***The Full Armor of God - Witnessing

The Suffering of Spiritual Combat, No. 7 - PH32-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:28-30***

In Philippians 1:30, the apostle Paul said to the Philippians Christians. "Having the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me." He had pointed out to them that there was in this passage a certain amount of suffering which Christians experience. It's undeserved suffering. He had experienced it, and they too would experience it. This was because of the fact that there was a spiritual conflict in which he was engaged, and in which they were engaged. This spiritual warfare is the constant lot of every Christian during his life on this earth. It is true to this day. This spiritual conflict with the demon angels results in undeserved suffering on the part of Christians. Therefore, it is very essential for a Christian to learn how to meet this combat, and how to deal with this suffering.

This spiritual conflict is a very hazardous experience. It is not only suffering, but it is also fraught with great danger. For that reason, the Lord has provided us with certain protective elements. We have been reviewing these as we find them in Ephesians 6:13-18. This describes the combat equipment of the Christian soldier in order to gain victory over the demon angels in this spiritual conflict.

The belt of truth is Bible doctrine in the human spirit. The breastplate of righteousness is a spiritual maturity structure erected in the soul. The shoes of the gospel of peace, which we began looking at last time, consist of the divine motivation for moving out in the Lord's service. A Christian soldier needs motivation which makes him ready to move out against the satanic enemy. Good protective foot gear makes it possible for the soldier to be mobile and active in combat. Peace in the soul of a Christian frees him to apply his mind to the battle, and his energies to the spiritual combat which is at hand because he is not in fear of God. That's the significance of having on foot gear in the form of the gospel of peace. It frees your mind from fears and personal concerns over your own destiny, and thus enables you to be motivated to move out in the Lord's work.

The peace of the gospel, we pointed out, expresses the reconciliation of man with God through the death of Christ on the cross. That's what peace is. It is the fact that we have been reconciled to God. So, all is potentially well between us. It's the act of God removing the wall that sin erected which separates God from man. The individual Christian is the minister to the world of this peace and of this reconciliation. One phase of our spiritual combat, therefore, is exercising the ministry of reconciliation as a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, last week we began looking at the issue of witnessing. This is very crucial. At the end of this session, I hope you will listen carefully because I'm going to give you an opportunity to enter into a witnessing experience of something of a unique character, but a substantial proportion. This is the thing that often eats away at Christians. Satan gets us all tied up with all kinds of other things and all kinds of other personal problems, which may be real, and one of the things he accomplishes through that is to neutralize us as witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ourselves should have the motivation because of the gospel of peace to be regular witnesses of the Lord.

Today I want to review certain issues that are involved in witnessing. I know that guilt complex often arise in the minds of Christian over this issue. We have the personal intimidation, "I don't witness," and this begins to eat away at you. If somebody gets up and starts haranguing you about it, and starts suggesting all kinds of ill things about you because you are not a regular witness, then it complicates the problem all the more. One of the most dangerous things it might do is to get you so unnerved that you'll storm out and start blabbering at the mouth to everybody you come to under the guise of witnessing so that you're operating in the old sin nature, and God's blessing is not upon what you're doing. So, it is important to know certain things about witnessing.

**Witnessing**

1. **Knowledge of the Plan of Salvation**

The first thing we pointed out was that the knowledge of the plan of salvation was necessary for witnessing. We mentioned several things concerning that. It isn't a certain stereotyped plan, but it is simply knowing the gospel and what is involved in presenting that to the unbeliever. It is the soldier's objective in the Lord's work to explain the gospel accurately to the unbeliever so that God the Holy Spirit can lead that person to salvation. It is necessary to reject, therefore, all of the human gimmicks that are designed to get people saved. No matter how sincere your concern may be for the lost, you may be confronted with the fact that while you are very sincere in this, you will be reaching out for human gimmicks that will actually work against the very thing you're desirous of doing. I don't have to list them for you. You know all of them. You've been around church situations enough that you are conscious of how many little devices and procedures are used to get people to receive the Lord. Salesmanship techniques of one kind and another are used in presenting the gospel. Usually these confuse the issue, and frequently they turn the unsaved off so that the unbeliever does not receive the Lord. Somebody else has to come along to present the case.

