

# The True Witness

by Carter Conlon

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*The true witness is having an inner witness of God's life in us, which is the power of God's Holy Spirit living inside of us.*

**Duration:** 29:08

**Scripture:** John 5:31

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Inner Transformation"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having the witness of God's Spirit within us, not just external belief, to truly experience the transformative power of Christ. It highlights the distinction of the Christian message in having Christ indwell believers, bringing about a miraculous life of change and victory. The speaker shares a personal testimony of encountering God's transformative power and invites others to open their hearts to Jesus Christ for forgiveness, new life, and eternal hope.

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## Transcript

I want to talk to you for just a few moments about the true witness, the true witness in an unusual verse of scripture in John chapter 5, verses 31 and 32. It used to perplex me a little bit, these two verses, but I understand it a little bit better today. Jesus said, if I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

There's another who bears witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesses of me is true. Now that's an amazing thought. We'll come back to that in just a moment.

But I'm thinking about today, it's Easter Sunday, a time when you and I gather to bear witness to a historical event, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Son of God was crucified, went into the grave, and on the third day, by the power of God, was raised from the dead. And our presence here today indicates that we believe this to be true.

Do you believe it's true? I would venture a guess that most everybody here, and the 600 fellowships online, and the Annex in North Jersey, and anybody visiting us today on the internet from around the world, I would venture a guess you believe that it's true, or at least in your heart you hope it is. But what if I told you that our assent to this fact, even though we're numbering in the thousands, is not enough in itself, unless we have within ourselves the witness of the one who gives life to all things. That's what Jesus meant when he said, if there's no interior witness, if it's just me talking about myself, and there's no interior witness of God, the life of God, being manifested through me, then my witness is not true.

Because remember, he said, I and the Father are one. If there were no witness of the Father, if there were no witness of the power of the Holy Spirit within his life, then it would be a false witness in a sense, if all it was was just about him. Paul the Apostle says in 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 13, he said, I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things.

And this is the essence of the Christian message, and what distinguishes it from every other form of religion. There is a difference between the message of Christ and the message of every religion that's available to humankind on the face of the earth. Paul says it this way in Colossians chapter 1 verses 26 and 27.

He said, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to his saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Paul was saying there's a mystery, and those who live outside the kingdom of God don't fully understand it.

But God has chosen to make it known through those of us who do know him as Lord and Savior. That God Almighty in the form and power of his Holy Spirit, not only is willing to save us because of the cross, but is willing to indwell us and transform us from the inside out. The Christian life is a miraculous life.

It is not a life that should be hidden from this or any other generation. And if you have Christ in you, the hope of glory, that is God's way of telling this generation that Christ indeed rose from the dead, that he is alive. He sits at the right hand of all power and all authority and has invited us in himself to sit there in victory with him.

Paul said to the Ephesians in chapter two, and you he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins. You remember those days, don't you? When you tried hard to be different, you tried hard to be good, but there was a law working inside of your body. Paul talks about it in the book of Romans that was constantly pulling you down into forms of behavior that you knew were wrong, but you were powerless to change who you were and try as you might to change.

You were getting worse. Your temper was getting worse. Your depression was going deeper.

The selfishness was growing inside of you. It was like a law of something inside that was no matter how hard you tried, it just continually had you in its grasp and was drawing you down into that which you did not want to be. In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.

Among whom you also, we once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature, children of wrath, just as the others. In other words, we were caught in this cycle, this inner power of being lost and without God, that was drawing us down farther and farther and farther away to a place ultimately where we would live in eternity without God. As horrific as that is, I don't think our minds can fully comprehend what it would be like to be in a place forever where God is not.

The Bible describes it as a place of torment, describes it as a place of anguish and fire, a place where the darkness is so thick you can touch it with your hands. A place where there's a total complete absence of hope for the future, of comfort, of any kind of life, of any kind of resolution. And that is the place that awaits those who do not have Christ as their Lord and Savior and have no inner witness inside of the presence of

God living inside of their lives and inside of their hearts.

But Paul says, but God who is rich in mercy because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ for by grace you have been saved and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ. By God's grace we have been made alive. He rose from the dead on the third day.

And Paul said in Romans chapter 8 verse 11, if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you. We sang it, Colin sang it this morning. Oh, thank God I am born again.

