

Witnessing for Christ

by Catherine Booth

God needs witnesses to represent Him in a world that is in revolt against Him, and faithful witnesses must have personal knowledge of the facts, tell the truth and the whole truth, and speak out without mincing the matter.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, Acts 5:32, 2 Timothy 1:8, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Evangelism", "Discipleship"

Description

Catherine Booth preaches about the importance of being faithful witnesses for God in a world that is in rebellion against Him. She emphasizes the need for believers to testify to the truth of God's saving power and to be good witnesses by living out their faith consistently. Catherine Booth highlights the necessity of personal knowledge of the Gospel, speaking the whole truth boldly, and testifying before others, even in the face of opposition or uncertainty. She shares her personal testimony of overcoming fear and timidity to become a powerful witness for God, encouraging others to do the same.

Transcript

ACTS i. 8 (latter clause).--"Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

ACTS v. 32.--"And we are His witnesses of these things."

AGAIN and again the same vocation and commission is bestowed upon the apostles and disciples. To the ends of the earth and to the end of time this commission comes down to every one of the Lord's own, for He says: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." That embraces us. And to every disciple who has preceded, or is to follow us, is promised His Divine Presence in this glorious work of testifying for Him.

God needs witnesses in this world.

Why? Because the whole world is in revolt against Him. The world has gone away from God. The world ignores God, denies and contradicts His testimony, misunderstands His character, government, and purposes, and is gone off into utter and universal revolt and rebellion. Now if God is to keep any hold upon man at all, and have any influence with him, He must be represented down here. There was no other way of doing it. If a province of this realm were in anarchy and rebellion, unless there be some persons in the province whose duty it is to represent the Queen and her Government, it will lapse altogether and be lost

to the kingdom for ever. So God must be represented, and, praise His name, He has had His faithful witnesses from the beginning until now. As the Apostle says, "He left not Himself without witness." Down from the days of Enoch, who walked with God, to this present hour, God has always had His true and faithful witnesses. In the worst times there have been some burning and shining lights. Sometimes few and far between, sometimes, like Noah, one solitary man in a whole generation of men, witnessing for God--but one, at least, there has been. God has not left Himself without witness.

But Jesus Christ the Son--the well-beloved of the Father--He was the great witness. He came especially to manifest, to testify of, and to reveal the Father to men. This was His great work. He came not to testify of Himself, but of His Father, not to speak His own words, but the words His Father gave Him to speak. He came to reveal God to men. He was the "Faithful and True Witness." And when He had to leave the world and go back to His Father, then He commissioned His disciples to take His place, and to be God's witnesses on earth. And Oh! friends, God's real people are His only witnesses. He will not allow angels--we do not know why--to witness for Him here. He has called man to witness for Him, His people, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me."

Jesus "witnessed a good confession," did he not? He witnessed nobly, consistently, bravely, of His Father, and sealed His testimony with His blood. The world treated Him as it has treated most of God's faithful witnesses from the beginning; it persecuted Him; it slew Him, as it would every faithful witness for God--if God allowed it--and would leave itself without a single spiritual light: for the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience hath an eternal and devilish hatred of every real, living, spiritual child of God. It hates him as it hated the Son Himself, and it is not the Devil's fault if he does not extinguish and exterminate every such witness. It is because God will not allow him, but holds us, keeps us, saves us, in spite of him.

The Lord commissioned, then, His disciples to be His witnesses, and He said--oh! beautiful words, and yet, how much they involve which few understand." As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so send I them into the world." Even so: as Thou hast sent Me to be Thy representative in the world, to spend and be spent for Thee, and shed My blood for Thee, if necessary, so send I them and so He did send them, and they had just the same fare as their Master, and many of them just the same end. But they were faithful witnesses, and they went forward and testified everywhere, to the Jews and to the Gentiles, in the Temple and in the Market Place, by the wayside and in the highways and hedges--they went and testified of this Saviour, and charged the wicked Jews with His crucifixion, and God accompanied their testimony by the Spirit, and thousands upon thousands were converted--turned from their rebellion to God.