There is this business of entertainment evangelism. Some people think that if you don't entertain folks, they can't move along spiritually. A great deal of entertainment in church to appeal to human emotions under the guise of spiritual guidance is substituted for spiritual advancement with the Lord. This is the easiest trap for Christians to fall into. If they have a church that has a lot of socializing and entertainment: "Oh, isn't this a wonderful place. How spiritual!" They actually think that because their kids go out for the entertainment that the kids are growing spiritually. When the entertainment stops at that church, your kids are going to go someplace else for the entertainment, no matter where it is. Some of those places they'll find their entertainment, you may discover, you don't consider quite so spiritual as when they were finding it out at church.

So, the business of knowing the gospel is crucial to being a witness. Get it straight. Know what you're supposed to do with it. Know what is involved in salvation. Don't be trying to appeal to the old sin nature to get people to make some kind of response so that you can go and report that you've won someone to the Lord.

1. **Other Doctrines**

Along with salvation's plan, it's helpful to know certain doctrines as background in witnessing. It is helpful to have certain doctrines understood because they give you a background and a clarification in your witnessing.

**Redemption**

One of these is redemption. All of you know that the human race is born into a slave market of sin, and the only person who can redeem a slave is somebody who is himself free. There's only been one person who has been free of imputed sin and of inherent sin, and that has been the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, Romans 5:1-21 explain how he was able to buy us out of the slave market of sin. He was able to pay the price for our redemption. It is helpful in your witnessing if you understand the problem that a human being faces by birth in being born into a slavery from which he can do nothing to free himself. There is no way he can buy himself out of that slavery. It requires someone who is a free man, whom we have in Christ, to do that job for us.

**Regeneration**

It's helpful to know the doctrine of regeneration--to understand that everyone is born spiritually dead, so everybody has to come alive spiritually if he is to go to heaven (John 3:3). Salvation is a matter of a relationship to Jesus Christ through the new birth, and nobody can have fellowship with God on any other basis. Any other basis is a false delusion. Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11). It is the work of the Holy Spirit using the Word of God (Ephesians 5:26, John 3:5). You secure regeneration by trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior. So, think through the doctrine of regeneration. As you deal with an unbeliever, you must realize that this person is spiritually dead. What does he have to pay to go to heaven? He has to die spiritually. He's already spiritually dead. He cannot pay the price of spiritual death. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was spiritually alive because he was born without a sin nature, gave His spiritual life, and He died spiritually on the cross so that the sins of the world were covered. That's regeneration--a person receiving a living human spirit.

**Positional Truth**

Another doctrine is the doctrine of positional truth. Everyone is in one of two places in God's sight. As you talk to unbelievers, you should know that this man is in Christ or he is in Adam. If he's in Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22), he's lost. If he's in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), he's born again. We are one or the other. There are certain characteristics about this position of being in Christ. This is a position which we achieve automatically by the baptism of the Holy Spirit when we receive the Savior. The characteristics are that it is not experiential or emotional. When you are in Christ, you don't have some kind of an emotional feeling that says, "Now I'm in Christ." It is not related to your human merit. You cannot earn your way into Christ. It is not progressive. It can't be improved. You don't gradually get into Christ, and you don't get more into Christ as you grow spiritually. It is eternal in its effect. The old sin nature is still operational, but you can never leave your position in Christ. You would never know this fact except that we read about this in the Bible. The Bible tells us that this is our relationship permanently to the Lord Jesus Christ. You receive this at the point of salvation. All of these characteristics should be clearly in your mind. When you talk about a person's position in Christ, you should understand what it connotes.

