

Whole Witness (Part 1)

Witnessing in Words and Works

The Clear Calling: Be a Witness

“8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
– Acts 1:8

19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” – Matt. 4:19

See also Matt. 28:18-20

The Importance of Words

20 “Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.”
– Acts 5:20

13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. – Rom. 10:13-17

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. –1 Pet. 2:9

The Importance of 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 who is in heaven. – Matt. 5:16

40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ – Matt. 25:40

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” – John 13:34-35

15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? – James 2:15-16

Not Either/Or, but Both/And

23 And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.
– Matt. 4:23

7 And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. - Matthew 10:7-8

17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. - Colossians 3:17

18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, - Romans 15:18

See also 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Both Can Fall Short

1 "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ... 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." – 1 Corinthians 13:1, 3

17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. – 1 John 3:17-18

See also Matthew 7:21-23

Witnesses from Church History

The Early Church

- Evangelism was primarily done by laypeople, more than apostles or "missionaries."
- Christians were known for their unique "social project" that was generous, cared for those in need, and welcomed diversity.

The Reformation

- The Reformers were known for their commitment to preaching the gospel and teaching from the Word.
- A plague struck Wittenberg in 1527. Many fled, yet Luther and his pregnant wife, Katharina, remained to care for the sick, citing Matthew 25:41–46 as their guide: "We must respect the word of Christ, 'I was sick and you did not visit me.' According to this passage we are bound to each other in such a way that no one may forsake the other in his distress but is obliged to assist and help him as he himself would like to be helped."