

Why a Personal Testimony?

by Dean Stump

Sharing a personal testimony is essential for giving glory to God, making Jesus great to the heathen, and bringing victory over sin.

Duration: 1:26:47

Scripture: John 1:12, Acts 26:1

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of sharing one's personal testimony of how God has changed their heart. They highlight the power of a personal testimony in discipleship and evangelism. The speaker references 1 Corinthians 4:10-16 to explain that sharing our testimony can bring conviction and encouragement to others. They also mention Matthew 5:16, which encourages believers to let their good works shine before others to glorify God. The sermon concludes by urging listeners to boldly share their testimonies and to live a life of service and good works.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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In Jesus' name, as many as believed on Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. I'm reminded of the song that says, Happy Zion, what a favored lot is thine. The second verse of that song, it's too good to pass up right now.

It says, Every human tie may perish, friend to friend unfaithful prove. Mothers cease their own to cherish, heaven and earth at last remove. But no changes can attend Jehovah's love.

No changes can attend Jehovah's love. There is no shadow of turning with our God's love. Let's turn to Acts chapter 26 for a reading of scripture here.

We're going to read the first 28 verses of Acts 26. And let's stand for the reading of the word. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.

Then Paul stretched forth the hand and answered for himself. I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews, especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews. Wherefore, I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify that after the most straightest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which thing I also did in Jerusalem. And many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests. And when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them, and I punished them oft in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme.

And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, but rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send thee, 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 and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but showed first unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem and throughout all the coasts of Judea and then to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple and went about to kill me.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely. For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him, for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the

prophets? I know that thou believest.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, O most, thou persuadest me to be a Christian. Okay, you may be seated. I guess the title of the message this morning is in a question.

Why a personal testimony? And I'd like to first give a little definition to the word testimony. In the Strong's Concordance it says, To give evidence or bear record or honest report or evidence given. Yeah, just evidence given is a testimony.

Evidence given. So when you're called to court, if you are a witness of an accident and you're called to court, you give your testimony of what you have seen. It's a first-hand account.

It's a first-hand authentication of a fact. It's a public profession. Oh, this is from the dictionary.

First-hand authentication of a fact or a public profession of a religious experience. That's what the dictionary says. Personal just means to be affecting yourself.

No one else but yourself. So the question this morning is, why a personal testimony? Why give a testimony? Why give evidence? Why bear record of what is going on in your own heart? This was much on my heart. The matter of bearing or giving a testimony, sharing a testimony, was much on my heart recently because of the testimonies that we were hearing here.

And then Brother Ross shared his testimony and I was blessed by that. Ross and Cynthia there. I was blessed with it and thinking about it.

And then someone else had come to me that day and just shared how much that testimony ministered to them and how it encouraged them. And then on top of that, I had been reading through the book of Acts and my personal devotions and this thing of a personal testimony really started jumping out at me. And I started seeing how much the Apostle Paul shares his personal testimony in the epistles.

Not just the testimony that we have here as he was given an opportunity to speak before King Agrippa, but he is sharing personal testimony, much of it in Corinthians. Hardly a chapter in Corinthians can you find where he is not sharing some personal testimony. And it was sort of an eye-opener to me a bit because I was more of the persuasion that especially over the pulpit, you shouldn't share a whole lot of personal testimony.

It just sort of, I don't know, begets pride or is a sign of pride or something. I mean, because I had heard a preacher one time say, not from here, that he never shares personal experience over the pulpit and would have expressed that he just felt like that is too much of a lifting up of oneself. But while we need to be aware of that, I guess we first of all need to understand what the purpose of a testimony is and what its goal is.

We're not lifting up ourself. We're lifting up God who is working in us and we're giving glory to Jesus. Now, I know you can share a testimony in a way that may bring glory to yourself, but that's not the purpose for a testimony.

And in answer to this question, why a personal testimony? I'll just say at the on start here that it's not to bring glory to yourself. And first of all, I guess I should say that in order for you to be able to share a personal testimony, you first of all must be born again. It's a personal testimony.

It's not a testimony of what God did in your father's life or in your friend's life. It's a testimony of what is going on in your life. Why a personal testimony? Jesus told Nicodemus, you must be born again.

And they read the Scripture here this morning in Family Sharing. If any man is in Christ, he becomes a new creature. And that has to happen in each one of our hearts.

We can't ride on the coattails of our parents, of our friends, of our church. It must be a personal experience in your life in order for it to be effective. So, first of all, you must be born again.

In Revelations 12.11 it says, And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. And they loved not their lives unto the death. So, I guess point number one would be for victory over sin.

Why should you be sharing a personal testimony? And why should you be quick to be sharing your testimony? And why should you be speaking of the things that God is doing in your own life, in your own heart, and what is happening in your life for victory over sin? Are you struggling with sin? Are you being defeated in your Christian life? Is it going up and down and up and down? Jesus says, God tells us here in His Word that a personal testimony, sharing a personal testimony has a lot to do with it. It's one of the secrets. It's one of the keys to having victory in your life.

