and actions because everything we do as a Christian can have a direct influence on how the world sees Him.
    - **What does it mean for us to be “appealing”, what might this look like?**
  - **We witness by our speech**
    - To intentionally set out to tell others about the Gospel of Christ.
      - This may be what we first think of when we say we are going to witness to someone about Christ.
      - It's a straightforward presentation or conversation about the Gospel and Christ.
      - Examples:
        - Speaking pointedly to a friend/co-worker/random person about Jesus Christ. To intentionally seek them out.
        - Preaching/speaking/teaching publicly about the Gospel.
    - By telling others what Jesus has done in your life.
      - This is to witness through your testimony, not necessarily from a formal presentation but simply telling others what Christ has done for you.
      - This can be the most significant witness because you are not arguing Scripture or doctrine but the truth of what Jesus has done for you.
      - ***(We'll discuss this more in-depth below.)***
    - To witness is not strictly limited to a full presentation of the Gospel.
      - A common excuse that Christians use is that they do not have the plan of salvation memorized or are not capable of presenting it.
      - But as we will see that there are many numerous ways to be a witness for Christ and it certainly is not limited to this.
      - We may just be called to plant the seed or set the example.
      - It may be how we voice giving thanks to God for what he has done in our lives.
  - **We witness by our Actions**
    - **To witness by our actions is the silent witness.**
    - It is the consistent unintentional witness that we live every day.
      - It's unintentional because we are not trying to share the Gospel. We are merely trying to live our lives for Christ.
    - To witness is also reflected in how we live our lives and our outward actions.
    - How do we handle ourselves in public? Or at a ball game? How do we treat others at work or at school?
  - **Is one of these ways of witnessing more effective than the others?**
  - **How do you know which way or method that you are supposed to use?**
  - **In what ways has God called you to witness for Him?**
- **While we know it is important to witness, there are many reasons why we do not.**
  - **I don't know enough about the Bible (not qualified).**
    - **It's interesting that if you ask most Christians is it difficult or perhaps complicated to be saved the response is an overwhelming no. They will say it is quite easy.**

- But when a Christian then is in a situation about being a witness, they will say that they are not qualified, or they do not know enough.
      - **If you genuinely believe that Salvation is not complicated then why the excuse?**
    - You don't have to be an expert on the Scripture to be a witness for Christ.
    - As a Christian, you already know the most important part of Scripture.
      - Jesus Christ is the Son of God
      - He died on the cross for our sins.
      - He was resurrected and ascended to God in Heaven.
      - If you truly believe in Jesus, then you will be saved.
    - If all you know is that you believed in Jesus Christ and that He saved you,
    - Just tell others what you know, and God will do the rest.
    - **Why else is this statement used as a reason to not be a witness?**
  - **I don't know what to say**
    - While we may often think I don't know how to lead someone to Christ, I don't know what to say.
    - **But as Christians no matter what level of spiritual maturity we have something to say.**
    - Christians have something that the world does not, **and that is hope.**
    - **Scripture tells us to be ready**
      - 1 Peter 3:15
        - "but honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts. **Always** be ready to give a defense to anyone **who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.**"
      - God wants to be ready to speak to the hope that we have within us because of what Jesus Christ has done for us.
      - Do we really think that we have NOTHING to say?
    - **This hope is to tell someone else what you know to be true as to how Jesus has changed you.**
    - As a Christian you have the Spirit of God living within you, you have experienced a change. That is the hope that we should always be ready to tell someone.
    - **It is also to tell someone your story.**
      - Your story about what Jesus has done in your life is your best witness to others.
      - Don't think you cannot witness if you do not know what scripture to show, the story that you know is very effective.
      - Your story contains:
        - What your life was like before Christ (or before you truly embraced Him)
        - How you became saved and started a personal relationship with Jesus. (How/why did you truly give your life over to God?)
        - How this relationship has changed your life.
        - Paul's testimony gives us an excellent example.
          - Paul's life before Christ
            - Acts 26:4-11
          - Paul met Jesus
            - Acts 26:12-18
          - Paul's life was changed
            - Acts 26:19-23
      - **Why do you think that "your story" is so compelling?**
  - **I am afraid**
    - **What makes you afraid to share the Gospel?**

