

Acts 22:12-22 (NIV)

¹²“A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.

¹³He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.

¹⁴“Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.

¹⁵You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

¹⁶And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

¹⁷“When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance

¹⁸and saw the Lord speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’

¹⁹“‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you.

²⁰And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’

²¹“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

²²The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!”

44-22-01-The Testimony of Our Witness

witnessing, testimony, personal, story-telling, Gospel, Jesus
Acts 22:12-22

Witnessing is telling others what we experience from Jesus.

INTRODUCTION: (Text as the Scripture reading)

–The *Gospel of Luke* and the *Book of Acts* were written by a physician, who wrote in a *2-step medical-education pattern*. [My nursing education had this *2-step process*: first the *lecture-hall*, then the *laboratory*; first, absorb the *principles*, then apply them in a *practicum*. A nursing instructor first teaches nursing precepts, then as a *preceptor*, coaches students in hands-on procedures. During this *preceptorship program*, students must remain open to input while involved in output.] In the *Gospels*, Jesus teaches us about the Kingdom; in *Acts*, He’s our Preceptor, guiding us to share the Kingdom’s Good News with the lost. –Acts 1:8, is the *involved-in-output part* of our *preceptorship*: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” But v.15 of our **text** describes the *open-to-input part*: “You will be his witness to all men of what you have *seen and heard*.” **HOM.idea**, our *Instructor and Preceptor*. *Paul’s testimony* can help us in *the testimony of our witness* (title).

I. Paul Had an Eye-Opening Encounter with Jesus

- A. Paul went blind when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus; **OR** *was Christ’s bright light graciously exposing his true blindness?*
1. He boasted of clear religious sight, until he met the Jesus Who said in Mat 6:23, “But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”
 2. Paul then testified of not seeing straight until a man he came to persecute prayed for him– v.13, “*He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.*”
- B. *In pride*, we hesitate to admit, “*I was blind*,” until we encounter the light of Christ and experience Psa 90:8, You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. (Pride, or *religious boasting*, has no place among the fellowship of the forgiven– Rom 3:23-24, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.)

TRANS: People get so used to second-hand stories, passed-on rumors, and social media gossip, they may ignore us when we declare *Gospel*

truth from God's Word. But that's preaching, not witnessing. A witness gives a first-hand testimony. [Perry Mason calls David Hatton to the witness stand. Where were you on the night you got saved? "At church." Tell us in your own words what happened. "I saw myself before Christ's Cross like a hell-bound convict chained to a ball of sins. Jesus offered to justify me freely by His grace through His death on the Cross, if I received Him. So I did. He took away my guilt and replaced it with His peace." Do you know the whereabouts of this Jesus? "Yes, He's been living in my heart ever since."] **Witnessing is telling others what we experience from Jesus. But our first encounter isn't our only testimony...**

II. Paul Had an Ongoing, Vital Communion with Jesus

- A. Anyone reading *Acts* and *Paul's Epistles* learns this to be the case, but Paul included the prediction of His ongoing relationship with Jesus in his verbal testimony— v.14-15. “Then he [Ananias] said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to **know his will** and to **see the Righteous One** and to **hear words from his mouth**. You will be his witness to all men of what you have **seen and heard**.’” (This wasn't a promise of **more Bible facts** or **knowing the letter better**, but “**You will know Me better.**”)
- B. The Christian life is called a walk, because that's what Jesus does: *He walks with us* through this life every day, every hour. (We need special times of *focused attention* [worship services, devotional reading, prayer times, Christian fellowship], but Jesus is *with us* 24/7 wanting us ready 24/7 to “*know his will*,” to *see Him moving*, “*to hear words from his mouth*,” and to tell others “*what [we] have seen and heard.*”)

TRANS: Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to *comfort* and *counsel* us, but also to *empower* us to be witnesses of the Jesus we walk with. We can trust the Holy Spirit to *remind us what in our encounter with Jesus and what in our walk with Him* we should share. He led Paul to share his testimony in a very Jewish way to a very Jewish crowd but...

III. Paul Had No Control over the Outcome of His Testimony

- A. He felt sure his way of testifying would succeed— v.17-20, “When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ “‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ (Surely that would convince them, thought Paul.)

- B. But to witness faithfully, he had to tell them what he experienced from Jesus— v.21-22 “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!”)

CONCLUSION:

- Some think Paul would've been more successful by not sharing that last bit. But he had no choice: that was his testimony. And God used his faithful witness as *a ticket to greater service in Rome.*
- Witnessing is telling others what we experience from Jesus.** None of us are in charge of how God will use our testimony of what we “*have seen and heard*” from our *encounter* and our *walk* with Jesus. What we are in charge of is staying in tune with Him every day, all day long. And we're in charge of keeping ourselves at His disposal to *tell others what we've experienced from staying in tune with Him.*