Who can say that this morning? Thank God forgiven through the sacrifice of Christ and born again, brought back to life, raised from the dead through the inner power of God, lifting me and lifting you out of darkness and into the light of his life. The greatest truth you will ever hear in your lifetime. There will never be a greater truth than this that you will ever hear.

Search every encyclopedia you can lay your hands on. Go on the internet and search the volumes of human accomplishment and knowledge and you will never find a greater truth than you are hearing right now. Jesus Christ, the son of God, died to pay for the wrong things that you have done and was raised by the power of God from the grave to prove to you that whoever trusts in him will be not only forgiven but raised out of the power of death and be brought into the power of his endless life.

If all we are today is a gathering of people who say we are Christians and we have no evidence of the transformative power of God within us then our witness is not true. There are people all over the world today who meet and proclaim to be followers of Christ but there is no evidence. Remember Jesus said if I bear witness in myself, my witness is not true.

If I say I am a Christian and there is no power of God inside of my life. If I say I am a Christian and I am still living in my old value system. I still think the way I used to think.

I still do what I used to do. The Bible says that when we are in Christ we are given a new nature and the old things in our lives are passed away and behold the scripture says all things are become new. There is a new fuel source inside of us.

There is a new value system inside of us. There is a new power to accomplish the will of God for our lives. We don't want to do the things that we used to do and we have a power now to move in the direction that God is calling us in.

That's the witness. If I bear witness in myself my witness is not true. In other words if there is nothing inside of me, Jesus was saying it himself, that proves what I say then don't believe me.

But there is another who bears witness of me and I know that the witness which he witnesses of me is true. Christ in you Paul said the hope of glory. Christ in you transforming, changing, renewing, giving hope, breaking the bondage of sin, giving you the power to endure any storm, bringing you through to the end with faith, putting power in your speech to move darkness back and to see light and life come into the hearts of men and women who are captivated by darkness.

That's what Jesus was saying in our opening text. There is another life operating within mine that bears witness that I have a relationship with and have been sent of God. I have been made alive Paul says and

raised up with Christ.

Jesus Christ has been raising people from the dead for 2,000 years. He raised me from the dead in 1978 at the age of 24 years old. I remember going on my honeymoon with my wife to Europe and I was so afraid of flying that I went to church before we left to go to Europe.

And I thought if the plane should go down on the journey at least when I get to the pearly gates I can say well obviously you're aware I was in church before I undertook this journey. Thinking erroneously that being in church was good enough. You see it wasn't good enough because I was still the same inside when I left as when I went in because it was just an experience and it was a nice experience.

I felt good in that building but you see I left it behind because it wasn't inside of me. It was only after coming back after a six week search throughout Europe for the presence and the person of God that I met another Christian who showed me and told me the things that I'm telling you today. And he spoke this incredible verse to me which I never forgot.

It was wonderful that Christ died for my sin and I loved that concept but there was a deeper concept that really got a hold of my heart. He said if Christ is in you, you become a new person. All the limits on your previous existence are gone.

The whole box that was built around you, you built around yourself, the sides just all fall and now there's no limit to what God can do through your life. He told me that the Bible promises that you will have a new heart, a new mind and a new spirit. Now I was getting through life not too bad.

A lot of people would have looked and said well he's got a lot going for him but I knew at the end of the day what I didn't have going for me. I knew I was turning to whiskey more and more every day for the inner peace that seemed to elude me. I knew the pills that I was taking.

I knew how selfish I was and angry in my marriage. I knew that I would never be a good father because I was too inherently selfish to wanting to live for myself. I knew that it was a cage I could never get out of.

But one day I pulled over on the side of the road and I prayed a simple prayer. I said oh God if this is true what my friend is telling me about you, if I can be forgiven and if I can have a new life on this earth then I open my heart to you and I invite you to come into my life and be my Lord and my Savior. Now I didn't hear any bells and whistles go off.

I didn't get a tingly feeling, nothing. I didn't feel anything. I just went to work.

I worked my shift. I went home. I went to bed.

It was the next morning. I got up and I remember it as if it was yesterday. I rolled out of bed, put my feet on the floor and by the grace of God I knew I was a different person.

Something had happened to me inside, not outside, inside. Something had happened. The Spirit of God had come.