Now, the fact that witnessing is necessary shows that there is controversy going on in the world as to the things and claims of God--that there are two sides to this. The great mass of mankind say, that God's truth is a lie. They say it virtually, if they do not say it in words; and many thousands of them, alas, in words, also. They deny, many of them, His very existence, and say there is neither Heaven nor Hell--that Jesus Christ was a mere man--that religion is a myth, and that there is no such thing as the knowledge of forgiveness of sins--that this witnessing is a grand delusion of the imagination, and nothing further.

Now, Christ calls His people to go and be witnesses to these facts. Witnesses, you know, must deal with facts, not theories--not what they merely think, or suppose, or have heard, but what they know. Now God wants His people to witness to facts--to something that has been done, and is being done--something that is and continues to be fact.

And He wants us to be GOOD witnesses, too. Oh! how much depends upon the character of a witness even in an earthly court. If you can cast a reflection upon the character or the veracity of a witness, you shake his testimony, and take away its value. Oh! how important that Christ's witnesses should be good witnesses--that is, that they should fairly and truly represent Him and His truth--for, if they misrepresent Him, somebody is sure to be damned through their inconsistency--and, how awful to have the blood of souls upon our skirts! To misrepresent a man, or woman, or child, is bad enough, but to misrepresent God!--to show a caricature of the religion of Jesus Christ!--to live a wrong life and still profess to be a Christian, saying to people, virtually, "Look at me the way I live and act--WHAT I Am--this is the religion of Jesus Christ." I say, such a man had far better have a millstone hanged about his neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea. There, would, then, be an end of his mischief; but a false witness on behalf of Jesus Christ is the most mischievous traitor on the face of the earth. He does more harm than a thousand false hostile witnesses against Him. Oh! my friends, to be good witnesses for Jesus Christ. The more a witness is supposed to know of the truth to which he testifies, the greater his responsibility. Oh! for a minister to be a bad witness, as some of the prophets of old were. Look at the awful things God says about them that lead His people into the ditch, caring more about the fleece than the sheep--awful! For a mother to be a bad witness in her family, and to take her little children, clinging on to her skirts, right to the edge of the pit! For a master to be a bad witness--to profess to be a Christian, and to be a bad witness before his men; for a Sunday school teacher to be a bad, inconsistent, false witness of Jesus Christ in his class; for members of Christian churches to be bad witnesses to one another, and to the world; who can tell the awful results? Oh! it is this inconsistent witnessing that has lowered and lowered the standard of practical Christianity till we have not got any standard left--till the landmarks are so obliterated, that there are not any to be seen.

FAITHFUL witnesses! He wants us to be faithful witnesses.

I want to note one or two qualifications of a faithful Witness, and, oh, may the Holy Spirit help us.

The first qualification, then, of a faithful witness, is A personal knowledge of the facts to which he witnesses. If a witness in a court of justice begins to talk of what he thinks, feels, and believes, "Oh! hush, hush," says the judge, "we can't have that; we want to know what YOU KNOW--what you have seen, heard, and felt of this case;" and these are the sort of witnesses Jesus Christ wants, who can get up and say, "I KNOW!" The sort of witness that St. Paul was, who could look his judge in the face and say, "I would that thou wert altogether such as I am, save these bonds." What an impudent man he must have been, if he was not a sanctified man. What a supreme egotist! Those are the sort of witnesses. How Agrippa must have felt, just then. How the tables were turned. "Oh! I am turned into the dock, and here is the prisoner taking his seat upon the bench." That is the sort of witnessing we want. "I would that thou wert altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Could you stand up in the dock and say that? Could you stand up in your own house and say it? Could you stand up anywhere and say it? That is what the Lord Jesus Christ wants people who know, who experience, who realize, who live the things they witness to. This is what the world is dying for--people who can get up and say, "I KNOW." The Lord wants people to tell the world they are saved. Can you? They will begin to listen to you then. You will begin to have some effect on them. They will begin to open their eyes and ears, and wonder whether it will be possible for God to save them. This is altogether different from a finespun theory about religion--this telling them that God has SAVED You. Not what we have learned in books. The world is sick of that. I don't wonder at intelligent men flying off from religion. I can make great excuse when I think what many of them have to listen to from Sunday to Sunday. As a gentleman said to me, 'It's enough to sicken anybody. We do get something in The Times, but, upon my word, I can't keep awake at church. It is not that I would not, if I could, but I can't.'