This is important because everybody who is born again, sooner or later, is going to get the shock of discovering that they still have the sin nature with them. It is just almost automatic that when a person receives Christ as Savior, he has the idea that now he's going to behave himself. Now he's not going to have those terrible thoughts that so humiliated him. He's not going to consider the acts of sin that he previously indulged in. But sure enough, here he is a born again believer, and all that is still coming into his mind. All that temptation is still there appealing very very much to something within him. So, a person has to be able to be led to an understanding that his position in Christ is a very definite secure thing, even though his old sin nature is trying to have a field day.

**Unlimited Atonement**

Another doctrine that is important for you to understand as a witness of the Lord is that of unlimited atonement. The Lord Jesus Christ died for the sins of every person: the past, present, and future sins. We have this in many places in the Scripture (Romans 5:6, 1 Timothy 2:6, Hebrews 2:9, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 2:2). This is a potential salvation. It is not applied to a person until he himself exercises faith in Jesus Christ as we see in 1 Timothy 4:10. God has made it possible for us to be saved. God has removed all the barriers between us and Himself. But if we refuse to accept what he has provided for the removal of our sins, then we stay under our sins, and the wrath of God is exercised toward us. The wall of sin separating man from God has been removed from everyone--even for those who will not believe. It is unlimited atonement. Everybody is covered. The people who will spend eternity in hell have their sins paid for. The reason that they're there is because they would not accept the solution that God provided.

**Imputation**

Imputation is another doctrine to have clear in your mind as a witness. That is, that God the Father made God the Son the bearer of our sins. That's all it means. 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us how Jesus Christ who knew no sin became sin for us, so that we in turn could have His righteousness. We would become the righteousness of God in Him. As our sins were placed upon Christ, so his absolute righteousness is imputed (or credited) to those who believe. Many times in witnessing, a person who is unsaved will be told, "If you receive Christ as your Savior, all your sins will be forgiven." That is a very true statement, and it is a very magnificent thing. But in your witnessing, you should also add something else. You should say, "Not only will your sins be imputed to Jesus Christ (placed upon Him), but God will impute to you (put to your credit) the absolute righteousness of God." That's called justification. So, every time God looks at you, because you are in Christ, he sees you as absolutely perfect. Furthermore, he sees you just as Christ was and has always been, as One who never committed sin. It is great to know that your sins have been forgiven. That's the negative side of salvation. It is something fantastic to know that in God's eyes, you're absolutely perfect. You are absolutely perfect. That ties back to positional truth. One thing relates to another.

Now that is what you are talking about as a believer to an unbeliever. If you have the background of these doctrines in mind, the magnificence of this salvation will blossom out in your speech and in your presentation. You can see what the writer meant when he said, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" It is these background doctrines that make this salvation stand out as great as it really is. Imputation is one of the greatest features of all: "God not only forgives my sins. He gives me the absolute righteousness of God. Therefore, this is a gospel of peace. It just relaxes me. It just puts my mind at ease. Oh yeah, I see the old sin nature cropping up its head and expressing itself, but that doesn't mean I'm going to hell again. I'm still headed for heaven. I can still stay active in combat. I may have stumbled, but I have a way of restoring through the confession of sin, and moving on in the Lord's work."

**Grace**

And, of course, you certainly ought to know about grace. The whole doctrine of grace is the background of being the Lord's witness. Grace is God's favor toward sinners which is undeserved and unearned. Grace on the one hand provides salvation. It is God's grace that makes us accept Christ, His beloved One (Ephesians 1:6-7). It is God's grace which we receive through Jesus Christ. There is no other way to come under the grace of God except through Christ (1 Corinthians 1:4-5). If you seek to come into God's favor and blessing in any other way, it will not be possible. Only through Christ can you come under God's favor which you don't deserve. Salvation, therefore, is by grace alone. This is taught in Titus 2:11 and Ephesians 2:8-9. It is not by works. No man has an opportunity to boast. This salvation is a grace gift alone.

