RELATE CHURCH

Your Journey With Christ · Discipleship · Lesson 9 of 27

Witnessing

Relate Church • Foundations for a Growing Faith

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us.

1 JOHN 1:3

Introduction

Have you ever thought of witnessing not in terms of salesmanship or persuasion, but in terms of matchmaking? At its very heart, witnessing is the process and privilege of introducing the Bridegroom (Jesus) to prospective brides (nonbelievers). Jesus truly is the Lover of souls, wooing His chosen beloved into permanent surrender to Him with His self-sacrifice and unfailing love. If we ignore the wooing and try to force a union, we can miss the very heart of the new life in and with Jesus Christ.

The Opportunity

> [18] *As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged him earnestly that he might remain with him.* [19] *Jesus did not let him but told him, "Go home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you."* [20] *So he went out and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed.*
>
> **Mark 5:18-20 CSB**

Why do you think Jesus gave these directives?

> [3] *what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*
>
> **1 John 1:3 NASB95**

How would you express what the Lord has done for you and how He has had mercy on you recently?

> *Witnessing is taking a good look at the Lord Jesus and then telling others what you've seen.*

Some Biblical Motivations and Reasons for Witnessing

> [9] *Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to him.* [10] *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.* [11] *Therefore, since we know the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade people. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your consciences.* [12] *We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, so that you may have a reply for those who take pride in outward appearance rather than in the heart.* [13] *For if we are out of our mind, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.* [14] *For the love of Christ compels us, since we have reached this conclusion, that one died for all, and therefore all died.* [15] *And he died for all so that those*

> *who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.* [16] *From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective. Even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective, yet now we no longer know him in this way.* [17] *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!* [18] *Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.* [19] *That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.* [20] *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."*
>
> **2 Corinthians 5:9-20 CSB**

Verse 9: To be pleasing to the Lord.
Verse 10: We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
Verse 11: Knowing the fear of the Lord.
Verse 14: The love of Christ compels us.
Verse 15: Those who live no longer live for themselves but for Christ.
Verse 16: We do not know anyone from a worldly perspective and we no longer know Christ from a worldly perspective.
Verse 17: We are a new creation in Christ!
Verse 18: Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.
Verse 19: Christ has committed the message of reconciliation to us.
Verse 20: We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making His appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."

The Two Ways of Witnessing in the New Testament

Two ways of witnessing are described in the New Testament.

Mobile Evangelism

The apostles went (usually as teams) across cultural barriers into places and to people who had never heard of Christ. Typically they came to a major city as outsiders, boldly proclaimed the gospel, established a foundation generation of believers there, and then moved on. Colossians 4:3-4 is an example of mobile evangelism.

> [3] *praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been bound,* [4] *that I may make it manifest in the way I ought to speak.*
>
> **Colossians 4:3-4 LSB**

Notice what Paul asked the believers at Colossae to pray for him and his co-workers in the Gospel:

- That God will open up to us a door for the word (the Gospel message)

- So that we may speak the mystery of Christ
- That I may make it manifest in the way I ought to speak

Local Evangelism

Before the apostolic teams left town, they entrusted the local believers to carry the gospel into their unique family, social, and work networks along relational lines.

Colossians 4:2,5-6 gives practical advice for the local believers regarding advancing the gospel right where they lived.

> [2] *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving;*
> [5] *Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, redeeming the time.* [6] *Let your words always be with grace, seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should answer each person.*
>
> **Colossians 4:2, 5-6 LSB**

Do you see both ways of witnessing at work in the world today?

Our attitude can make all the difference in witnessing. Two examples of how people acted and why they acted this way are given below.

The Attitude of Authorities

> [42] *Nevertheless, many did believe in him even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, so that they would not be banned from the synagogue.* [43] *For they loved human praise more than praise from God.*
>
> **John 12:42-43 CSB**

The Attitude of Paul

> [13] *Now I don't want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I often planned to come to you (but was prevented until now) in order that I might have a fruitful ministry among you, just as I have had among the rest of the Gentiles.* [14] *I am obligated both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish.* [15] *So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.* [16] *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.* [17] *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith.*
>
> **Romans 1:13-17 CSB**

What was the primary difference in attitude between Paul and the authorities?

How to Effectively Witness

Witnessing is not merely an activity—it is a way of life. Followers of Jesus don't do witnessing; they are witnesses — good or bad.

We will not be effective "going to" lost people until we are effective in sharing our faith naturally right where we are, among those who know us best. Some people never read the Bible and don't attend church. If you want them to know what Christ can do for them, let them see what Christ has done for you.