Poor fellow! how I pitied him.

No! not what is got from books; not a dry, finespun theory, from mere hearsay. When a witness begins with what he heard someone say, 'Oh, hush! says the judge, 'we don't want that, we want to know what you have seen. Keep to the facts.' Jesus Christ wants you to keep to the facts. Tell them, as John says, what you have seen, and heard, and handled, and realized of the truth of God. Personal knowledge! It is wonderful how simple salvation language is, when you have learnt it by experience and are prepared to speak plainly to the people.

Then, a faithful witness must tell the truth, and the whole truth. He must not hold back anything on account of personal inconvenience, suffering, loss, or gain, but must tell the whole truth. Oh! I tremble to think what will be the fate of some who set themselves up as teachers, and who have "kept back part" of the truth because, to their apprehension, it was not palatable or profitable to mankind. What have I got to do with that? I have to preach the truth--the beautiful, whole, round, diamond, luminous with Divine light, and not a base, muddy, paste imitation, half truths manufactured into damning errors, by which Satan is decoying thousands to Hell. Give men the whole truth--both sides: the side that relates to God; and the side that relates to man; and be done with the nonsense of making God contradict Himself, for "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." If there were contradictions, there would be darkness. No; the darkness is in our own poor, blind, puny brains, and not in God or in His Book. In His Book, rightly interpreted, there is no contradiction whatsoever. The whole truth: the convicting truth as well as the healing truth; the sword as well as the balm; the running in of the Divine knife as well as the pouring in of the Divine oil. As Paul says, in the 26th chapter and 18th verse, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins." He says he preached to the Jews and Gentiles that they should repent. This is the Apostle Paul, the great expounder of Justification by Faith, "That they should repent," and what?--oh, you legal Paul, what? "Do works meet for repentance." Oh, Paul, I thought you were saved from works altogether, and had done with the Law. Oh! you preach works, and doing works meet for repentance. That is not Gospel, Paul! He significantly adds, "For this cause the Jews caught me, and tried to kill me:" and for that cause the Pharisees have been trying to kill God's true, whole-truth witnesses ever since, for they don't like the doctrine that cuts idols and sin in twain, and that says, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance."

The faithful witness must give the whole truth and he must give it personally, too. A faithful witness must give it himself. He can't witness by proxy. He may pay one hundred and fifty evangelists to go and witness in his place: that is all right. It is no more than he ought to do--two hundred and fifty, if he has money enough--because the Master claims all that he has, little or much, every farthing of it, however many preachers he may send and maintain.

Therefore, he can never do any more than he ought, but that will not exonerate him from the personal obligation. God will say to him: If I have put my candle in you, it is that it may shine for somebody else's benefit. If I have given you the bread of life, it is for you to go and break it to the famishing multitudes round about you. YE are my witnesses. You may pay the minister and the missionary, but you must do it yourself, too, for how can one witness make up for two? True, God wants the minister to witness, and it is no more than his duty if he witnesses all day long as long as he lives. But that will never make up for your lack of service. YOU must witness; and there are some souls with whom you have more influence than any other living being--some souls that you can better get at than any other person--some souls that, if you do not save, will, probably, never be saved at all. Ye are my witnesses, and, if ye have the grace and love and light of God, it is at the peril of your soul if you hide it.

Then, in the next place, faithful witnesses must speak out, not mince the matter--not "mumble," as they say in court. The judge makes the witness speak up so that everybody may hear him. He must be heard. "Speak out." And why should not the Lord's witnesses speak out? I wonder when we shall be done with this sneaking, hole-and-come, shame-faced religion! I wonder when Christian England will cease to be ashamed of its God!! The only nation under Heaven ashamed of its religion and its God is the one that has got the true God to worship and to love. What an anomaly; Speak out!!

David knew nothing about this mincing, half-and-half, milk-and-water sort of religion. David rejoiced to tell of his righteousness before the great congregation. He was always telling about His goodness, and His Law, and singing about it all the day long, dancing before the ark sometimes, and doing all manner of demonstrative things to glorify his God. And that was not enough, for when he had called upon all human kind to praise Him, he called on the hills and the trees to clap their hands and to dance for joy. We want some of that sort of religion nowadays. Talk of the new dispensation, I wish we could get a bit of the old one back.