Do you understand that? If you do, you will not be tempted to ask people to do something to be saved. You will not say, "Now, would you like to be saved?" The person might say, "Yes, I would like to be saved." Then you shouldn't say, "Would you repeat after me? I, John Doe, being of a sound mind, having hereby heard the gospel, do now declare before God, angels, and this witness," and so on. And you have a little word to repeat.

You may be smiling because you think that's funny. You're smiling. You don't think people do that. Well, I happen to know that it is not uncommon for preachers to say, "Now those of you who would be saved, would you please stand?" Some of the greatest evangelists, in days past too, have had their vast auditoriums filled with people, and they'd ask them to stand. These people in sincerity think, "I want to go to heaven." So, they stand, and the evangelist would say, "Repeat after me." One very great evangelist on one occasion did this very thing: "Repeat after me: I hereby receive Christ as my Savior." Once they had repeated that, he said, "Sit down. You're saved." He was trying to show them the simplicity of it all. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer was in the auditorium at the time, and he just about had a fit to see a spectacle like that, but that's done in individual ways also.

You give little devices because you don't understand that it's grace, and grace means faith plus nothing. So, don't ask a person, "Do you want to be saved?" They say, "Yes." Don't then say, "Would you sign this card here?" That's another way of doing it. You have these little salvation cards which say, "I receive Christ as my personal Savior." You're supposed to say, "Would you sign here on the dotted line?" Some of you've got more class than others. You go around with your little cards, and then you have a little one of these things like a notary public does, and you seal the thing and you punch it. So you hand it to this guy, and this poor guy takes it, and he has a sealed card from you. Somebody can ask him, "Are you a Christian?" He says, "Yeah, see," and he shows his card.

Or you can get more complex. You can ask people to raise their hands. Why would you ask someone who wants to be saved in a service to raise his hand? This is professional preacher gimmickry. They want to identify and separate whom they may zero in on. I've been in services where, after the hands were raised and the heads were bowed and people would not come forward, the leaders would go down the aisles and reach out and take hold of people to pull them down forward. Now that is a sight to behold.

There are any number of things that you may impose in order to do what? Because you don't understand what grace is, and you want to override that you are nothing in the process of salvation except a communicator of information, and then people are to be told, "Believe it. Accept it. Receive Christ through faith where you sit." You have not confused the issue with something of your own invention. It is very important to know this. Furthermore, it is important to know that grace also provides Christian living. This is equally disastrous that, once you are a believer in Jesus Christ, people are given the idea that they are to do certain things; avoid certain things; practice certain things; say certain things; and, go to certain places in order to be spiritual Christians. However, the truth of the matter (in brief here) is that it is grace that provides the spiritual Christian life. It is grace that enables you to confess your sins as per 1 John 1:9 so that your status as spirituality is maintained. It is grace that enables you to approach the throne of grace in prayer in Hebrews 4:16 so that you can speak directly to God in behalf of your need, and intercede on behalf of other people.

It is not wrong for Christians to tell others, if they feel so led, that they have certain problems in their lives. Maybe they want to identify the problems. Maybe they don't. It is very legitimate for you to convey that information to those whose prayers you may esteem. It is not wrong to inform believers to pray in your behalf. It's part of the grace operation. It is grace that enables us to produce divine good works (1 Corinthians 15:10). Any work that we produce in the old sin nature is the flesh doing it. The ones that count are those that the Spirit of God has done through us. It is grace that enables us to enter into suffering as a Christian (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). I've been surprised recently at how many phone calls I've received, and this is the question that I am asked: "Do you have any tapes on the problems of Christian suffering?"

A lady called me this week and said, "I have a friend who has a physical problem that will never be resolved. She will live with it for the rest of her life. She has not been able to learn how to take this in stride in the plan of God for her life. Is there anything that you could give me in the way of instruction?" I said, "There is, but I'm sorry. We don't have it now. It is in the process of being edited, but I think that we have exactly what she would need in an exposition of Paul's thorn in the flesh and the great demonstration of his taking suffering without bitterness; without resentment; and, without antagonism toward God or man because he understood how grace was functioning in him, and thus produced in him that spiritual quality to take the suffering in stride. He was able to take the pressures that are upon us in such a way that the Lord is honored."

