

Stewardship 101

Lesson 7

Witnessing

PART I EXPLANATION

Introduction: The final aspect of our stewardship that has been committed to us by God is the stewardship of the gospel. Obviously, this is the greatest trust that could be committed to the hands of man. Paul called it the “*glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*” (I Timothy 1:11) He also challenged his young disciple Timothy to “*keep that which is committed to thy trust*” again referring to the stewardship of the gospel. The way in which we are to be faithful stewards of the gospel is to preach it distinctly and directly to every creature. Christ told a group of fishermen that He would make them fishers of men. The way in which they fished was to throw out nets and cover as much area as possible before sorting out the catch. We should take the same approach today to cover as much area as possible with the gospel and then sort out the genuine converts from those that only outwardly respond to the gospel message.

The example that we have been given to follow is the life of the Son of God. Never was there a life that was so entirely dedicated to the spread of the gospel to the neglect of personal ambition. This type of lifestyle, one devoted to the spread of the gospel, is almost extinct in the world today. However, He is the “*faithful and true witness*” and He rebukes the saints for their lukewarmness and challenges them to be zealous. When we become entangled with the affairs of this life we cannot please Him who has chosen us to be soldiers. This failure to be faithful to our commission as Christians is possibly the greatest cause of stagnation and chastisement in the Christian life. Jonah is a case study of having a defiant attitude toward fulfilling the commission of God. Jonah had more compassion for a plant than he did for the souls of Ninevah. How often we can be guilty of caring more for temporal matters than those perishing around us.

Besides these distractions, the fear of and the reality of rejection are further hindrances to spreading the gospel. No person enjoys delivering an unpopular message to unreceptive hearers, but we are challenged not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ because it is the power of God to save the lost. We must learn not to take the rejection personal. When people reject the gospel, we are instructed to shake the dust off of our feet and go to the next town, not to take it personal and quit. The remedy for being discouraged by the small percentage of converts is to remember that we are rewarded for the amount of our labor not the size of our harvest. God is responsible for the size of the harvest; we are responsible to sow the seed of the gospel to the best of our ability. Also, no matter how unpopular the message of repentance is or how little fruit we harvest, Christ has told us that He has sheep not yet in the fold and it is our responsibility to help gather them.

Another remedy for a lack of passion for the souls of men is to be reminded of the eternal destiny of unsaved man in the Lake of Fire. We must never forget about those who have never even heard of the hope of the gospel. “*How shall they hear without a preacher?*” We must constantly remember that Christ is not going to personally preach the gospel to mankind, He has entrusted that to His church. With all of the technology and means that we have today it is embarrassing how inefficient we are at spreading the gospel message. God’s people need to acknowledge their neglect of this spiritual duty instead of making excuses for it. The Devil is more that willing to supply a variety of excuses to justify our unfaithfulness.

Definitions: For English use the Webster’s 1828 Dictionary and copy all appropriate definitions for each word. For the Greek and Hebrew use a Strong’s Concordance and copy the definition. The Strong’s number is in parenthesis.

English: witness -

Testimony -

Testify -

Greek: (3141) **marturia** *mar-too-ree'-ah*

1263. **diamarturomai** *dee-am-ar-too'-rom-ahee*

Quotation:

“Oh, if you have the hearts of Christians or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor ignorant, ungodly neighbors. Alas, there is but a step betwixt them and death and hell; many hundred diseases are waiting ready to seize on them, and if they die unregenerate, they are lost for ever. Have you hearts of rock that cannot pity them in such a case as this? If you believe not the Word of God, and the danger of sinners, why are you Christians yourselves? If you do believe it, why do you not bestir yourself to the helping of others? Do you not care who is damned, so you be saved? If so, you have sufficient cause to pity yourselves, for it is a frame of spirit utterly inconsistent with grace... Dost thou live close by them, or meet them in the streets, or labor with them, or travel with them, or sit and talk with them, and say nothing to them of their souls, or the life to come? If their houses were on fire, thou wouldest run and help them; and wilt thou not help them when their souls are almost at the fire of hell?” Richard Baxter