The interests of truth demand this out-spokenness. How is error to be met but by the bold proclamation of the truth? How are the emissaries of Satan palming upon mankind his lies--always at it, night and day--how are they to be silenced but by witnesses faithfully crying in their ears, "This is a lie, and that is a lie. This is the truth and this is the way; we know, we see, we feel--walk ye in it." Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? They want out-spoken witnesses. There are plenty of false witnesses now, as there ever were, and what does Jesus Christ want? He wants His true witnesses to come out and face them, and be a match for them--not to sneak away in holes and corners, and be ashamed of their religion, and talk about an "unobtrusive religion" unobtrusive nonsense. There is no such thing! Come out before the world. As Elijah said, "If the Lord be God, follow Him, serve Him, speak for Him; "but if Baal" be God, "then follow him." Then away with all this nonsense, your sanctuaries, and Bibles, and profession--have done with it all and follow Baal. Be one thing or the other. Methinks there wants an Elijah now to come and ring it through all England. I would like to see any man get up and make a straightforward recognition of, and appeal to, God in our Houses of Parliament, and I would like to see how he would be greeted.

I was thinking, as I was passing the Royal Exchange and saw on the top, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," how many believed it who walked beneath its shadow. I wonder what anyone would be thought of, were he practically to recognize the fact. 'Oh!' they would say, 'he's not fit for his post--you'll have to take him away; he's a little affected in his head.' Oh! you know it is so; but God is not mocked, though men think He is. God sits in the circle of Heaven, and though the people do rage, and the heathen imagine a vain thing, and the kings of the earth set themselves, He is laughing at them, and by-and-by will come their calamity.

We say the world is dying; what for? Sermons? No. Periodicals? No. Religious stories? Oh! dear no. There is no chance of a want of them for many a long year to come. Dying for disquisitions? No. For fine-spun theories? No. For creeds and faiths? Oh! you might have them by the dozen. What is it dying for?--downright, straightforward, honest, loving, earnest testimony about what God can DO FOR SOULS. That is what it wants. That is what those poor men in the shops, those walking up and down Oxford Street, in the theatres, in the dancing saloons, in the concert rooms, everywhere, that is what men want: somebody to come and take them lovingly by the collar, and tell them that GOD IS GOD, and that He can save them. 'He has saved me, my brother, and He can save you!' That is what the world wants. One word like that is better than a sermon, and it will do more for God and the salvation of the world. Oh, yes, men are saying, in fact all over this land--thousands, 'Here I am; I am a poor slave of sin. I know it.' They say it

in their consciences, though they do not say it to you. They say it often to us when they are pushed into a corner by the sword of the Spirit. 'I know I am wrong, sinful, wicked.' As that dear John Allen, whose life I have been telling about, said once when sitting swearing, surrounded by his companions, and somebody said to him, 'Jock, if you were to die, what would become of you?' 'I should go to hell, straight!' He was an honest fellow. He knew where he was going, and he said it.

I said to a gentleman, 'Mr. So-and-so, what about your soul?' He said, 'It's in a devilish state.' Poor man! He knew where he was going, and there are thousands like him. Do you think they don't feel their bondage? Have they not got a mind and a conscience? Have they not a better side, as you call it, to their nature? Has not God flashed the light of His Holy Spirit upon their dark souls, and have they not struggled and striven? Yes, but they say, 'There is no health in us; there is no help for us. We have done making resolutions and trying to be better; we cannot. There is no hope in us.' And there they are waiting for somebody to come and tell them there is **HELP IN GOD**. They say, 'I see precious little difference in you religious folks. I have never known anybody that religion has seemed to do much for.' And, when they are told to believe, they laugh at you, and I don't wonder at it. The poor human conscience is better instructed than many of its teachers. It wants to be put **RIGHT**, and it says, 'Is there any hope? Can God save such as I am? Has He saved anybody like me from this thralldom, from this slavery, from this misery, from this constantly going down in the mud? Did He ever save anybody **LIKE ME**? And sometimes he goes to chapel or church, and hopes the minister will tell him, when lo, he begins a dissertation about the resurrection, or the divinity of Christ, or something the man has believed all his life, and so he is disappointed again, and he says, 'This is of no use to me.' Oh! friends, I speak the things I know from testimony of scores of souls. In fact, I could not repeat it, it would make your faces burn to hear what men of intelligence, thought, and standing have said to me in many an ante-room where I have been labouring. It is time there was a change. The world is famishing for lack of real spiritual bread. It wants something to eat, and you give it a stone! but God is raising a people who know what it wants and how to give it, who know how to break the bread of life, and testify what God has done for them, and what He can do for other poor famishing souls; who can go and say: 'Here my friend, He can save such as you. I was such a one once. I was a slave of sin, the slave of drink, or a blasphemer, or a liar, or a thief, or addicted to some bad secret habit worse than any of these. I was such a slave, and He has saved me. He has broken my fetters and set me free, and I am the Lord's free-man. He has saved me and He can save you,' That is what the world wants--**TESTIMONY WITNESSING**.