Witness Through Love

> [4]*Love is patient, love is kind, is not jealous, does not brag, is not puffed up;* [5]*it does not act unbecomingly, does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered;* [6]*it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;* [7]*it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 13:4-7 LSB**

How do you think love opens the door for you to be an effective witness?

> [34]*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.* [35]*By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*
>
> **John 13:34-35 NASB95**

Why do you think Jesus gave this command?

> *Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words.*
>
> **—Attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi**

Witness by Living Life

What can be the results of your good works?

> [16]*In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*
>
> **Matthew 5:16 CSB**

As a follower of Jesus, you are witnessing to others by the way you live life. What do you think nonbelievers perceive about Jesus from your lifestyle alone?

> *9 Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. > 10 And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, 11 and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*
>
> **1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 NIV**

What ambition did Paul desire for those at Thessalonica?

- To make it your ambition to lead a quiet life
- You should mind your own business
- Work with your hands
- So that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody

Why do you think Paul desired these things for them?

What are your ambitions and why?

> *You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day,*
> *by the deeds that you do and the words that you say.*
> *Men read what you write—distorted or true;*
> *What is the gospel according to you?*
>
> **—Anonymous**

Witness by Word

When you think about witnessing to others, how do you react? Check a sentence below or perhaps you have a sentence of your own.

___ I find it difficult to speak of such a personal matter.
___ I do not speak unless someone asks me.
___ I find it easy to talk to friends about Christ, but not people I do not know.
___ I find it easy to talk to strangers about Christ, but not close friends.
___ I often find myself talking to people about Christ, and I enjoy it very much.

Let us take a look at how Peter answered this question.

> *17 But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." 18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the*

> *sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge;* [20] *for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."*
>
> **Acts 4:17-20 NASB95**

What most hinders you from witnessing verbally with others?

> [13] *Who then will harm you if you are devoted to what is good?* [14] *But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear them or be intimidated,* [15] *but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.* [16] *Yet do this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame.*
>
> **1 Peter 3:13-16 CSB**

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 provides some important foundations for being an effective witness.

> [4] *My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,* [5] *so that your faith might not be based on human wisdom but on God's power.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 2:4-5 CSB**

The blind man whom Jesus healed had little or no theological training, but he was able to express simply and effectively the facts of his experience.

> [25] *He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"*
>
> **John 9:25 NIV**

You can express your experience with Jesus Christ to others. No formal training is needed for you to be able to do this.

> *I cannot, by being good, tell men of Jesus' atoning death and resurrection, nor of my faith in his divinity. The emphasis is too much on me, and too little on him. —Samuel Shoemaker, Extraordinary Living for Ordinary Men*

Paul's Story

The essence of the gospel is found in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

> [1] *Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.* [2] *By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.* [3] *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,* [4] *that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,*
>
> **1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NIV**

A Witnessing Masterpiece

The account of Paul standing before Agrippa and his royal party is given in Acts 26. It begins with Agrippa giving Paul permission to tell his story (verse 1).

> [1] *Now Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul, stretching out his hand, began to make his defense:* [2] *"Concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I regard myself blessed, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today;* [3] *especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.* [4] *"So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem;* [5] *since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.* [6] *And now I am standing here being tried for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers;* [7] *the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews.* [8] *Why is it considered unbelievable among all of you if God does raise the dead?* [9] *"So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus the Nazarene.* [10] *And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.* [11] *And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.* [12] *"While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,* [13] *at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me.* [14] *And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'* [15] *And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.* [16] *But rise up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a servant and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;* [17] *rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,* [18] *to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'* [19] *"So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision,* [20] *but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, practicing deeds appropriate to*

repentance. [21] For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and were trying to put me to death. [22] Therefore, having obtained help from God to this day, I stand here bearing witness both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; [23] that the Christ was to suffer, and that as first of the resurrection from the dead, He was going to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." [24] Now while Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Great learning is driving you out of your mind." [25] But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. [26] For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner. [27] King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know you believe." [28] But Agrippa replied to Paul, "In such short time are you persuading me to become a Christian?" [29] And Paul said, "I would pray to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."

Acts 26:1-29 LSB

Paul's Story Starts With a Compliment

[2] *"Concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I regard myself blessed, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today; [3] especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.*

Acts 26:2-3 LSB

Paul's Life Before He Trusted Christ

[4] *"So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem; [5] since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.*

Acts 26:4-5 LSB

[9] *"So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus the Nazarene. [10] And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. [11] And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.*

Acts 26:9-11 LSB

How Paul Trusted Christ (What Reversed the Direction of His Life)

> [12] *"While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,* [13] *at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me.* [14] *And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'* [15] *And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.* [16] *But rise up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a servant and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;* [17] *rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,* [18] *to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'*
>
> **Acts 26:12-18 LSB**

Paul's Explanation of the Gospel

> [23] *that the Christ was to suffer, and that as first of the resurrection from the dead, He was going to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."*
>
> **Acts 26:23 LSB**

Paul's Crucial Question

> [27] *King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know you believe."*
>
> **Acts 26:27 LSB**

Do you see the flow of Paul's story?