Opening up your mouth and sharing what God has done in your heart. I don't understand at all what is going on when we share a personal testimony, but I do know that it brings a shoring up, it brings an accountability our way, and it mysteriously brings heaven over our life. It's a means of grace in your life when you open your mouth and share with someone what God has done in your heart, what God has shown to you.

When you open up your mouth, whether it's here, after the service, and you're sharing with someone, look what God has shown me in the Scripture today. Or, I just read through the book of Isaiah, and the Lord has just opened that up to me. I mean, I got remas from this.

God has spoken to me. Or, I had an answer to prayer this week. I asked God for this, and here was the answer.

Not in the way I expected maybe, but God answered my prayer. He has shown Himself to be alive in my heart this week. We need to be doing that.

Otherwise, what happens is, we take for granted the work that God is doing and a cooling off happens. And I speak from experience. I know that there is something happens when we speak of what God is doing in our heart.

That we don't just keep it to ourselves. God wants us to make His name great. And the way that happens, or one of the ways that it happens, is by sharing what God is doing in this soul of mine.

So maybe you came here this morning knowing full well that you didn't live in victory this last week. And maybe you are discouraged about that. And maybe you're wondering, why? Well, are you opening up your mouth and telling others, whether it's the saint, whether it's your brother or sister in the Lord, or whether it's the heathen? Are you opening up your mouth and telling them what God is doing for this soul of mine? So why a personal testimony? Why is it so important? And why did Paul express himself so often of what God was doing in his heart? He understood the secret, or that it's one of the secrets of having victory over

sin in my life.

I wonder how many times I was feeling the cares of life come over my soul, or the oppression of the enemy pressing me down, or just sensing the shame of owning my Lord's name when a personal testimony just broke the clouds away and sent me singing on my way. I don't know how else to say it, but many times I have experienced this. And I know many times that I haven't taken opportunities that I should.

And I am preaching to myself here this morning as well. Another reason to share our testimony. It makes Jesus great to the heathen.

God knows what has an effect upon people's heart. And He doesn't want us to be silent. You know, we're called to preach the Gospel.

And we're called to preach it unapologetically. And preach it for all that it's worth. Regardless of what it has done in your heart or my heart.

But I believe we can only preach it if it has had an effect in our heart. But there's much preaching in Scripture where the apostles preached forth the Word of God, preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But I have to say, as I have this matter of sharing a personal testimony on my heart and read through the Scriptures, it's amazing how often it comes out.

And how often they spoke. When I'm thinking to myself, they wouldn't have had to say that. They wouldn't have had to share their personal experience there.

But God prompted them through the Holy Spirit that it was important that they open up and share their own experience for some purpose. And one of those purposes is to make Jesus great to the heathen. Now, when we share a personal testimony to the unbeliever, it does bring them to a place of decision.

We can see here in Acts 7.56, and I'm so glad Stephen didn't keep his mouth shut here. It has blessed me many times to ponder this, to ponder the reality of life after death. Here in Acts 7.56, when after Stephen had shared his heart, had preached to this angry crowd that wanted to kill him, and they were ready to kill him, they were gnashing on him with their teeth, it says, he being full of the Holy Ghost, in verse 55, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

And the only way we know that is because he shared his personal testimony. And said, Behold, I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. This was his own personal experience.

This wasn't something that he was saying that someone else saw. He was experiencing it, and it brought such a conviction upon the hearers that they had to stop their ears before they could hear another word. And it brought Stephen to his death.

But, it also brought them to a decision. They could no longer stand in a place of indecision when he started sharing his experience. What he was experiencing.

What he was seeing. What God was doing in his heart. Just that little nugget we have there of his testimony.

And it brought such a conviction upon their heart. And I also can't help but think that that was an encouragement to the Apostle Paul many times afterwards because he was there and he heard those words. And one place, he even shares a bit about this experience in one of his testimonies.

One of his many testimonies that he gives, he shares about having been there at Stephen's death and consenting to Stephen's death. And maybe it was an encouragement to him afterwards. And maybe that's why we have so much personal testimony from him.

Because he was so blessed by having been influenced by Stephen's testimony that he wanted to be faithful. At least he was faithful. And the other response that we get is when someone hears a personal testimony, the truth of it, the reality, can't be denied.

If someone is sharing that they have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, then the argument is over. You can be an unbeliever, an infidel, and say there is no God, and argue your point until you're blue in the face. But if I have experienced otherwise, if I have seen heaven open and Christ standing at the right hand of God, the argument is over.

And the truth of that can penetrate into the unbeliever's heart. And as the story is told of William Hone, or his testimony, is that as an unbeliever walking through a town in Wales one day, he saw a young girl sitting on her doorstep reading the Bible. And he made the remark to her as he was passing by, so you're fulfilling your task.