And now I had desires. I was a cop back then. I remember giving somebody a ticket and I felt bad for the first time in my life.

I'd never felt bad before. You know when something has happened inside of you. I looked at my wife differently.

I looked at my son differently. I started looking at life differently. It was somewhat of a strange experience in the beginning.

I look in the mirror and think, who's living inside of me? What's happening to me? Why am I so different? Why am I changing so radically? It's Christ in you, Paul said, the hope of glory. It's God bearing witness inside of your body that you now belong to him and that he is going to change you from the inside out into not what sin was making you into but what God designed you to be. That is what Easter is all about.

That's what makes this a happy occasion. Oh, thanks be to God. And what a journey this has been.

What a miracle. After miracle, after miracle, as we heard sung today, expect a miracle. Don't come into church just expecting a feel-good time.

Expect a miracle. Expect God to do what only God can do. You know, there's some people here today that you're in the place that I used to be in.

You make your annual pilgrimage or semi-annual pilgrimages to church. Some people only go to church when they're hatched, they're matched, and they're dispatched. They get dedicated, they get married, and they get buried in the church, and they show up for the odd Easter and Christmas service.

But folks, it's deeper than that. I'm not trying to get you to join the church. We're already full.

I'm trying to get you to open your heart to Jesus Christ and let Him come in and be the Lord and the Savior of your life. Let Him raise you out of the power of death and give you life. That's what He said He will do.

He said you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Some people here today this morning say, well, you know, I'm doing pretty good. What do I need to be set free from? Just give it a bit of time.

You'll know. And don't think we have a million tomorrows. You're watching the news lately.

You might realize of all the people in the world, New Yorkers should be the most concerned about eternity. We don't know how long we have. But I do know that if you open your heart to Jesus Christ, you have an eternity with God.

You have an eternity to sing the songs and some that you've never even heard the way we sang today. You have an eternity to clap your hands, to worship, to say, God, thank you that I have the sense in my heart in April in New York City in 2017 to say, Jesus, I want to make you Lord of my life. You'll never regret it.

You will never regret it. The question now is, if you know this truth, now what do you do? Do you walk away and say, well, that was interesting, but not for me, not now? Or do you open your heart and say, Jesus, if you died for me and you were raised from the grave as proof to me that if I trust in you, I will not only be forgiven, but I will be given life. The life you have for me, the life you've always longed that I should know.

I will be brought into the power of that life and I will sit with you in a place of victory, not only here in time, but forever, forever, forever, and ever. I want to challenge you with all my heart today. For those that are

listening online, for those that are in the NX and everywhere else, the time is short and God is calling.

I want to challenge you to open your heart to Jesus Christ and let him become the Lord and the Savior of your life. It's as simple as a prayer, a prayer like I prayed, God Almighty, if this is true, I open my heart to you and I invite you to come into my life and be my Lord and my God and my Savior. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

If you're without Christ, you're already living on the losing side. You have nothing to lose, everything to gain. Is there somebody here this morning or in the NX that would say, Pastor, you're speaking to my heart.

I believe in the resurrection, but the resurrection of Christ is not inside of me yet. I need to be set free. I need to have the power of God inside my life, not just for today, but forever.

I'm caught in a spiral of sin and I can't get out. Or maybe you're just aware that you need a Savior today. If you're here and that's you today and you want to just pray a simple prayer with me, that's all we're going to do today.

Inviting Jesus Christ, not a concept of Christ, not a religion, but actually inviting God to live inside of you and be your Lord and your Savior. If you would like to do that today and join me in praying that kind of a prayer, would you just raise your hand wherever you are? Go ahead, God bless you. All over, just raise your hand up in the balcony.

God bless you. You will never be the same again. You will never be the same again.

Everyone who raised your hand, you'll never be the same again. Let Jesus Christ come into your life. Let him be your Lord.

Let him be your Savior. We're going to stand. In just a moment, we're going to sing another song.

And as we do, everyone who raised your hand and those who should have raised your hand, I'm going to ask you to slip out of your seat and just come and join me here at the front of this auditorium. Then we're going to pray that prayer together. You're coming out and you're making a public statement.

You're saying, I am choosing to open my heart to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. And by the grace of God, by the goodness of God, I'm going to live for God and let God live through me. Would you join those that are already coming? Let's stand in the balcony.