“We have greater work to do here than merely securing our own salvation. We are members of the world and Church, and we must labor to do good to many. We are trusted with our Master’s talents for His service, in our places to do our best to propagate His truth, and grace, and Church, and to bring home souls, and honor His cause, and edify His flock and further the salvation of as many as we can. All this is to be done on earth, if we will secure the end of all in heaven.” Richard Baxter

“We fear man so much, because we fear God so little. One fear cures another. When man’s terror scares you, turn your thoughts to the wrath of God.” William Gurnall

“Methinks if by faith we did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it would more effectually untie our tongues, that Croesus’ danger, as they tell us, did his son’s. (his deaf and dumb son spoke when someone was attempting to assassinate his father) ” Richard Baxter

“If we once become listless in duty, we shall quickly become lifeless in it.” Stephen Charnock

“I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.” Richard Baxter

“God hath work to do in this world; and to desert it because of difficulties and entanglement, is to cast off His authority.” John Owen

“Sins of omission are aggravated by knowledge.” Thomas Manton

“The saints are to bear a three-fold testimony to, and for Christ and His truths; Breath-testimony, Life-testimony, and Blood-testimony.” Vavasor Powell

Confessions (Look up and read these articles)

London Baptist Confession of 1689

Chapter 20 Of the Gospel - paragraphs 1-4

Spurgeon's Catechism

Questions: 67-70

PART II EXPLORATION

Key Questions (*Answer in writing*)

1. How is the gospel committed to our trust?
2. What method did the fishermen understand when Christ made them fishers of men?
3. What is the message of the Faithful and True witness to us?
4. What was the cause of Jonah's disregard of his commission?
5. What instruction are we given in regard to those who reject the gospel message?
6. What is a remedy to discouragement over the lack of converts from our witnessing?
7. What is something that we need to be reminded of to be more motivated to witness?
8. What is the excuse that you most often give for failing to spread the gospel?

9. Explain Thomas Manton's quote in your own words.

10. Explain Stephen Charnock's quote about the relationship between becoming listless and lifeless in our spiritual duties.

Key Scriptures: (*Look up these verses and fill in the blanks*)

Ezekiel 33:1-9 God set a _____ to warn the people of coming judgment. They were to sound the _____ as a warning. If the people do not give heed to the trumpet, his _____ shall be upon his own _____. But if the watchman see the coming judgment and does not warn the people and they are destroyed, his blood will I

_____ at the hand of the _____. The watchman is to _____ the people for God. If we warn the wicked to _____ from his way and he die, thou hast

_____ thy soul.

John 1:7-8 John the Baptist came to bear _____ of the Light.

Acts 2:40 Peter's warning to the people was to save yourselves from this

_____.

Acts 4:33 The apostles witnessed of the _____.

Acts 20:17-27 Paul taught the people publicly and from _____ to _____ testifying of _____ toward God and _____ in our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul called them to testify that he was _____ from the _____ of all men.

Acts 26:22 Paul was faithful to witness to both _____ and _____.

Romans 1:16 Paul was not _____ of the _____.

I Corinthians 3:6-7 Paul recognized that when he was witnessing that one _____ and another _____ but God gives the _____.

I Corinthians 4:1-2 We are _____ of the mysteries of the gospel and it is required that we be found _____.

II Corinthians 5:18-21 God has given to us the _____ of reconciliation. Now we are _____ for Christ, as God is speaking _____. Our witnessing and testifying of the gospel is in Christ's _____.

I Thessalonians 1:8 This church was so faithful to witness that when Paul arrived, he _____ not to _____ anything because they had already heard.

II Timothy 1:8 We are not to be _____ of the _____ of our Lord rather to partake of the afflictions of the _____.

Key Chapter(s) (*Read daily and summarize in your own words the meaning of the chapter*):

Ezekiel 3

PART III EXPECTATION

Memory verse: Romans 1:16

Personal Definition: witness -

Personal Application: Witness to at least one person this week.

Meditation question: (*be prepared for discussion*) What impact does the doctrine of election have upon your witnessing?

Extra Credit Write out your own personal testimony so it can be used as a tract to give to others.

Read Spurgeon's sermon about lukewarmness.