Has He saved any of you? Are you testifying to your poor, famishing, sinking fellow-men? Do you ever look at them and think where they are going? Do you pity them, love them, long after them in the bowels of Jesus Christ? Do you know anything of that longing? If so, how can you forbear testifying? "Ye are my witnesses of these things," everywhere, at all times, amongst all people!!

It is in the nature of the case that a witness must witness before other people, before living hearers. That is the place to witness, and before enemies, and when he does not know which way the wind will blow, or how the words of God will be received. He must be a true witness, even if he has to seal his testimony with his blood.

This was the kind of witnessing the martyrs did. I often wonder whether there would be any martyrs now. Sometimes I think that the greatest boon to the Church of Christ would be a time of persecution. I believe it would. I believe it would drive us up to God and each other. We should find out, then, whether we were willing to forsake all to follow Him. You know that if the martyrs had taken the standard of religious life that exists now, they would never have been martyrs. They would have looked after their own skins, and left

the Lord to look after the Gospel. If they might have been allowed a little latitude, and gone halfway, there would not have been any martyrs, because they could nearly all have got off with that; but they felt it necessary to be faithful right through, and to stand by the whole truth to the very last jot and tittle, and when they could have got off by saying three words on a paper, they refused to do it, and went to the stake, and let the flames lick up their blood. Those are the witnesses the Lord wants outside, everywhere, always at it. Always witnessing. 'Always,' you say. Yes; always. Why? Because men are always dying and being damned! If the Bible is true--everywhere--your friends and your neighbours around you. You get a letter: 'Oh! Mr. So-and-so is dead--only ill three days--thirty-six hours--twenty-four hours--gone!' Ah! and the echo in many a soul afterwards is, what would I give for a chance to go and have one talk with him. But he's gone--somewhere! Where is he gone? If he were unwashed and unpardoned and unsaved--where is he gone? I got so wrought up once upon this point that I thought I should have lost my reason. I could not sleep at night with thinking of the state of those who die unsaved. Dare I think about it? WHERE IS HE GONE? Oh! it was this view of the case that led me to open my mouth first in public for God.

I have promised some friends here tonight to give this illustration from my own experience, or else I rarely refer to it. I had long had a controversy on this question in my soul. In fact, from the time I was converted, the Spirit of God had constantly been urging me into paths of usefulness and labour, which seemed to me impossible. Perhaps some of you would hardly credit that I was one of the most timid and bashful disciples the Lord Jesus ever saved. For ten years of my Christian life my life was one daily battle with the cross--not because I wilfully rejected, as many do, for that I never dared to do.

Oh, no! I used to make up my mind I would, and resolve and intend, and then, when the hour came, I used to fail for want of courage. I need not have failed. I now see how foolish I was, and how wrong; but, for some four or five months before I commenced speaking, the controversy had been signally roused in my soul which God had awakened years before, but, which, through mistaken notions, fear, and timidity, I had allowed almost to die out. I was brought to very severe heart-searchings at this time.

I had not been realizing so much of the Divine presence. I had lost a great deal of the power and happiness I once enjoyed. During a season of sickness, one day it seemed as if the Lord revealed it all to me by His Spirit. I had no vision, but a revelation to my mind. He seemed to take me back to the time when I was fifteen and sixteen, when I first gave my heart to Him. He seemed to show me, all the bitter way, how this one thing had been the fly in the pot of ointment, the bitter in the cup, and prevented me from realizing what I should otherwise have done.