Go to either exit in the main sanctuary. Slip out. Just join those that are coming.

Praise God. Just join them. Slip out now.

Make your way down. God bless you. God bless.

Come on in. Come on in close. God bless you so much.

Just keep coming, folks. Just keep coming. Give your life to Jesus today.

And don't anybody here say, no, I'm too bad. I'm too far gone. I'm too far down.

That's a lie. That's not true. Jesus himself said, I came not to call those that already got it all together.

I came to call sinners to salvation. That's who he came for. Come on in real close.

Let's move in. Just make your way down. If you're here with a family member, would you just turn to a friend and just say, if you want to go down, I'll go with you.

Just do that right now. To your friend, or maybe you have no friends with you, just turn to the person beside you and say, if you're not saved, I'll go down with you. Come on, do it now.

Do it now. Church is not a place for cowards. Come on in.

Come on in close. Come on in close. Just keep coming, folks.

Just keep coming. For heaven's sake, keep coming. Oh, God, yes.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God Almighty.

One day we're going to gather at the throne of God and we're going to give thanks for this day. We're going to shout and jump and dance. You're going to be so glad you made this choice today.

Praise God. When you open your heart to Jesus Christ and ask him to forgive you of the wrong that you've done, you understand that he died on the cross in your place. In your place.

Only you. If you were the only one that would ever open your heart to him, he still would have died on the cross just for you. That's the depth of his love.

And when you open your heart, you make a way now for God, through his own Holy Spirit, to come and indwell you. This is what's going to happen at this altar. God's Holy Spirit is going to come.

And the one that raised Christ from the dead will also quicken you, give life to your mortal body, and you will become a new person. The old fuel source will lose its power, and the power of a new life will be unleashed within you. And line by line, little by little, step by step, you will become the person God designed you to be and destined you to be.

It's amazing the transformation that will take place in your life. Now we're going to pray. Would you lift your hands? Just raise your hands and surrender to God.

And pray this prayer with me. Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that you're the Son of God.

And I believe that you died to pay the price for the wrong things that I have done so that I could be forgiven, that you could live inside of me, and heaven will be my home. I open my heart to you today. I invite you to come into my life, sit on the throne of my heart, and be my God, the one who forgives me, and be my God, the one who changes me from the inside out.

I surrender my life to you. I surrender my past and my future, all that I am and ever will be. I put it all into your hands.

And I ask you, Lord Jesus Christ, to make something beautiful out of my life for your glory so that others can know that you are God. You are the living God. I believe that right now you are claiming me as your own.

Your Holy Spirit is coming to me to live inside of me. And from this day forward, I am forgiven. I am a child of God, and heaven will be my home.

And I believe this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Praise God. Praise God. Praise God.

Praise God. Praise God. Now, let me pray for you.

Everyone who's at the front of this auditorium today and down the aisles, let me pray for you. Oh, God, in Jesus' name, I ask, Lord, for these men and women and these little ones also that are here. Father, I ask in Jesus' name, God, that you seal this work that you've done in every heart by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Give everyone here the courage to go forward and not backwards ever again. Give them the understanding, Lord, that you are willing to change everyone. Some quickly, some take more time, but you are willing to change everyone and to make every person into that which you have destined them to be.

We bind every work of darkness, every voice of hell that will come against these men and women and try to draw them back into that sea of lostness. We come against it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. God, we thank you for saving to the uttermost those that have come to you today, Lord.

Thank you, God, for a new song, a new heart, a new mind, a new spirit, an awareness that you have come, an awareness, Lord, that you're no longer on the outside, you're now on the inside, an awareness, God, a witness of the Spirit that these are children of God. And so, Father, we thank you. Thank you, God, with all of our heart today, Lord.

We put them all into your hands. You are the faithful creator. You are the one who's able to keep everything that's given to you, Lord, and you will lose none and bring them home at that last day.

Lord, we thank you, God. We thank you. We thank you.

We thank you. Open everyone's understanding. Help them to understand your word.

Show them your promises, O God. Show them that they are new creations in Christ Jesus. God Almighty.

God Almighty. Be God Almighty to them today. Be that witness, O God, in the heart.

Father, we thank you for it with all of our heart, and we praise you, and we bless you in Jesus' mighty name. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God.

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