It is grace that enables us to do this. It is grace that gives us the power of God in 2 Timothy 2:1 that frees that power to function in us. It is grace that provides spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:18). It is no credit to you that you take the trouble to come to a church service; that you listen to the instruction; and, that you go positive toward it. All of that is faith. All of that is believing. It has no merit. It is grace--the grace of God that makes the spiritual growth come that follows your response to His word. Hebrews 13:9 promises a great stability because of the grace of God so that we are not up and down. It isn't like the old song says: "Sometimes I'm up, and sometimes I'm down, but always I am heaven bound." That isn't the way it is supposed to be. It isn't, "Up and down and heaven bound." It is, "Heaven bound," but it's on a stable up basis. When you're down (which doesn't mean that you're not in the valley of suffering and pressures of one kind of another), nevertheless there is that peace that the gospel gives that maintains your mobility and activity as a soldier. It is grace that brings us to salvation. It is grace that enables you to live successfully the Christian life. If you understand that, it will guide your witnessing, and you will not botch it up and be giving people the wrong impressions and the wrong ideas.

**Temporal Fellowship**

Another factor that you should understand in a way of doctrine for your witnessing is temporal fellowship. Fellowship with God in time requires the status of spirituality. Spirituality means that God the Holy Spirit is in control of the life. Carnality means that the old sin nature is in control. You may read about this in Romans 8:5-6 which give you the contrast as to what it is to be fleshly minded (that is, old sin nature minded), and what it is to be spiritually minded (that is, God the Holy Spirit minded), and the differences for one or the other. And you are one or the other. If you are spirit controlled, you have fellowship with God in time. If you are old sin nature controlled, your fellowship is broken. Confession of sin to the Father, as per 1 John 1:9, restores the temporal fellowship. All of the learning of doctrine; all of the spiritual growth; and, all of divine good production requires the status of temporal fellowship.

So as soon as a person is born again, the kindest thing you can do to that person is to say, "Now you have received Christ as your Savior. This has been an act of faith, and you are now in the family of God. Your destiny has been changed from hell to heaven. However, I want to warn you that there comes into the Christian life with you an old sin nature. It will have in time its expressions. When it does, your fellowship and your walk with the Lord is broken." You should understand that the minute a person believes in Christ as Savior, he not only enters eternal fellowship, but he also enters temporal fellowship. All of your sins are forgiven, both in terms of eternity and in terms of time. You go immediately into the inner circle of fellowship. You may stay there two minutes; four minutes; five minutes; or, maybe an hour before you sin as a new convert, and then you're out of that inner circle, and you're in carnality. That's why a person should be told about temporal fellowship. The kindest thing you could do would be to immediately explain to them how the old sin nature is going to break their stride with the Lord, but how they correct it. Tell them what the bandage is to put on the wound to bring immediate healing.

**Religion**

Finally you should understand the nature of religion. Religion is man's attempt through his old sin nature to please God and to gain God's blessings. People who are religious are often lost. To be religious and moral does not mean that you're going to heaven. Religion actually blinds a person to the gospel, and makes him a person who is very hard to reach. The person who is in some places like South State Street in Chicago; the Bowery in New York; or, other skid row areas is often much easier to reach with the gospel than is the person who is religious and sitting in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City or one of the great cathedrals in Chicago or someplace else. Those are the religious people who are blinded to their condition. They're much harder to reach. Remember that Satan is the father of religion, and that's why God rejects it (John 8:44, 2 Corinthians 11:3-15). In Matthew 23, you can read an extended condemnation upon religion by the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are background doctrines that will make your witnessing more effective.

