

Vertical – Week Four

Bottom Line: **Clear, direct witness to others about my relationship with Jesus  
Christ brings the glory down**

***14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. 15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, 16 to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ. – 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 ESV***

Story: Have you ever experienced something so magnificent, that others simply had to know about it and experience it themselves? – (Cypress Street Pint and Plate...DONUT BURGER)

Just as we witness about things we're passionate about, salvation requires human witness. How can we be silent about matters such as these? *It is the Holy Spirit that does the saving, but we are the agents through which He will bring salvation knowledge*  
***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?<sup>[c]</sup> And how are they to hear without someone preaching? – Romans 10:14***

The glory of the Lord remains the same. It doesn't change based on our willingness to witness about it. Our witness, however, is what introduces others to His glory. How can the lost and dying world experience the saving power of God's manifest glory if all the Christians keep quiet about it?

Sometimes those that witness say too much, and other times, too little. We need to be able to know who is ready to be witnessed to and who isn't. Think about an apple. Red when ripe, green when not. Sometimes we will witness to a red apple, and they will receive it and give their lives to Christ. What a great feeling! But other times, we will witness to a green apple. They won't receive it, and may even be upset that you shared with them. It can be tempting to give up, but it only means that it wasn't the right time!

Ecclesiastes says there is a time for everything under the Heavens: Saying the right thing at the right time is important – parenting a toddler

Let's refer back to the passage (v. 15-16)

To those that are full of life, we smell GREAT! I mean you smell like Heaven! There is no reference in the Bible to the actual smell of Heaven, but I bet it smells like CFA. But, to those that are perishing, we smell like death. People who don't want to/aren't ready to receive Christ will turn away from your witness. It does not mean you did anything wrong. It means their hearts were not open to the glory.

The problem is that too many Christians fear smelling like death, so instead, they become quiet. It's uncomfortable smelling like death. We want to be a pleasing fragrance to everyone we encounter. But only the red apples (who may not even know they're a red apple) will be ready to receive your witness. That is who we are doing it for. You may encounter 5 green apples before a red one. But when you get the Gospel through to that one person, there is NOTHING like it.

Refer back to v. 17

We are not simply door to door salespeople of the Gospel. We speak with sincerity and boldness, as commissioned by God. In other words, *how can we possibly do anything else?*

Quote: **Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.**

Woah! Harsh! But we must consider the weight of these words. The fear of standing out, or being rejected, or not knowing what to say cannot stand in our way of witnessing.

Everyday people are going to Hell because too many Christians won't stand firm in their faith. It's time for the tides to turn.

What's the #1 thing we need to witness well? **Boldness.**

***<sup>8</sup> 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 ESV**

Boldness is not a personality type, it's a decision to be uncomfortable if it means God gets the glory

It's His Spirit that makes us bold. Think about it – did Jesus ever do anything that wasn't bold? He consistently challenged the status quo of His day, had Scripture debates with the religious leaders, hung out with the lowest of society, performed miracles that no one had ever seen. Do you think He was shy about what mattered most?

In fact, here's what Jesus had to say about boldness:

***<sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that<sup>20</sup> they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. – Matthew 5:14-16 ESV***

Truths that empower our boldness:

- You are the light of the world – Jesus said this very same thing about Himself. What does that say about His thoughts toward us, His people? Not that we are Him, but we can do as He does and exhibit His nature! If He is a light, so we are a light!
- The world is dark – if there was no darkness there would be no need for light. Don't assume that the world will eventually lead itself to the light. It's dark, and it's only getting darker. Jesus will eventually sort this out when He comes back and reveals His glory to the whole world.
- Your light points to Him – By its very nature, light shines. In the same way a flashlight or a torch helps people find their way in the darkness, the light of His glory in us illuminates the paths of others and helps them find the true Light – God Himself.

When we recognize these things, it births a mission in us to go out and SHINE! We must live with this mindset: “If I don’t shine for His glory, who will?”

***37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” – Matthew 9:37-38 ESV***

Notice how there is no shortage of harvest. I have good news: people are getting saved across the world daily. The church is still the hope of the world. The family of God is getting bigger. There is revival happening in the global church. The only reason this isn’t more prevalent is that we have a labor shortage in the body of Christ. We need more bold witnesses to take their place.

Questions to ask yourself:

**1. Where’s my boldness level?**

- a. Are you concerned with smelling like death? Figure out what’s holding you back from living as a witness every day and rearrange your priorities. Glory takes the first place.

**2. If I’m already witnessing, how is it being received?**

- a. Are being a gentle, patient witness, or an overbearing, pushy one?
- b. The reason so many people received Jesus’ witness is because He did it in love. The Bible instructs us to “speak the truth in love.” Some of us stop at “speak the truth” but if it’s not done in love, we can’t expect it to be well-received

**3. Is my life pointing to the King of Glory?**

- a. All of our lives are giving glory somewhere. Is it to you, your family, the culture? Or are we giving God His due praise?
- b. The appropriate response to salvation freely given to us is unashamed witness of the majesty of King Jesus

***8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. – Acts 4:8-13 ESV***

Closing Challenge: Can you think of anyone in your life that needs a bold witness of Christ? Write their name down and make a point to witness to them and pray that they would be a red apple ripe to receive the Gospel.