I felt how it had hindered the revelation of Himself to me, and hindered me from growing in grace, and learning more of the deep things of God. He showed it to me, and then I remember prostrating myself upon my face before Him, and I promised Him there in the sick room: 'Lord, if Thou wilt return unto me, as in the days of old, and re-visit me with those urgings of Thy Spirit which I used to have, I will obey, if I die in the attempt. I care not; I will obey.' However, the Lord did not re-visit me immediately.

He let me recover, and I went out again. About three months after that I went to the chapel of which my husband was a minister, and he had an extraordinary service. Even then he was ever trying something new to get the outside people. They were having a meeting in which ministers and friends in the town were taking part, and all giving their testimony and speaking for God. I was in the minister's pew, with my eldest boy, then four years old, and there were some thousand people present.

I felt much more depressed than usual in spirit, and not expecting anything particular, but, as the testimonies went on, I felt the Spirit come upon me. You alone who have felt it know what it means. It cannot be described. I felt it to the extremities of my fingers and toes. It seemed as if a voice said to me, 'Now, if you were to go and testify, you know I would bless it to your own soul as well as to the souls of the people,' and I gasped again, and I said, in my soul, 'Yes, Lord, I believe Thou wouldst, but I cannot do it.'

I had forgotten my vow--it did not occur to me at all. All in a moment, after I had said that to the Lord I seemed to see the bedroom where I had lain, and to see myself as though I had been there prostrate before the Lord promising Him that, and then the voice seemed to say to me, 'Is this consistent with that promise?' and I almost jumped up and said, 'No, Lord, it is the old thing over again, but I cannot do it,' and I felt as though I would sooner die than do it. And then the Devil said, 'Besides, you are not prepared to speak.

You will look like a fool, and have nothing to say.' He made a mistake. He overdid himself for once. It was that word settled it. I said, 'Ah! this is just the point. I have never yet been willing to be a fool for Christ, now I will be one;' and without stopping another moment, I rose up in the seat, and walked up the chapel. My dear husband was just going to conclude. He thought something had happened to me, and so did the people. We had been there two years, and they knew my timid, bashful nature.

He stepped down to ask me. 'What is the matter, my dear.' I said, 'I want to say a word,' He was so taken by surprise, he could only say, 'My dear wife wants to say a word,' and sat down. He had been trying to persuade me to do it for ten years. He and a lady in the church, only that very week, had been trying to persuade me to go and address a little cottage meeting, of some twenty working people, but could not. I got up--God only knows how--and if any mortal ever did hang on the arm of Omnipotence, I did.

I felt as if I were clinging to some human arm--and yet it was a Divine arm--to hold me. I just got up and told the people how it came about. I confessed, as I think everybody should, when they have been in the wrong and misrepresented the religion of Jesus Christ. I told the people, although I had been occupying all the ordinary positions of a minister's wife, though I was young then, I had been doing a great deal more than many an elderly one does in the Church of God, in the way of meeting believers, and visiting and working behind the scenes, so that they had all been regarding me as a very devoted woman, and I told them so.

I said 'I dare say many of you have been looking upon me as a very devoted woman, and one who has been living faithfully to God, but I have come to know that I have been living in disobedience, and to that extent I have brought darkness and leanness into my soul, but I promised the Lord three or four months ago, and I dare not disobey. I have come to tell you this, and to promise the Lord that I will be obedient to the Heavenly vision.'

But oh! how little I saw then what it involved. I never imagined the life of publicity it was going to lead me into, and of trial also; for I was never allowed to have another quiet Sabbath, when I could speak or stand up. All I took there was the present step. I did not see in advance, but the Lord, as He always does, when His people are honest with Him, and obedient, opened the windows of Heaven, and poured out such a blessing, that there was not room to contain it.

There was more weeping, they said, in the chapel that day, than ever there had been before. Many dated a renewal in righteousness from that very moment, and began a life of devotion and consecration to God.

Now, I might have I talked good to them till now, and that would never have happened. That honest confession, coming out and testifying the truth, did what twenty years talk would never have done.