And as if she was putting in her duty and doing what she's instructed by her parents to do, and she said, excuse me? What did you say? So he repeated himself, so you're doing your task. And she said, sir, I'm reading my Bible. This is the greatest pleasure of my day.

And I'm memorizing it right now. I'm here memorizing something because it's the greatest pleasure of my day. And the reality of it just hit his heart, hit his soul.

And as an unbeliever, he could no longer go on his happy merry way thinking there is no God because that was real to that young lady. And he knew it. And the way she expressed herself, he knew that there was something real beating inside that girl's heart.

That was no duty. That wasn't a task she was doing. She wasn't fulfilling some task.

And it's his testimony that that girl's testimony, her being willing to open her mouth and express what was happening inside of her led him to Christ. So, need we say any more? Why a personal testimony? Why should I open up my mouth? Another one that we see in the Apostle Paul's life many times is for encouragement to the saints. How many times have you received encouragement from a testimony? And I would say that that was the reason why this young man was so blessed with Brother Ross' testimony because he shared some of the things that went on in his heart in his Christian experience and some of the struggles that he had with sin and some of the wrestling that he had to do with God and yet the faithfulness of God to break through in his life and give him victory over sin.

And that was a stamp upon that young man's heart that yeah, Brother Ross isn't some special person. He's this person that I only know as this great hero over there on the front lines, but he's a real person just like I am. And he's willing to open up his heart and share his real life with us.

And it was an encouragement. It was a strength to us. In 1 Corinthians 2, 1-4, I like to see as one of those the Apostle Paul knew where his strengths lie and he wasn't about to take glory to himself and he was willing to open up himself and share with the Corinthians here.

It says, And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

And do you think they would have known that if he hadn't told them? And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Now, I don't think he's saying that he got up and preached to them and just mumbled under his breath because he didn't want to be declaring man's wisdom unto them. He spoke with authority.

It says, In demonstration of the Spirit and of power. And I get the picture that Paul preached with every ounce of strength that he had in his body with authority and with power and lifted up his voice and yet he's telling them, he's testifying to them, I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. I knew that in me that is in my flesh dwells no good thing.

And determined that it was going to be nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. So, why a personal testimony? We can encourage the saints. I'd like to read another in 2 Timothy 4. And I would encourage you because we won't be going through all of them, but just to read through the epistles and see how often they shared a personal testimony.

2 Timothy 4, 6-8. Paul is admonishing Timothy, instructing him, passing on the baton to him. And now he says, I am now ready to be offered in the time of my departures at hand.

I have fought a good fight. I personally have fought a good fight. This is my testimony, Timothy.

I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith.

Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing. Now, I don't know what your experience is, but my experience is that I have received much encouragement from that Scripture in my Christian life.

Hearing Paul's testimony, at the end of his life, him looking back over his life and knowing and having no regrets about selling his life out to Christ, having no regrets about laying his life on the line, and as Brother Steve shared here, having that devotion to Christ, turning his heart from the world and from his religion and everything that went with that, all of the prestige and his reputation. He had no regrets here as he came to the end of his life. He's completely surrendered.

He's ready to go home. And he knows, he's confident that there's a crown of righteousness laid up for him. And I'm sure, Timothy got much encouragement from that.

Along with encouragement, when we share a testimony, there's also conviction. Sometimes a testimony, a simple testimony shared from someone's heart, from someone's experience, can bring a conviction upon us, can give us direction in our life like no sermon seems to have done. All of a sudden, it wakes us up and we realize, where am I? What have I been doing? What's going on in my heart? So, it brings a conviction as we saw there in the Apostle Paul's testimony.

What's interesting to me is the two responses are right there from those two different men. You have Festus saying, Paul, you're mad. Much learning doth make thee mad.

And the King of Griffith says, Paul, you almost persuade me to be a Christian. I think we can see there the conviction that is beating in his own breast. So, we have sharing a personal testimony for encouragement, but we also share a personal testimony for conviction.

Still speaking of the believer, in the believer's life, it says in Romans 1.14-16, Paul sharing a personal testimony, I am debtor, both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also. Why? For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

Well, my testimony is that Paul's testimony here has been a conviction in my Christian life. Every time I read that, I'm convicted of my own lethargy. For, look how bold he is.

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. For it is the power of God unto salvation. Why should we be ashamed? So we need to share personal testimony to wake each other up.

You need to share yours with me and I need to share mine with you. We need to sharpen each other with our testimonies and exhort one another with our testimonies. You know, so many times I think we're hindered by thinking that, well, I can't share the Gospel.

I don't know what to say. I don't know how to say it. I'm not good with words.

Well, share your testimony. Did God do something in your heart? Have you been changed by the power of God? Then tell someone. And it doesn't have to be with enticing words of man's wisdom.