1. **Witnessing is the Responsibility of Every Christian**

Another issue in the business of witnessing is that witnessing to the gospel is the responsibility of each Christian. Here's the rub in Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 4:5, and Ephesians 6:15. It is not the exclusive job of the preacher. It is not the exclusive job of the evangelist. All of us as Christians, 2 Corinthians 5:20 tells us, are in full-time service. Witnessing, however, is going to be governed by the status of your own spiritual maturity structure. Those who are spiritually immature are going to be hesitant to speak about the Lord to anybody. The immature Christian, however, may witness because he has a guilt complex, or because somebody has put pressures upon him telling him that he should do this, and that if he were a spiritual Christian, he'd be witnessing. Don't ever respond to that. Respond only to the opportunities and the guidance of the Spirit of God within you. I'll guarantee you that many opportunities for witnessing will come. You and I generally are guilty of neglecting opportunities of witnessing, not of failing to have them. We insulate ourselves so that we have reasons not to witness. But the Word of God calls upon us to be ready; to be motivated; and, to be flexible.

Mass evangelism can never do the job of evangelizing the world. This is because mass evangelism is a sometime thing. There is no way to run a great campaign in a great city in a great stadium without it being a sometime thing. It has a pitch before to build it up; it has the zeal and the white hot heat of the series of meetings; then it has a rapid cooling off; and then, it's gone. You will never reach the world with mass evangelism. It is a glamor technique that can never do the job.

God's procedure is personal witnessing, and it is the responsibility of every Christian. Therefore, it is up to us to consider it and to take it seriously. You needn't excuse yourself and say, "Well I don't have opportunities." Yes you do. You needn't an excuse yourself and say, "Well, I don't know how to talk." Yes you do. "I don't know how to explain it." Yes you do.

1. **The Great White Throne**

Another issue is that clarity in witnessing is affected by one's grasp of the Great White Throne judgment that you read about in Revelation 20:11-15. You must remember that nice people end up in hell if they are unbelievers. That includes all the nice moral people and the nice religious people. The human good of unbelievers cannot meet the payment for one's sins. What do you need to pay for your sins? The absolute righteousness of God. That's what you need. That has to be given to you through Christ.

The issue to stress is not sins. Anytime a preacher is called in to hold a series of meetings, the automatic pattern of the revivalist is to spend the first few days preaching about sins. He'll say, "I'm trying to get the Christians right with the Lord." That's a terrible thing to say. Here's a visiting preacher who comes into your congregation, and the first thing he does, he looks at this crowd and says, "Boy, what a crowd. I've got to get you right with the Lord." Well what in thunder has that preacher been doing all along? It is his business to have gotten the congregation right with the Lord. A favorite topic of the evangelist is to preach on sins.

But the issue is not sins. If you understand the Great White Throne, there are people who are going to be condemned on the fact that God has removed the wall of sins. He is no longer imputing this to them. The issue is whether they will receive Christ or not. If they will not, all they have is their good works, and that's not going to cut it. The wall has been potentially removed for everyone. So faith in Christ is the issue (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). At the Great White Throne, it is not sins that are being stressed. It is man's good works, and he is trying to make it and he cannot.

1. **The Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

The witnessing of the individual believer in the next place requires a ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11). An unbeliever has no living human spirit. How is he going to receive the gospel? He cannot experience the feeling of the Holy Spirit which you and I have which enables us to understand doctrine. So, at this point he is a natural man, 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, meaning he is an unbeliever. The Holy Spirit gives him the grasp of the gospel. The Holy Spirit acts as a human spirit for him so that he can receive the gospel into his mind and make a decision. The Holy Spirit does the job of conversion with our testimony of evangelism. It is the Holy Spirit who does the job of conversion. He alone can make the gospel clear and bring a response.