- **Rejection?**
- **Made fun of?**
- **Will they be offended?**
- **Will they treat me differently or will I lose a friend?**
- If we look at the big picture, it can help us overcome our fears.
  - **It is more important to share the Gospel (which affects eternity) than being concerned with temporary social issues.**
  - We are trying to save their lives from the cancer of sin that brings eternal death.
  - God will strengthen us to share his Gospel.
    - Isaiah 41:10
      - “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand.”
  - Paul's strength came from God, and he was not ashamed.
    - Romans 1:16
      - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.”
- **What can we do to remove the fear?**
- **It’s never the right time or place. It isn’t “convenient” for me.**
  - It does not have to be in a particular place (like church) to share the Gospel.
  - 2 Timothy 4:2
    - “Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching.”
  - **There will rarely be a right time or place, and it will most likely be inconvenient. But we must step out and share our faith and be a witness where Christ has called us too.**
  - We will use all sorts of excuses but in the end none of them matter.
  - **It is ALWAYS the right time because you may never get a second chance.**
  - 2 Timothy 2:5
    - “But as for you, be serious about everything, endure hardship, **do the work of an evangelist, fulfill our ministry.**”
  - Peter and John show us how God will put people in our path that we are to witness to.
    - In Acts 3 we see how the blind man was put in their path for a purpose and precisely at the right moment.
    - While there is nothing wrong with have a “scheduled” time or setting that you plan on being a witness of the Gospel, we must also understand that God will likely put someone in our path when we least expect it.
    - **We must never take off our “evangelistic calling” just because we are busy doing what WE want to do.**
  - **If it is God’s will for us to share our faith with someone, do you think that He will make the occasion for the PERFECT time regardless if it’s an “inconvenience” to us?**
- **We must not assume that someone is a Christian | Hebrews 12:15a**
  - Hebrews 12:15a
    - “Make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God...”
  - In our Christian walk not only are we to set an example for others so that they may know what it is like to live a life for Christ, but we are also supposed to watch out for others.
    - We are called as Christians to find those in the world that are lost and to show them the way to Christ so that they might have an opportunity to believe.

- We should be genuinely concerned about the lives of others and whether or not they have salvation.
  - **We also need to be sure that we are not limiting or overlooking those that we need to reach.**
- **To come up short is not good enough when it comes to salvation.**
  - When we think of falling short of something, we think of getting close to the goal but not quite reaching it.
    - Perhaps in a football game where a team came up just 3 points shy of winning.
    - While they were close, it still wasn't enough to win.
  - **To achieve the goal of salvation and eternal life is much the same as you either have it or you don't.**
    - If you fall short of God's grace and don't receive salvation, then you don't go to Heaven. You spend an eternity in Hell.
    - **God doesn't look at someone and say well they almost believed in me, they entertained the idea and were almost convinced, so I'm going to write their name the Lambs book of life because they were close enough.**
    - If one falls short, the result is the same as one who was not even close to the goal.
  - **We must make sure that we do not just assume that others are saved.**
    - We can get caught up in thinking that the only people we need to reach out to are those who we believe have never heard the Gospel before. That only those are the ones that we need to focus on.
      - Those that are "obviously" not Christians.
    - It can be easy to assume that our loved ones know Christ because maybe they go to church or "seem" to be Christians, but unfortunately those actions alone do not mean that someone is genuinely saved.
    - We need to be concerned for those who may appear to be saved but perhaps are not. They may be falling short of God's grace.
    - There is nothing wrong with getting assurance that those who we think are saved genuinely are because their likely man who go under our radar because we assume.
  - **Those that fall short might believe they are saved based on false assurances.**
    - Jesus made a statement in His great Sermon on the Mount that we would do well to remember.
      - Matthew 7:21-23
        - "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord! Will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in Heaven. On that day any will say to Me' Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name? Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!'"
      - **Jesus told us that there would be those who have a false assurance of salvation. Let us not make assumptions that everyone we know is a Christian.**
- **Do you think it is hard to talk to someone about Christ whom you assume is a Christian?**