Your Story

Now that you've seen how Paul told his story, work on a way to tell yours using the same pattern. Sharing how and why you chose to trust Christ can be one of the best ways to witness. It is particularly helpful in presenting Jesus Christ to relatives and close friends. In telling your experience:

- **Get their permission**—try to make it their idea. Find a way to naturally get them to want you to be talking about this. Sometimes you may have to just ask if it is okay to tell your story, but a lot of times you can find a way to make them thirsty to hear it.

- **Make it personal**. Don't preach. Tell what Christ has done for you. Use "I," "me," and "my"—not "you."
- **Make it short**. Three or four minutes should be enough time to cover the essential facts.
- **Keep Christ central**. Always highlight what He has done for you.
- **Use the Word of God**. A verse or two of Scripture will add power to your story. Remember that the Word of God has a keen cutting edge.

How to Prepare Your Story

- Try writing your story down just the way you would tell it to an unbeliever. Make the story clear enough that the person hearing it would know how to receive Christ.
- Tell a little about your life before you trusted Jesus Christ, then about how you came to trust Him; and finally, something of what it has meant to know Him: the blessing of sins forgiven, assurance of eternal life, and other ways life has changed because of your relationship with The Living God.
- If you have been a believer for a number of years, include some current information about the continuing effect of Christ in your life in Him.
- As you prepare your story, ask the Lord to give you opportunities to share it. Pray for opportunities to witness in your neighborhood, at work, at school, or wherever you go.
- Believe God will give opportunities for you to reach people and look for Him to speak to you. God is always working in people's lives.

My Story

BEFORE I trusted Christ:

HOW I trusted Christ:

SINCE I've trusted Christ:

List some people (family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, enemies) you know who don't know Jesus. What specifically can you do to introduce each of them to Jesus through your prayers, love, life, and words?

Remember that you do not have the power in yourself to convince anyone of spiritual truth. The Holy Spirit convinces people of their need to know Christ (John 16:8). As you pray for those you want to share your story with, be sure to ask God to honor the proclamation of His Word, to convince people of their need, and to strengthen you as you share the gospel.

Ask God to show you what is particularly attractive or "fragrant" about your life that might influence others to follow Christ. Also allow Him to reveal anything about you that may be turning others against Jesus. Invite Him to spread the sweet aroma of Christ through you.

Memory Verses

> [15] *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect…*

1 Peter 3:15 NIV

> *[9] that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; [10] for with the heart a person believes, leading to righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, leading to salvation.*
>
> **Romans 10:9-10 LSB**

Points to Remember

- According to the principles of Scripture, we are to be witnesses of what we see, hear, and experience with Christ.
- We are witnesses by our actions of love, by our lifestyle, and by our speech, as we pray for others.
- The gospel advances in a variety of ways. Some believers are called to be mobile evangelists by crossing cultures with the gospel. Most of us are called to witness from our experience with Jesus as insiders to those we live and work among. All believers are called to be witnesses.
- Paul's spoken testimony provides this pattern for witnessing: telling what our life was like before we met Christ, telling how we met Christ, and telling what our life is like since meeting and trusting Him.

Points to Ponder

Read John 4:1-26. Consider the incredible story of Jesus sharing the gospel with a Samaritan woman whom He met at the well. Observe what He did that touched her heart and won her trust in Him. Then consider what principles you can draw from this story to strengthen you as you tell your story.

Verses	What Jesus Did	What You Can Do in Sharing the Good News
3-6	Took the initiative for social contact as He was going along.	Intentionally hang out with people who don't know Christ yet as you go about your normal life.
7-8	Established common interest conversationally.	Develop authentic friendships around common interests, hobbies, and connections.
9-15	Probed for interest-naturally gained her permission for Him to speak to her about it.	Get to know them; ask good questions about their lives and feelings; be conversational.
9-17	Graciously dealt with deep issues (sexual & religious).	Be willing to engage on deep issues, but do it with humility and grace—not judgment.
16-19	Honored appropriate limits.	Don't go too far or beyond where your relationship allows you to go.
16-19	Had appropriate, gracious attitude.	Don't condemn or convey that you have all the answers or a perfect life; identify with their pain where you can.

Verses	What Jesus Did	What You Can Do in Sharing the Good News
20-26	Focused on her concerns, but also returned to her deep inner needs.	Don't get sidetracked into arguments.
26	Brought the conversation to a clear close.	Encourage them to make a decision.