He brings a threefold conviction, John 16:7-11 tell us. He brings the conviction concerning sin. What sin? The Bible says it's the sin of not believing in Christ the Savior. That's why that's the thing to stress. Why do people go to hell? Because they do not believe in Christ as Savior--not because they drink; they booze it up; they're immoral; or, something else. He is also going to convict them of righteousness--the absolute righteousness of God that a person needs to go to heaven. That's the standard of judgment, and this is imputed to believers. He's going to convict him of the judgment upon Satan--that Satan is destined for the lake of fire, and anybody who rejects Christ is going to join Satan in that lake of fire. The Holy Spirit convicts of these three things.

This should give you guidance in your prayer for unbelievers: "Lord God, will you convict Sam Jones of the sin of unbelief in Christ of the righteousness of God that he must face, and of the judgment which has been placed upon Satan that he will share if he does not receive the Lord. That gives you guidance specifically in your praying. When you do witness, be relax enough to give the unbeliever time to think as the Holy Spirit is working upon his mind.

1. **The Content of Witnessing**

Another issue is the content of witnessing. When you witness to a person, what should you talk about? Should you talk with him about how Noah could get all those animals on that boat? That's what's important, isn't it? Should you talk with him about Genesis 6 to prove that those were human women and angels who cohabited and produced a race of giants? Should you talked about the Battle of Armageddon to the unbeliever? Should you just scare the brain cells out of him? That is disastrous. There's only one thing that is a legitimate discussion topic to an unbeliever, and that is the gospel. That is the specific part of the Bible that explains how to be saved (1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The unbeliever is the target of this particular information. A lot of witnesses get sidetracked into arguing about other things in the Bible. So, the issue of salvation gets lost. Also, don't argue about the Word of God. Don't argue about the Bible being the Word of God. Just use it. Just quote it.

1. **The Christian's Mental Attitude**

Another issue is that the motivation for witnessing is affected by the Christian's mental attitude. If you are ashamed of the gospel, you're going to be reticent to speak to your family or to your friends. If you lack capacity to love Jesus Christ, you're not going to be very much in love with unbelievers and their problem. If you don't comprehend the horror of spending eternity in hell in the pain of that fire, you won't be readily concerned about the danger to the lost.

Our position should be that of the mental attitude of the apostle Paul expressed in Romans 1:14-16. In verse 14, he says, "I am debtor. As a Christian, I owe the gospel to the unbeliever." In verse 15, he says, "I am ready. I know the gospel, and I'm prepared to give it. I look to God for the opportunities." In verse 16, he says, "I am not ashamed, and I'm not intimidated by the unsaved world. I'm not intimidated by my family. I'm just not intimidated by those people I work with. I'm not intimidated by my professional associates. I am not ashamed of the gospel. I am debtor. I am ready because I'm prepared, and I am not ashamed of it." If you don't have that mental attitude, the gospel message will rarely pass your lips. God's program for reaching the world is going to be dragged down.

When you do witness, please don't give bragging testimonies about your witnessing nor criticize Christians who don't witness to your satisfaction. This is not to say that you should not share opportunities that God has given you for witnessing. Thank God that can be done in a legitimate way.

1. **The Testimony of the Christian's Life and Words**

Another issue that there are two areas of life involved in our witnessing. One is the testimony of our life (2 Corinthians 3:3). The other is the testimony of our lips (2 Corinthians 5:14-21). Your character and your speech always go together in the eyes of the unbelievers. If you want to slam the door shut on your witness, just use words that you shouldn't use; talk about things you shouldn't talk about; and, have conduct that is unbecoming of your testimony as a Christian, and you'll slam the door shut on anybody listening to you in reference to the gospel. This requires some restraint in the exercise of our Christian liberties in order to keep the door open for us to speak.

1. **Rewards for Witnessing**

There is a great reward finally to be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ for our witnessing (1 Corinthians 3:11-16, 2 Corinthians 5:10). It's part of our divine good production, and the Lord rewards us for it. These rewards will in some way glorify God in heaven. They may be an extension of our spiritual maturity structure which glorifies the Lord. It reflects His glory. There will be some Christians who will not reflect the Lord's glory to the same degree that other Christians will in eternity. One of the ways that you will reflect the Lord's glory will be through the rewards which you have been given. One of the ways you may secure a reward is through being a witness for Him.