Just simply tell someone what God did in your heart. And as we are aware of the need to share our testimony, it also brings the conviction upon our heart to walk with God, that He is real in my heart today. That I have something to share with you as my brother or the person out there on the street that I know God is real because this is what He did in my life today.

Why a personal testimony? For instruction. In 1 Corinthians 4, verses 10-16 I'll read. 1 Corinthians 4, 10-16.

We can disciple someone through a personal testimony. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong.

You are honorable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place. And labor, working with our own hands, being reviled, we bless.

Being persecuted, we suffer it. Being defamed, we entreat. We are made as the filth of the world and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you, for though you have 10,000 instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel, wherefore I beseech you, I beg you, be ye followers of me. He is instructing here with His testimony.

He's telling them, the reason I'm sharing my testimony, my experience with you here, is that I want you also to be a follower of Christ in the same way that I am. He's instructing them through this testimony to be a follower of Christ. So, it's just been an inspiration to me to ponder this matter of sharing a testimony and I guess has brought a revival about in my heart, a new vision, and also, shall I say, it has become more of a thing that we must do.

It's not an option. It's not something that, well, if I get around to it, or... No. I must open my mouth.

You must open your mouth. For my sake. For the brothers' and sisters' sake.

For the heathen's sake. For Jesus' sake. The glorious end is our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's one of the tremendous ways God has designed to bring glory to Himself for Jesus Christ to be lifted up. There seems to be a power like no other in having that personal testimony. And for an unbeliever to get up here and preach the Gospel does not have the same effect as for someone who can get up here and say, Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good out of experience in my own life.

And I guess, in closing, just to say that I have failed you much in this many times. I think I have thought, it's not worth sharing to them. I believe many times I have been disobedient to the Lord in sharing my personal experience.

What God has done in my heart. What He means to me. I do love the Lord.

And I love the Word. And I love the quickening power of the Word. I love the life.

The Word of God is pregnant with life. And I love it. And I many times have not expressed myself, and maybe it was due to wrong doctrine, wrong theology.

But I want to repent of that and be a brother here in this fellowship. As we heard last week from Brother David, we all have a needed part to play. And don't think your experience insignificant.

If God did it, if God wrote it on your heart, by all means, tell someone. You must. I tell you, you must.

Otherwise, God is not glorified. Maybe you are blessed, but you are keeping the blessing for yourself and that becomes selfishness. Share it with someone.

Let the Lord Jesus Christ be glorified. In your life. Through a personal testimony.

Thank you, Brother Dean, for that challenging word this morning. I have to think again of that Scripture. I'm not sure if Dean quoted it or not in Revelation how they overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony.

But anyway, it gives it in the context of that it is an overcoming strength or an overcoming power in our lives to open our mouth for the Lord. And also, I believe, it is very essential in creating the two kingdom world that is so necessary in the world today. When we speak otherworldly, we identify ourselves with that other world.

If we just mingle with society and in business act like everything is on the same level, which I find at fault many times with salesmen. You know, we talk about the products and what He came for, and I'm busy, and I don't necessarily want to prolong it another half hour. He's held me up long enough, I think.

And then I often neglect to change the subject there at the end and give a word for the Lord Jesus to them. So that is very good admonition. Let us take it to heart.

I'm just wondering whether we can have open mics here this morning and have testimony time and sharing time about this subject. Especially maybe we're open to both confession and testimonies, but appreciating testimonies of how you have found it or how you are able to do it in a discreet way without being abrupt or real obnoxious, I might say. Some don't do it very wisely.

And we look at that sometimes and say, well, I don't want to be like that. And yet there is that right way to just put the word in there as we mingle with the world. Is it not? How do we do it? Alright.

Raise of hands. Yes, Brother Dean. Let's get you the mic.

Yeah, okay. Come right up to the mic. One thing that I wanted to say in closing is that in our testimony time here, I shared different things that a testimony does.

It brings conviction to the sinner. It brings encouragement to the sane. It brings victory over sin.

If you can think of others, I'd be happy to hear them here this morning. Other things that a testimony does. Thomas? Oh, I'm sorry.

Michael, I didn't see you. Yes, praise God. I'm thankful this morning to be a child of the living God.

This morning, we brothers were back there praying, just confessing our need before the Lord and asking Him to speak into our lives. And I'm thankful that He's done that in my heart this morning with both the opening and the main message, just answering some questions that I've had in my heart the last week. Thank you, Brother Dean, for your message on the power of a testimony.

I have experienced that, but I want to be much more faithful in exalting the name of Jesus Christ in that way. I'm blessed with Peter and John's testimony after they healed that lame man and there was a commotion. The rulers of the Jews arrested them and told them that they may not speak or teach anymore in that name of Jesus.

And I love their testimony there in Acts 4, verses 19 and 20. Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

And there's that personal testimony of them having seen Christ and heard Him. And I want to have that devotion to Christ and a walk with Him that is such that I'll have a current testimony of what God is doing in my life. Sometimes, too often I'm afraid to speak out sometimes and testify of Christ.

