

“You Shall be My Witnesses” by E. A. Terry for March 15, 2020

Ezekiel 3:16 -19; 1st Corinthians 1:17 – 31; 2nd Corinthians 5:6 – 21 Matthew 28: 16 – 20; **Acts 1:8**

All of our scripture lessons clearly state that our Lord Jesus Christ has given every Christian the important job of telling the people around us about the love of God and the saving grace of Jesus.

Notice our scriptures from Acts and Matthew are commands; they are not just suggestions. ***“You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*** (Acts 1:8)

Jesus gave us The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 – 20; ***“... go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”*** Besides these commandments Jesus said ***“let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*** (Matthew 5:16)

We all understand Jesus command to us.

So the questions for each of us is; *“am I obedient”* or *“am I a disobedient.”*

“Am I ashamed to tell the people around me about Jesus and tell them what Jesus means to me?”

We should never forget Jesus’ words in Matthew 10: 32 & 33 where He said ***“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”***

Telling someone about Jesus will come automatically if you are enjoying a personal relationship with Jesus

In verse 20 of our lesson from 2nd Corinthians we read; ***“we are therefore Christ’s ambassadors”***.

So what does it mean to be an ambassador?

An ambassador is an official personal representative of a person, a nation, or a kingdom to some other people or some other nation.

An ambassador is someone sent to deliver a special message and / or to accomplish a mission.

An ambassador acts on the authority of the one who sent them.

As Christ’s ambassador we are Christ’s personal representatives.

We are to bring the message of Jesus Christ to the people around us.

In other words, we are to be Christ to other people.

Every Christian has been given this mission.

Remember when we became a Christian, we became a citizen of Heaven and we represent The Kingdom of Heaven!

But sadly, many Christians have forgotten that our citizenship is in heaven and that we are to fulfill a mission while we are still on earth.

Sadly, many Christians have lost the sense of being Christ' ambassadors in this world and they have become comfortable and content to be ordinary citizens of this world.

So what is our message we are to deliver to the unsaved people God has put in our life.

Our message is simply this.

God loves everybody and God has provided a way for sinful people like me and you to be saved from the penalty of our sins by believing in Jesus Christ.

You all know John 3:16 & 17. ***"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him"***. And verse 18 says; ***"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son"***.

God loves everyone and God wants everyone to be with Him both now and throughout eternity.

However, somebody has to tell people about Jesus before they can know to ask Jesus to save them from the penalty of their sins.

It is not hard to tell people about Jesus because our message is a single message.

In the Acts 16 we read where the Philippian jailor asked ***"what must I do to be saved"***. ***The Apostle Paul and Silas answered "believe in The Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved – you and your whole household"***.

And in John 3:36 says ***"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."***

In the 5th chapter of Mark we can read about the demon possessed man named Legion that Jesus healed.

Legion wanted to follow Jesus but Jesus told the Legion to first ***"go home to your family and tell them how much The Lord has done for you and how He has had mercy on you"***

Acts 1:8 is a command from our Lord Jesus Christ.

"you shall be my witnesses".

But in order for you and me to be effective witnesses we have to have a firsthand knowledge of Jesus.

Remember a witness can only testify about what they know, they have seen, or what they have experienced.

A witness cannot testify about what someone else said.

That is why the Sunday Bible Discussion Classes are critical.

You and I have to experience the new abundant life that Jesus offers for our testimony to be credible.

That is why nurture and fellowship are so important.

We learn and are encouraged by being around other Christians.

Regular attendance at worship and celebrating the sacraments provide a source of divine strength to live like Jesus while we are in this world.

The church exists to provide training so we can show the people around us what life in the Kingdom of Heaven is like. (Ephesians 4:11 -14)

“You shall be my witnesses” is a command from our Lord Jesus Christ..

So if we are not telling other people about our Jesus we are disobedient disciples.

Think back and ask yourself when was the last time you told an unsaved neighbor or a co-worker about Jesus.

God’s message to us this morning is for each one us to get serious about sharing Jesus with the unsaved people around us.

If you really love someone you would not want them to end up in hell.

If you really love Jesus you will obey His commandment to tell other people about Him.

If Jesus means anything to you will want to tell the people around you the difference Jesus makes in your life.

If you want to grow closer to The Lord you will be telling people about your Jesus.

You see when we share our faith we grow in faith and we encourage other people in their walk of faith.

In 1997 Time Magazine reported on a poll.

They found that 63% of Americans believe that hell exists as a place where people will be punished forever in the next life.

This same poll also reported that only 1% of Americans believe they would end up in hell.

Sadly, millions of people are destined for hell and they do not even know it.

Somebody has to tell people about Jesus before those people can ask Jesus to save them.

And as Christians we have the only message that can save people from spiritual death and spending eternity in hell.

In our lesson from Ezekiel, God clearly articulates the seriousness of God’s instructions for His people to share the good news that He has been entrusted to us.

“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to a wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself. (Ezekiel 3:17 -19)

Every Christian is accountable for every word, every thought and every deed.

As Christians we all are called to be light and salt to every person we come in contact with.

We each need to ask ourselves how many opportunities did we allow to slip away this past week.

There is an old saying; *People do not care how you know until and unless they know how much you care.*

As Christians we have been commanded to tell other people about Jesus.

And while telling is important remember letting them know you care about them and showing them what a Christian is like is also a critical part of being a witness for Christ.

Ephesians 5:1 tells us to ***“follow Christ’s example”***.

We destroy our witness when we are not imitating the way Jesus treated people.

You see telling someone about Jesus is not hard if you know what Jesus has done for you.

If you really appreciate what Jesus has done for you, you will want to tell someone about it.

If Jesus is your friend you will introduce Jesus to your other friends.

If you really care about your neighbor you will want them to enjoy the peace, the joy and the hope that Jesus offers to His disciples.

If you really believe what the Bible says about hell, you would not want your worst enemy to endure the misery and pain of spending eternity in hell.

Jesus said; ***“If you love me, keep my commands.*** (John 14:15)

It is so important for us as Christians to tell people about Jesus because our Lord commanded us to tell people about Him.

Telling people about Jesus is also critical for our own personal spiritual growth because we strengthen our faith when we tell someone about Jesus.

And we sin against God when we keep silent about Jesus.

It critically important for us as Christians to tell people about Jesus because if we don’t unsaved people will end up in hell.

Acts 4:12 is crystal clear; ***“salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”***

Jesus said; ***“you shall be my witnesses”***.

So we all need to ask ourselves;” how *am I doing when it comes to telling people about your Jesus*”?

“Are my words and my actions pleasing to Jesus?”

What will Jesus say when you stand before Him and give an account of your stewardship of sharing His message to the world?

Will Jesus say; “well done my good and faithful servant”?

AMEN