**Approaching the Unbeliever**

Just very briefly, I will mention some approaches to the unbeliever. Some people say, "Well I just can't get started." There are some very good ways to get around to the gospel. One is to ask a person for his definition of a Christian. Go from his usual definition of human good to what God requires in the form of divine good. That's one way to enter the gospel.

Another way is to note that between people there are no absolutes of good and bad, but with God there are absolutes. We face a standard of absolute righteousness. That's a springboard into the gospel. Another way is to ask what one considers to be the worst sin. That makes real interesting discussion. Then you can show that, with God, at the top of the list is rejection of Christ.

Or, you can discuss Jesus Christ and show that there are only two alternatives in our view of Him. Either He is God as he claimed, or He is the greatest liar that ever walked the face of the earth. Then deal with how His claims were authenticated.

Another way is to discuss the reasons for the fantastic influence of Christianity historically among nations. Show how God had moved in human events, and the role that Christianity has played. Just ask people, "Why do you think Christianity has been such a worldwide influence?"

Another approach is to discuss a verse of the Bible, maybe something from Proverbs, and lead into the meaning of a salvation verse. Another way is to ask what a person views as a good church, and show that one's relationship to Jesus Christ is the thing that counts with God--not your relationship to some church. Any unbeliever can be well-related to a church organization.

Another way is to read the Bible in public. When you're traveling on a plane, often people will strike up a conversation as they see you reading the Bible. Conversations in general can be gracefully turned to witnessing.

You know the gospel. You know the motivations. We've touched upon some very basic issues that are involved. We're not trying to harangue you or to whip you up into a spirit to do something, but there is an organization that distributes the Word of God called the Pocket Testaments League. The Pocket Testament League is putting into motion an inner city Bible ministry which is going to be conducted during the months of September and October. This is to blacks and to Spanish-speaking people largely, and 99% of the residents of these communities which will be contacted are unchurched, and the people are without a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is going to be tough territory to go into, and some of you may find the challenge bigger than you want to even consider coping with.

The technique is going to be this: Every weekday night, Monday through Friday, a meeting will be held in a different inner city location. You will have the opportunity to select these nights and these locations. It will be Fort Worth and Dallas in the Metroplex area. You can be on hand as a witness for Jesus Christ. The procedure will be a film with a sound truck to draw the crowd, and the gospel will be presented. Then, on the basis of people who may express an interest in what they have heard, you will be given opportunity to explain to a person how to go to heaven. You can explain how to get from a destiny in hell to a destiny in heaven. This will give you an opportunity to witness and to explain the gospel to someone who perhaps doesn't have your advantages; your background; your concepts; or, your opportunities. But the gospel is the equalizer of the human soul. It puts us in Christ, and that's the one place that our opportunity is equal and maximum. Why don't you pray about this? Why don't you consider this? You may put together what you have heard here in the way of what is involved in witnessing. The gospel of peace, if it is on your feet, may give you the motivation to move out in this particular aspect in this particular expression.

Shall we pray? Our Father, we do thank you for your Word today, and for the information which it has given us. We thank you that the business of witnessing is a matter that does concern our hearts, and it is one in which often we feel that we are negligent. But we pray, our Heavenly Father, that that will help us to recognize that this too requires the preparation of doctrine, and that there are some things relative to the procedure of witnessing that we should consider and that we should understand. We pray that the things that we have gone through these past two sessions will give us guidance and direction in that service. In that particular phase of our ministry, we pray that the gospel of peace may so have relaxed our own minds as to give us the foot motivation to be the witnesses of the reconciliation and the peace that you have for every human heart. We thank you for this time today. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

[**Back to the Advanced Bible Doctrine (Philippians) index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/philippiansdanish.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)