And part of that, I believe, is because of the response of many people when you speak of Christ and they say, oh, yeah, I've heard, or I already know Him, that type of thing. But there is such a power in a testimony when they see that Christ is real in my life that cannot be refuted. May Christ be glorified.

You know, I just have to report a bit on that. I was meditating about it the last couple of days and seeing what our world is going through to mention that great name, Jesus Christ. I mean, they're referring to the, like the J word, I guess, or you don't say that word.

And a stewardess just got stopped going on her airplane with her Bible a day or two ago. What has turned out from the whole concept of toleration to Islam and Buddhists and other religions in the world has become the elimination of Christianity, of Jesus Christ. And I had to think, as I was meditating about it, you know, brethren, the day is coming and yea, now is, that all we have to say is, do you know Jesus Christ? Then the world will recoil at that name.

The world will recoil at that name. So you don't have to give a big flowered testimony, sisters, brothers, young in the faith ones, all you have to do in our time, not so much so yet in Lancaster County, but it will eventually filter its way down to us too, that it's just not allowed to say that name in a bold public manner. Our high school students can't speak of him at commencement exercises and graduation.

Not allowed. They can't, our congressmen and senators can't pray a prayer in that name at any political function in Washington. And so here we are.

Can we say, well, I belong to Jesus Christ. I love Him. Alright, Thomas.

Amen. That's right. There's no other name by which we may be saved.

I believe that one thing worth noting here is the context. I think we maybe limit the power of this thing a little bit. It's more than just personal victory, although it's certainly that.

And it's more than the victory that is achieved in a brother's heart by hearing testimony, although it's certainly that too. But the context for this Scripture that Dean mentioned and you mentioned in Revelation 12, verse 10 says, And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now has come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ. For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

And they overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony and that they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil has come down unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

It seems to me, in the context of my own personal experience and in the experiences I read about with Stephen and Paul and many others, there is a throwing down, there's a casting down of the deceiver and of his lies. And it's something powerful that I don't understand. When we name Christ, when we are not ashamed of Him, it is a big threat to Him in a greater way than I think we can quickly see.

It undermines everything He stands for. It undermines His fortresses. It undermines the power that He has in people's lives.

And that is the context in which it seems that He is cast down. And so, I think He feels very threatened by the testimony and by the mentioning of Christ Jesus. There's no other form of salvation.

So, the Muslim and the Buddha and all of that, there's no threat there. The only threat is in Christ and in our testimony. If we have real salvation experience, it's a threat to Him and His lies.

Yeah. The other thing, there's such a vast difference between having a religion and Jesus Christ. The religion... Buddha is not going to require the things of your... a change of life in you like Jesus will.

Jesus has words to say, thousands of them, to how you live. And the Muslims the same way. Mohammed is dead.

The prophet is dead. He's not going to tell them how to live even though they have their Koran that says, but many of these men live wicked lives. They have a religion, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified is different in that it has major requirements of a change in our lives.

Yes. Yeah, while Michael was sharing, I realized that if our heart is yearning for that kind of devotion that so many that we see have, one way to reach that is to begin by testifying. When we share our testimonies, my experience has been that when I've shared my testimony, then I'm getting challenged.

Then I'm getting questioned and I end up going back and praying and seeking the Lord and wanting to read my Bible and understand more about what they're questioning. Then that brings forth a heart that wants to testify more. So there's a real relationship there.

Thank you, Michael, for bringing that up. I remembered that, how clearly that is. And then I see in my own life and would ask you all to pray, that I don't want to slide away from that.

I want that to be the focal point of my life, is sharing the Lord Jesus. Amen. Alright, over here.

Two things I was thinking about is that when you share your testimony, and you have to put words on an experience, it really burns into your memory a lot more than if you go through an experience and think, yeah, God was there. But if you have to put words on what you experienced, somehow you don't forget. And another thing I was thinking about is if I understand the way courts work, a testimony is a very powerful thing.

Lawyers will say, how many witnesses do we have that's very crucial to a case? And a testimony is saying, yeah, I was there when God did this work in my life. It's a very powerful thing, even in the court of law. They recognize that as something very powerful.

And, yeah, that would encourage us to see how powerful a testimony is. Yeah, that's interesting how that is recognized in our world as a, actually, two of those will incriminate anyone to a long jail sentence. Two testimonies.

And how much more the testimony of Jesus Christ be that which is absolute. Yes, sister. I would just like it if you all could pray for me.

I always kind of deceive myself thinking that I was born again. And I've always, you know, tried to fool people by saying that I am or kind of acting like a good person. And I would like it if you all could pray for me.

I've always been a man pleaser, trying to please man. And I'm really struggling with trying to be right with God and not trying to please man. And I'd just like it if in your time you could pray for me that God would help me not to be bitter at Him or angry at Him, but that He would just help me to deny myself and to come to Him and repent.

