

CAN I GET A WITNESS?

Acts 1:8

Intro. Does the word “witness” intimidate you? What do you think about when you hear it? Does it somehow conjure up the idea of a Christian version of the Green Beret making guerilla raids on the unsuspecting neighbors living around the church?

What do you do with good news? Naturally, you tell it! Maybe you have just eaten at a new restaurant and the food was great. You call a friend. You find a bargain at the mall and you think of someone who could use that item.

It is true we like to share good news. We like to tell a good story. Relax, witnessing, is simply telling good news in the power of the Spirit. Let’s see what we can learn from the first century church.

1. Witness is who we are before it is what we do! Acts 1:8

We have somehow missed the obvious. When we become believers, we are witnesses to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. We have a story to tell.

Illustration: If you were to walk out of this building and see an accident occur right in front of the church, you would be a witness! You might argue that you don’t want to get involved. Guess what, you are involved. Some lawyer will likely subpoena you and require you to give your eye-witness account.

We have been subpoenaed by the King and empowered by the Spirit to give witness to the greatest new ever declared. We know sin can be forgiven! We can start over! (If you are a golfer and your partner graciously declares that you can have a mulligan, it is great news if you just hooked it out of bounds.) Everyone needs a mulligan at life. You can exchange your sin for God’s righteousness. You can have abundant life now and live in the presence of the King for all eternity. Why would we ever be reluctant to tell such good news?

- a. We think it is for the professionals who have the gift of evangelism. The Bible is clear; we are witnesses just like we are declared to be salt and light. It is a part of our new DNA in Christ. Witnessing is simply telling your story in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- b. I don’t think I can convince anyone to believe in Christ. Good news, that isn’t your job. The Holy Spirit convicts and convinces, we only tell our story and He will provide the results. Witnessing is one area where you can never fail.

2. We must seize kingdom opportunities.

In the first century church witnessing was both *spontaneous* and *intentional*. Let’s look first at the spontaneous witness that may occur every day right where we live, work, and play.

In Acts 2 we find that the signs accompanying the outpouring of the Spirit provided the early disciples with the opportunity to explain what these events mean. You may be thinking nothing like tongues of fire seem to manifest themselves in your daily events. The evidence of the ministry of the Spirit may not always be this spectacular but it is nonetheless all around us. It could be that a friend notices how you respond to difficult circumstances and wonder how you can be so calm. Tell them! Perhaps a friend admits to you that they are feeling guilty about their harsh behavior toward a neighbor. You can tell them about the work of the Spirit in conviction and how you deal with your own guilt.

In Acts 3 we find another kingdom opportunity. Peter used the healing of the lame man as the opportunity to point his listeners to the true source of all life and health (read 3:11-19). I know you may be thinking, that you never have an event like this to occur, but don't be too quick to jump to conclusions. We experience blessings from the hand of God every day and often chalk them up to our "good luck" or "good fortune." No such thing as "luck." When someone asks me how I am doing, I often respond with the simple word, "blessed." You would be surprised how many people ask what I mean. If you look for the King at work, you will see His hand and you can give a witness.

As we read the book of Acts we are amazed to find that events such as the stoning of Stephen and the imprisoning of the disciples only serve to provide another platform for telling the good news. If you will only stop, look, and listen to the Father, He will show you opportunities every day to Splash a little living water.

3. We must develop an intentional strategy.

The early believers were not only spontaneous, they were intentional. Read Acts 8:25 and 14:21-22. It is clear that they had developed a strategy of going from town to town preaching the gospel.

Every kingdom person and every kingdom-centered church must have an intentional strategy. What is your strategy to win you neighbor or colleague to Christ? It might involve inviting them to dinner, offering to pray for their family needs. You could give them a Christian book that relates to a need they are experiencing. It will probably take several encounters before you have earned the right to tell your story. Are you prepared to keep Splashing your neighbor with the Living Water?

(At this point you should share the church strategy for intentional evangelism. You could use the invitation as a time to encourage or enlist people in various aspects of the evangelism strategy.).

Invitation