The work went on. Whenever I spoke, the chapel used to be crowded to its utmost capacity, and numbers were converted. Not to me but to God be all the glory. Shame to me that I did not begin sooner. It was not I that did this, but the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit of God.

The Lord dealt with me in a very wonderful way. Three months after this, my dear husband fell sick for the first time, and he was obliged to go away into the country. A deputation waited on me, to ask me to take his town appointments. I said I could not think of such a thing. What could I do with that great congregation? They must not ask me--and away they went. They came back again to know if I would take the nights, they implored and importuned me until I promised. So you see, God forced me to begin to think and work. I was obliged, and I did it with four little children, the eldest then four years and three months old. It looked an inopportune time, did it not, to begin to preach? It looked as though the Lord must have made a mistake. However, He gave me grace and strength, and enabled me to do it; and while I was nursing my baby, many a time I was thinking of what I was going to say next Sunday, and between times noted down with a pencil the thoughts as they struck me. And then I would appear sometimes, with an outline scratched in pencil, trusting in the Lord to give me the power of His Holy Spirit; and I think I can say that from that day and it is about nineteen years and nine months since He has never allowed me to open my mouth without giving me signs of His presence and blessing. Don't you see that while the Devil kept me silent, he kept me comparatively fruitless; now I have ground to hope and expect to meet hundreds in Glory, whom God has made me instrumental in saving. The Lord dealt very tenderly with me: giving me great encouragement, but some things were dreadful to me at first. I would not go into pulpits till the people demanded it. And the first time I saw my name on a wall! I shall never forget the sensation. Then my dear husband said, 'When you gave yourself to the Lord, did you not give Him your name?' Thus he used to go from one thing to another, until now I have learned to glory in the Cross. When a dear friend was talking, the other day, about the tremendous undertaking it was to go to France and begin there; I said, 'My dear sir, I should not feel any more discomposed to go to France, and open there next Sunday, than I should to appear in St. Andrew's Hall, simply for this reason, that I believe God is the same in every place, and the same faith, and the same truths and the same faithfulness will bring Him to our help.' "Ye are my witnesses," saith the Lord, "And, lo, I am with you ALWAYS!"

Will you be encouraged, my sister? Never mind trembling. I trembled. Never mind your heart beating. Mine beat nearly through. Never mind how weak you are. I have gone many a time from the bed to the pulpit, and back from the pulpit to bed. It is not by human power, wisdom, might, or strength--it is by my Spirit, saith the Lord. He loves to use the weak things, that the excellency may be seen to be of God. If your neighbours were sick of some devastating plague, and you could go and help them, would not you do it? Would you say, 'I am only a woman, and I cannot?' 'Oh,' you would say, "let me go, like Miss Nightingale did to the sick and wounded soldiers. Let me go." And these are not the bodies, but the souls. They are dying. They are going to an eternal death. Will you not rise up? Oh! suppose all the Christians in this hall to-night were to begin, from this hour, to be faithful, and consistently testifying everywhere for Jesus, what a commotion there would be! How many, think you, would be converted in a month's time? How would they begin flocking like doves to the windows? How would the ministers, some of them, begin to wake up? The people would go and beseech them morning, noon, and night. God wants you to witness right out everywhere, in the darkest courts and alleys and in Oxford Street alike. Begin, and the Spirit of God will fall upon you, and however they may try to get rid of the Holy Ghost, they will not be able to do it when

God has got hold of them. We catch thousands of people in this way who never intended to be converted. Every day I live, the more I am convinced that if God's people were to be in desperate earnest, thousands would be won; but they are not likely to be won by the genteel fashion of putting the truth before them--so common nowadays--because nobody thinks they are in any danger! If you believe it, begin. The Apostle says you are to be good, valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ: the old Christians were all this; they fought a good warfare, and they overcame the Devil by the "blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." Be soldiers for the Lord, and He will give the victory, and you shall go and take prisoners. Great big giants, black-hearted infidels, black-hearted blasphemers, they shall go down before you like little children, because the Lord of Hosts will put His Spirit in you. "Ye are My

witnesses." Witness! WITNESS!! of Me everywhere and always. The Lord help you. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/catherine-booth/witnessing-for-christ/>

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