Amen. God bless you, sister. Amen.

Thank you for that. Okay, Edwin. Yeah, God is good.

I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, what they have done. But I do have a little vengeance about you people because they come up to me and ask me, you've got a funny accent. And I just go right at it.

I tell them, well, where I came from, what God had done, that I was a drunk and I've been saved by the power of God. Amen. You have a door opener.

Alright, down here. Yes, I was really challenged this morning by the message. And I know there's been an awful lot of testimonies that have really challenged and spurred me on in my Christian life and made a lot of difference in my heart.

And I guess I realize I've fallen short there and I want to change and do better. And open my mouth for God. God bless you, sister.

Alright. Okay. Yeah, someone else.

I'm sorry. I just wanted to share that when I first came to Bible school here when I was 17, the thing that probably impacted my life the most was one young lady that was overflowing with the love of Jesus Christ. And you couldn't talk to her for two minutes.

And she was sharing what she had read in her quiet time. Just little things that she was always radiating that Jesus is real to her. And that she had a moment-by-moment testimony with Jesus Christ that was reality in her life.

And that challenged my soul very, very deeply. And I would say that her testimony has probably been the thing that the Lord Jesus used the most to create in my own heart a hunger to have that moment-by-moment reality with God. I just want to give thanks to God how this all worked out.

I was actually... when I heard Brother Dean's message today, I just started just... I couldn't hardly believe it because we were going to have a sisters meeting on sisters learning to share testimonies with each other and how to encourage each other. And then I didn't think I could pull it off. And I didn't know how I could even do it anyway.

And then when Brother Dean shared, I thought, well, this is going to work out the best. And I just want to give thanks to God how the sisters meeting that I thought maybe should be planned off, but I couldn't. And then Brother Dean just did it perfect.

And so I'm just really thankful to God how that all worked out. Amen. Thank you.

Luke? Yes, I am thankful to God for the opportunity to have been here this morning. Both the opening and the message were a blessing to my life. And I just want to give testimony that I love the Lord and want to serve Him and follow Him and His Son Jesus all of the days of my life.

And just to add a word of testimony in the fact of giving testimonies, it seems when we can use the Word of God and how we have lived our lives thereby and followed the commands of Jesus and obeyed Him and how it's blessed us richly and how we know that the words of Jesus that are written in the Bible are true and they work, those things are also powerful if we can add that with our testimony of our own experiences. So I just thought I'd add that also. I'm wondering how many have found sharing an open testimony in church amongst the brothers have given you help in overcoming something in your life.

Yes, there's something about going public with a need in your life, with an honest confession, with an asking for prayer that just seems to take us over the hump to overcoming and giving us strength for at least a time it seems that is very effective to overcome. Yes, Sister Rachel. Moses just said what I was going to say.

I was going to say that I often have found that when I share a testimony of where I am... Do we have a problem here? I'll try and do it real close, direct. Now tilt the mic more. Moses just said what I was going to say.

I often have found that when I share a testimony of where I am or my need or what God has been doing for me, as I share it and as I talk, it just strengthens my own faith, not to mention what other people get benefited by. And one of our first blessings at charity was, it's 18 years now, and we came from a church that did love the Lord. People were born again, but to come and hear people have testimony and confession time, that was so encouraging and so inspiring.

Yes, I'd just like to echo that in my own experience here 25 years. That was a blessing. And I remember many times in tears that took place in the early days and still does today of what God is doing and that they were real, I think for the most part, in comparison to what I had seen many times for years.

Okay, sister. I do want to bless the Lord today for both messages. Amen.

And I know that I have grieved him by not giving him the glory for what he has done in my life. I know that four years ago, he has done a work in my life, in my heart, that I'm just so grateful for. And I desire, by his grace alone, to continue on.

Amen. But not to turn back. Amen.

And I just ask for your prayers. And I know that it's only by his grace that I have made it through and I look forward to another year spending my life in him. Yes, amen.

Thank you. God's blessing to you. All right, Nolan.

I think we all know that verse in the Bible that says the fear of man is a snare. And that would be my testimony that whenever I stand up and say something here in church or just overflow at work or whatever, and I don't do it enough. I'm not standing here saying that I always take the opportunities because I don't.

And you can pray for me for that. But when it does happen, I used to be... One of my teachers in school said to describe me, she said, I forget what word she used, timid or something like shy. And that's been kind of... I've been a man pleaser like the sister said here and done a lot of those things wrong in my life.

But I thank the Lord that He has given me a freedom just through standing up and opening up my heart. And there is a freedom from that fear in my heart at this day. And I thank the Lord Jesus.

He is the one that sets us free. Amen. All right.

I just want to say I was very blessed by the message today. You know, I had been having some struggles in some different areas and I was trying to figure out why I couldn't seem to overcome in some certain areas in my life. And me and my husband had been praying about it and talking about it.

