

No Proxies

by A.W. Tozer

The apostolic witness is not about ideas, but about the person of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the only effective witness.

Duration: 5:40

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, John 1:29, John 15:26, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being a witness for Jesus Christ. He uses John the Baptist as an example of a good witness who pointed people to Jesus. The preacher highlights that the power of the church's witness lies in its focus on Jesus, rather than on theological debates or personal agendas. He emphasizes that only the Holy Spirit can truly convert and transform individuals into Christians. The preacher encourages believers to go forth into the world, testifying about God sending His Son, Jesus' death and resurrection, and His future reign over the earth.

Transcript

Now, he says, I want you to notice this very clearly, that ye shall be witnesses unto me. Now, this is the substance of the apostolic witness. The apostles and those early Christians and always wherever there is anything of revival in the Church, wherever the Church is moving, she never moves by heavy theology, although theology must be there as the basic groundwork for a witness.

But she witnesses not to ideas. It's entirely possible to spend our lifetime playing with ideas and never give a witness unto him. He says that we are to witness unto him.

They went forth and they talked about a man who was also God. It wasn't an idea, and it wasn't even truth, primarily, but it was the man who was truth, and because he was the Word, he was the idea of God incarnated in human flesh. And they went forth declaring that they had seen a man and that there were certain things true about that man.

Peter told about it in Acts 2 at length, he told about it more in Acts 10. They said that this witness concerned him, this man who was also God. They said he was God, and they said he was the redeeming God, and there wasn't any hope for anybody apart from him.

They said he saves by dying for men and rising again. And they focused the attention of people upon the man. I think John the Baptist was a good witness and a good illustration of what I'm trying to say.

John pointed to Jesus and said, Behold the man, behold the Lamb of God, the Lamb of God. That Lamb of God, that man, was the Lamb, and he called attention to him and then faded out. For the witness is not so important, but the one about whom he witnesses is all important.

This witness that the Church gave was the shell for its power. Here is the tragic thing, and I'm sorry about it, that it's entirely possible to give a Christian witness without power, as seen in some denominations today. They are sound in theology, but worldly in conduct and carnal in heart and earthly in spirit.

Because there is no Holy Spirit in their witness, they are far worse than if they did not witness at all. They said in old days they once saw a man dressed in the habit of a monastery, and they heard him preaching the gospel. They looked a little closer and found it was the devil.

The devil had the religious habit on, and somebody went to the devil and said, Why do you preach the gospel? You're out there preaching the truth. You, the devil, are against truth. Why should you preach the truth? And he said, The truth preached by a bad man is worse than error.

We may be entirely right about it. I don't know if the devil ever said that, but I think it's a good idea, and I want to pass it on. That truth that is simply given because it's logically accepted and traditionally believed may do more harm than good.

He said, Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Spirit, and ye shall be witnesses unto me. For remember one thing, the Holy Spirit is the only effective witness. You and I can talk till we're blue in the face and get no results at all, but it is the Holy Spirit that is the only effective witness.

It is the most significant, it's the solemn thing, that everybody that's ever been converted to Christ soundly in the world was converted by the Holy Ghost. Nobody was ever able to convert anybody else. That is, you can turn them around and get them going another direction, you can get them to adopt another creed, you can get them to believe another set of truths, you can get them to join another church, your church, but you can't regenerate them and you can't make Christians out of them.

Only the Holy Spirit can make a Christian out of a sinner. Only the Holy Spirit. When Jesus said, When the Holy Spirit is come, ye shall testify of me, and we have the word again.

So what we have before us is the teaching of our Lord himself, and it's substantiated by the rest of the scriptures, that God means a people to go forth into a world that's hostile but badly in need of the testimony. Those people are to go forth testifying that God sent his Son, and he died from him, and they rose from the dead, and he's coming again, and the kings of the earth shall wail because of him, and that he will be in charge of the world, and the Lord God omnipotent will reign. They are to go forth telling this, and their witness is to be about him, not idling loaves of baptism, not giving forth profound ideas, but telling about a man, the man who is God.

Only the Holy Ghost can give this testimony. The scripture says, The Spirit shall witness, he shall testify of me.

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