

# A Day of Testimonies

Aug. 26, 2007

Scripture reading: 1 Chr 16:7-11, 23-24

When I picked out the scripture reading for today it suddenly hit me that we are all messengers for God. God wants to speak to the world through us. Paul said, “We speak the truth before God, as messengers of God.” (2 Corinthians 2:17).

Now you may feel you don’t have anything to share; that’s the Devil trying to keep you silent. Each one of us has a storehouse of experiences that God wants to use to bring others into his family. And your testimony is about how Christ has made a difference in your life. This is the essence of your testimony – simply sharing your personal experiences with the Lord. A testimony is not giving a sermon or getting on a soapbox arguing your favorite topic.

The Biblical definition of testimony, in both the OT and NT, is to give witness or evidence to what one has seen. In a courtroom, a witness isn’t expected to argue the case, prove the truth, or press for a verdict; that’s the job of attorneys. Witnesses simply report what happened to them or what they saw.

Jesus said, “You will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8) – not “You will be my attorney.” He just wants you to share your story with others; that is an essential part of your mission on earth; because it is unique. *There is no other story just like yours, so only you can share it.* If you don’t share it, it will be lost forever. People love to hear our personal stories because they are easy to relate to. They capture our attention, and we remember them longer.

A couple of weeks ago our church was involved in VBS. I handled the scripture lessons for the day. On a couple of the days the crew leaders were asked to relate to the kids how God had affected them in their lives based on the topic we were talking about that day. The kids were very intent when listening to the leaders. I only got to hear snippets of the stories the leaders were relating. I wish I could have heard all of them.

The strongest argument for the Gospel of Christ is the personal testimony of someone whose life has been changed by it. People can argue about facts. They can argue about theology. But they can’t argue with a changed life. Your story of what Jesus has done for you is your most powerful witnessing tool.

Now maybe you feel you don't have a testimony, God has always been with you. That's ok, be truthful, just say: "I've been a believer in Jesus Christ for as long as I can remember. And I can't imagine living any other way. He has been an ever present help in times of trouble and in times of happiness. The reason why I am the person I am today is because of Him." People need to hear this. Psalm 9:1 says, "I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart, I will tell of all your wonders."

I'm also willing to bet that most of us have had moments when God wasn't the most important person in our lives. I'll bet that there were times when we made some foolish or bad choices that we never would have made if we were walking with God. When you share your testimony, without going into unnecessary detail, you need to let people know that you're a human being. And that before you were dedicated to Christ, your life wasn't what it needed to be.

Some of you have had memorable conversion experiences. Some of you can't even remember your conversion. But the way you became a member of the kingdom is not nearly as important as the fact that you ARE a member of the kingdom. The important thing is that you're saved. Not whether or not you can remember how it happened.

I think people will be impressed with how your life has changed since you met Christ. I think what will REALLY get their attention is the way you are living for Him now.

- Maybe you don't worry about things as much as you used to.
- Maybe you care more about your fellow man.
- Maybe you have a greater desire to see people saved.
- Maybe you're getting more out of church than you ever did before.
- Maybe you sense God's direction and guidance more than ever.

Whatever your story is, people need to hear it. People need to know that God is actively involved in the lives of people today. And they need to see the miracle that your life is becoming.

But I need to give you a word of caution: Just because God gives you opportunities to share your story doesn't mean that you will always get the response that you desire. No matter how articulate we are, there will always be people out there who think we're bananas. There will always be people who can't understand how we can believe so strongly in a supernatural, all powerful God. And when people poke fun at us, it hurts. It's an unfair impression of who we are. And I think some of us, me included, are afraid that if we get vocal about our faith, then we're going to get a little persecution. When that happens, the simple answer is: PRAY FOR THEM. As Paul said "So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord ..." (2 Tim 1:8)

The important thing to remember is: don't be afraid to share how God has been working in your life. It might not come out in a neat and orderly manner, but so what; the important thing to realize is that the story of your faith journey is just as meaningful as anyone else's.

Now I invite any of you who wish, to come forward and give your personal testimonies. Here are a few questions to jog your mind and get your started:

- When did I first meet Christ and accept Him into my life?
- Has God healed me physically, spiritually or emotionally?
- How has God shown me He is in control and that I don't need to worry?
- How has God given you direction or confirmation of a direction?
- What has God taught me about a lack of money?
- What has God taught me about pain or sorrow or depression?
- What has God taught me through waiting for answered prayer?
- What has God taught me through illness?
- What has God taught me from disappointment?