And just yesterday actually, and we were just discussing maybe some of the different things. And I was saying, well, you know, I know, you know, I know my testimony at this point. And I know, you know, I've really been thinking about, you know, that verse, Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I couldn't remember where it was. So I was thankful that they said that today. And I didn't really feel that that was an area where I was struggling in because I know that that can be it sometimes.

But I still could not seem to overcome in some areas. And, you know, what you just said most really blessed me in Revelation, where it says, And they ever came in by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony? And I thought, well, I have the blood of the Lamb, but I have not lived out giving my testimony much. And so, I need to do that more so if y'all would pray for me in that area.

Yeah, turning to Romans 10 is another one that I often refer to. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. And we often say, Well, I believe it in my heart.

But there are so many young people, especially, who never confess Him with their mouth. Therefore, I say, they only have gone halfway. So how do they expect the power, the surge of life? I actually believe that that's where many would find the reality of the surge of life to come into them in a much greater way if they would dare to go around and tell their friends, You know what? Last night I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus.

And I so appreciate here in the church when the parents bring a 13 year old, 12, 14 year old up to me after the service and say, My daughter has something to say to you. My son has something to say to you. And let them say it with their own mouth in tears.

I got bored again last night. You know, and that is a strength for them. And I often encourage new converts at least write letters to some of your friends and grandparents, maybe your uncles and aunts and make a clear testimony.

If thou shalt confess him with thy mouth. Can you imagine that perhaps God would hold the full assurance back until that takes place. I actually think that happens at times.

And then the individual can understand why it wasn't maybe a greater way. But that's where the bells and whistles often go off. It did for me.

I can say that when I had the courage to tell my school neighbor boys on their bicycles what happened to me. And I was walking on air after that experience. Right? Yes, I would just like to read two verses in 1 John chapter 5, verse 10 and 11.

And it says, He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself. He who does not believe God has made him a liar because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of his Son. And this is the testimony that God has given us eternal life in this life and in His Son.

And so if we want people to believe our testimony, we've got to believe in the testimony that God has given us through His Son. Yes. Yeah, also have the testimony.

All right, up front here and back there. CJ, over here. Okay.

Betty. I want to testify about the goodness of God, what He's done for us 10 years ago. It was December the 15th that He brought us over here out of a bondage of religion.

And I remember sitting back in the colony and listening to the tapes and the testimonies of what the Lord has done in people's lives. It was about four months before we left I told my husband, I think we ought to go and find out what the church is all about. They must have something that we don't have by the way they talk and they testify and they preach.

And at that time he wasn't saved and he said, you're crazy, you can go if you want to. I'm not leaving. But I said, the day he was born again, the next day he said, honey, let's go.

I can see that this is all just religion. He was weeping for his brothers. And in a week we were gone.

Praise the Lord. It was because of testimonies and of speaking. 10 years ago.

December the 15th. Amen. Praise the Lord.

Yes, alright. Yes, David. In my own life, I still wrestle with the shame of the name of the Lord Jesus.

Like he said, whosoever is ashamed of me and of my word in this adulterous generation. I find it in my own life, still, it is a barrier in my relationship with people to bless them in the name of the Lord Jesus. You know, God bless you is still such an easy one to slip out.

Because everybody says it. I mean, Catholics, Mormons, you know, God bless you, God bless you. You can assign that.

But when I try to exercise myself in my business dealings, like you said, Mose, when I'm done with that salesman, you know, I say, Jim, God bless you. I mean, the Lord Jesus bless you, Jim. And I try not to just say it in a way that's kind of well sheepish, but I try to jump over that in my heart because I don't know why that is, but I try to use the name of Jesus with that man and look at him, you know, not kind of like Jesus bless you just as he's going out the door or something like that or at the counter there at the hardware store or the grocery store, but in a way that allows them to know I'm not ashamed of this name that I'm blessing you in.

I bless you in the name of Jesus. And I try to write it at the end of my emails, you know, when I email a business or something like that, use the name of Jesus, because the world doesn't understand that. They look and say, why aren't you ashamed? Everybody else in the world is ashamed of that name.

And I think that's what Jesus meant to us when He said, don't be ashamed. And I find it strengthens my love for the Lord Jesus when I do that, when I step out and say, I'm not going to be ashamed of the gospel in this adulterous generation. Then, I wrote this verse when Dean was talking about the fear of being too proud to share something that God's doing in my life.

This verse of Scripture came to my mind. Psalm 66.16 says, Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul. And I think that there's a humility that is proud.

I don't know how that works, but I know that there is a proud humility in the world that is so proud it won't obey. And it paints it over with, well, I don't want to exalt myself. It makes excuses with humility that really is a pride in and of itself.

A pride of how humble I am. And it hides disobedience in that humility. It takes a humility to be willing enough, to be bold enough to just step out and give your testimony.

And then, this is another one the Lord's working in my own life. In Psalm 138 it says, Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me. That's David speaking.

Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of my enemies, and thy right hand shall save me. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever.

And I'm finding and have found in the past when I refuse to knuckle underneath the affliction of the trouble I'm in and self-pity and all that, and rather rise up in faith and say, the Lord is going to bring this to an end sometime, and I'm going to laugh again, and I'm going to be happy again, and God is going to perfect what is right for me, and the mercies of the Lord are still going to be new to me. That kind of a confession and a testimony, it does something in my heart. And I find that difficult to do.

It is very difficult. When I read those from David, I think, David, how can you say those things? Here you are in this difficult situation. And yet, there it is.

He had no problem saying, the Lord shall do this for me. And just one more little testimony of my own life. I took that to heart just a while ago and opened my heart to my family concerning a failure in my life.

In my devotional time in the morning, I was suffering because I was not getting out of bed the first time my alarm rang. And I just couldn't get over it. I wrestled with the Lord in my prayer closet and I said, Lord, I wish I had been here earlier.

I wish I had gotten up the first time my alarm went off. I just couldn't. I wouldn't do it.

And one morning, I just broke my heart with my family and shared my failure. And it turned my life around. I was amazed.

I was amazed at the blessing that came out of that. And I thank God so many times in the last weeks since then. I think it might have been even a month ago that I shared that with my family.

Just blessing God for the power of a confession and opening of my heart with my family. Amen. Thank you, brother.

I had to think concerning the public testimony. You know, there is a natural barrier to overcome to start. That's how I find it.

Once I'm going, then I cannot quit. You know, it seems like you just could talk for an hour. But that first thing, it's just like a natural barrier in the world to be able to start.

Alright, CJ. Yes, I was going to read the verse in Matthew 5. Verse 16 says, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. And I noticed in my own life that lack of spirit of servant almost like puts a plug on our mouth when we want to give testimony for Jesus.

If there is not testimony of being servant of others and doing good works, that already prepares hearts of people to receive something from us. If there is bright content, if there is joy in our life, if there is peace in the midst of pressure, that gives us a tremendous authority when we say a few words. Another thing was,

in the Ten Commandments, there is a commandment where it says do not use the name of the Lord in vain.

And I noticed that sometimes overdoing it and for every little thing mentioning the name of God, it brings rather like a vow rather than testifying. So we have to be wise there. But I think that if you want to open the door for testimony, our works must so shine.

Doing good works to others and being of bright content is the first thing. And then testimony will come naturally after that. And I think it's right to pray for an open door.

I think it's right for that. Up here. Down.

Okay. Over here. Donnie? Yes, I'd just like to share how blessed I've been here over the last four months since I've been here.

Just a wonderful experience here. Just love you as my brothers and sisters in Christ. I want to follow Christ.

I do have a prayer request. I'm going to be going back to my family here on Friday for two weeks. And I would request that you would pray for me as I go back and try to reach my family and try to be a witness to them and maybe to bring my family back here.

And if the Lord will open the door in that way, I just pray that somehow it can work out that way. Just I love you all and it's been a great experience and hopefully I can come back. Amen.

God bless you all. Thank you. Amen.

We're praying for a miracle, Donnie. Amen. Okay.

Over here. Alright. Thank you, sister.

I don't really know where to start with this. I have so much of that proud humility. Hold it a little closer.

Sorry. I don't really know where to start with this. I know that God wants me to confess a few things.

I have so much of that proud humility. I could take pride in confessing, but I feel like I should just confess anyway. I've come to the conclusion the Lord's been showing me that I have a lot of pride and a lot of thinking I'm better than other people and doing things thinking I'm better and just trying to be better and please man.

I guess my motive hasn't always been Christ. I really want the motive to be Him and I want to do things for Him and I don't want to not do things just because it's the wrong motive. I guess I just want to confess that I have so much pride.

And in the matter of giving testimonies and things, I have a lot of lost people in my family and I've had to talk to them lately and I've hardly said anything about Christ. I've maybe said, God bless you, but I'm just so ashamed that I can't give them the Gospel after it's changed my life so much. If you guys could just pray for me, my family needs Him so, so badly.

I'm the only one that can tell them and I just haven't. So, thank you. Thank you, Megan.

God bless you with that. And we lift up her family in prayer. Alright, it's our period.

I think this will be the last here then we'll close. Yes, I found in my own life that it opens up a door to be able to share the Gospel. And here just last week, I was in an Amish home down in York County and encouraging a fellow there and there came in, unbeknownst to us, a bishop and two other Amish fellows and their wives and it was pretty evident that I wasn't welcomed there by them.

So, I just started, I introduced myself and they knew that I wasn't from around here so I shared my testimony with them and it opened a door to share the Gospel with them and I knew that I needed to take that opportunity right away because the door was soon going to close there that evening. That's right. And so, I just praise God for that and just thank the Lord for what He's did in my life.

Amen. Thank you, Don.

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